Scholarship and Relationships: Reflections on *Young Scholars in Writing*

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Since my late friend and colleague Candace Spigelman and I co-founded *Young Scholars in Writing* over a decade ago, undergraduate research in writing studies has progressed in the most exciting ways. There are increasing numbers of undergraduate scholars conducting genuine inquiry and new and diverse venues for these students to present and publish their work. Faculty and student research *about* undergraduate research is also multiplying and diversifying, demonstrating the power of this pedagogy. Undergraduates and their teachers are enriched in countless ways.

Candace and I launched volume 1 with both excitement and trepidation. I vividly recall wondering whether we would receive any submissions at all, so we were ecstatic at the number and quality of the submissions! Volume 1's nine published articles, by a total of fourteen student scholars from nine different colleges or universities, set a high bar that was ultimately met by many, many authors in volumes 2 through 10. In our first editors' introduction, Candace and I wrote,

> *Young Scholars in Writing* will continue to develop and change over time. What will remain constant, however, is our commitment to and celebration of undergraduates engaged in scholarship in writing, rhetoric, and related disciplines. Just as students' voices are crucial to the work of composition and rhetoric, student research may significantly contribute to the scholarship, learning, and ongoing formation of this disciplinary community.

When we wrote these words, Candace and I expected to continue to build the journal together. Tragically, Candace died in December 2004. Yet our work together on the first two volumes laid the foundation for *Young Scholars in Writing* such that those words we wrote in the first editors' introduction feel as real to me now as they did then. *Young Scholars in Writing* has developed and changed over time; yet it remains committed to undergraduates' genuine, meaningful scholarly contributions to the discipline.

My own journey with undergraduate research has taken many wonderful twists and turns. It has inspired my teaching, research, and service as well as the integration of these areas of my professional life. The special anniversary articles in this volume speak eloquently to the intellectual, theoretical, and practical issues and implications of *Young Scholars in Writing*. In my view, I can best pay tribute to the work of *Young Scholars in Writing*'s 10 volumes by offering the following observations at the intersection of my personal and professional lives. I hope that in so doing, I reveal what *Young Scholars in Writing* means to me: teaching, research and scholarship, community, and relationships.

- Ryan Hoover's article, "Origins of Continental Drift Theory and the Influence of Rhetoric," was published in volume 2. On the bulletin board above my desk at Penn State Berks is Ryan's handwritten card: "It was an absolute thrill to break the cellophane wrapping and see my work in paper and ink. This publication is already the highlight of my undergrad career and, I am sure, will mean so very much to me in the years to come." To this day, I smile when I read Ryan's expression of excitement in the breaking of the cellophane wrapping; that moment of seeing our writing in print for the first time is almost indescribable.

❖ Candace and I had quickly realized there was something unique and special about working with undergraduates from across the country on their research. In February 2005, after she died, I traveled to the Writing Research in the Making Conference in Santa Barbara to present the paper Candace and I had proposed with Matthew Bunce, who published "Online Texts, Online Identities: Designated Free Space or a Space Constrained?" in volume 1. Matthew, whom I had worked closely with online through his several revisions but had never met, and I presented "From 'Research Paper' to the Scholarly Article: Working with Undergrads to Publish Their Research." His enthusiasm about the revision and publication process was palpable to the audience; by then, Matthew was in graduate school at Michigan Technological University, and he told a wonderful story about discussing his *Young Scholars in Writing* publication in his graduate school interview.

This conference was significant for me as well in that it is where I met Joyce Kinkead. Joyce presented "Composition Studies, Undergraduate Research, and the Research University" as part of the panel Teaching Undergraduate Research. Needless to say, Joyce's and my interests overlapped (undergraduate research *and* long power walks), and that day began our professional collaborations and abiding friendship. Joyce is a scholar-teacher, administrator, *and* national leader in undergraduate research; her perspectives enlarge and enrich my own.

❖ Emily Groves's "Acknowledging the Narcissist and the Voyeur: The Emerging New Discourse of the Away Message System" in volume 3 introduced me to this new technology that was at the time completely foreign and incomprehensible to me. At the time, I had two tweens of my own, and it wasn't long before these technologies became part of their, and hence my, lives. I credit Emily's theoretical analysis of AIM for the relatively open-minded approach I had when my children began using similar and evolving technologies. Emily's article also became integral to my own teaching of genuine scholarship. The next year, I modified my teaching approach to an upper-level rhetoric course, leading to two published Comment and Response essays in *Young Scholars in Writing*: "Extending Emily Groves: Features of AIM in Relation to the Voyeur and the Narcissist" by Jonathan Ellis and "Picking Up Where Groves Left Off: Response to Emily Groves" by Nicole Krause. It was a joy to work with Jonathan and Nicole as they interacted intellectually with Emily's work, taking into account AIM's changes. It makes a great deal of sense, looking back, that the authors in *Young Scholars in Writing* are at times leading us, as their teachers, to deeper understanding of cutting-edge technologies.

❖ After working with then-undergraduate David Elder on "Chris Rock: Epideictic Rhetor," published in volume 3, I was thrilled that David became a peer reviewer for the journal for two years, and even more thrilled when in 2009 he became a faculty advising editor (by then he was a PhD student). I soon worked with David again when he and Joonna Smitherman Trapp co-authored a chapter, "Mentor as Method: Faculty Mentor Roles and Undergraduate Scholarship," in *Undergraduate Research and English Studies.* David and Joonna's chapter describing their relationship as mentor/mentee offered me a fascinating view of the *Young Scholars in Writing* revision process that I had not yet seen in such depth: the writer's conversations with and feedback from his faculty mentor in response to the revision strategies and expectations from me. David is a new PhD, having successfully defended his dissertation in November 2012, and a Writing/Rhetoric assistant professor at

Morningside College; he is also editor of the Comment and Response feature of *Young Scholars in Writing.*

❖ I met Jessie Didow, author of "But What Is the Truth in Creative Nonfiction?" in volume 3, in the days after Candace died. I had been on sabbatical that semester. Jessie was a transfer student in Candace's gateway course for Penn State Berks's professional writing major, and Candace saw such promise in Jessie's essay on creative nonfiction that she offered to mentor Jessie during the spring semester to revise the essay for submission. Not surprisingly, Candace encouraged and loved Jessie's use of the personal as evidence. I worked closely with Jessie on her *Young Scholars in Writing* revisions, enamored by her creative nonfiction essay, "Ghosts of Children Past," at the center of "But What Is the Truth in Creative Nonfiction?" "Ghosts of Children Past" relates Jessie's experiences as a mother, especially her difficult choice to give up her first baby for adoption, to a local historical figure, Louisa Bissinger, who drowned herself and her three children in the Tulpehocken Creek in Berks County, Pennsylvania on 17 August 1875. The friendship Jessie and I developed is lasting, nurtured by mutual affection for Candace and by our shared interests and experiences as mentor/mentee, researchers, writers, readers, and mothers. Jessie and I spend a good deal of our time together walking a path along the Tulpehocken Creek.

❖ Volume 5 was a transformational time for *Young Scholars in Writing,* with two significant additions. First, the journal had for the first time a faculty editorial board comprised of dedicated teacher-scholars in the discipline: Linda Bergmann, Shannon Carter, Doug Downs, Heidi Estrem, Helen Foster, John Gravener, Jane Greer, Carmen Kynard, Sean O'Rourke, Kelly Ritter, Amy Robillard, and Susan Thomas. Each board member was also a faculty advising editor (FAE) who worked with student submitters throughout the revision process. Jane, Doug, John, and Sean, and Susan remain with the board; Jane is the current editor. The *Young Scholars in Writing* editorial board was then, and remains today, a learning community of like-minded colleagues dedicated to challenging undergraduate scholars across the U.S. and around the world conducting research in writing and rhetoric to do their absolute best.

Jane, Sean, and Amy had informally taken on this work for volumes 3 and 4. At that time, becoming involved with *Young Scholars in Writing* was of little value to their dossiers; undergraduate research in our discipline had not yet caught on, and to work with undergraduates at another institution was pretty much unheard of, especially in a role with no formal title. Jane, Sean, and Amy's generosity of time and advice, as well as their sheer enthusiasm for working with undergraduates, played a pivotal role in my motivation and ability to continue with *Young Scholars in Writing.* Without them, *Young Scholars in Writing* may not have survived Candace's passing.

Jane's involvement with *Young Scholars in Writing* began with volume 1, when her student Katherine Stuart published "Girls in Business Meetings: Beta Phi Theta Rho Secretaries Take Charge, 1946–1950." Candace and I were blown away by the quality and originality of this research. Jane was ahead of her time with undergraduate research that encourages students' intellectual inquiry and discovery in the most creative directions. To this day, Jane's students consistently publish superb archival, feminist research. Jane became the guest editor and then editor of *Young Scholars in Writing* beginning with volume 7. Admittedly, I was one of two board members to vote no to Jane's proposal to redesign the journal's cover (we lost, and the new cover does look great!). My dislike of change notwithstanding, I could not be happier with Jane's leadership and commitment to the journal. Jane's passion and dedication

to this journal, from the student submitters and authors to her colleagues on the editorial board to the disciplinary work the journal accomplishes, is testimony to her outstanding work as *Young Scholars in Writing*'s editor. Jane is also a good friend.

Sean is a professor of Rhetoric and Oratory at Furman University and chair of the Communication Studies Department—the other discipline that shares its historical origins with Composition and Rhetoric. Since he's not a regular attendee at the Conference on College Composition and Communication (4Cs), Sean has not participated in our editorial board meetings, but he is very much an integral supporter of the journal. Sean's student Susan West Heimburger published "Of Faith and Fact: Haywood N. Hill's 'This I Believe'" in volume 2. Since then, Sean's students have published Comment and Response essays in six of *YSW*'s ten volumes, and another of his students, Jennifer E.M. Hill, published "Reframing the Victim: Rhetoric for Segregation in the *Greenville News*" in volume 9. Along with Jane, Doug Downs, and Jonathan Hunt, Sean organized a panel entitled Fostering Undergraduate Contributions to Scholarship in Rhetoric for the Rhetoric Society of America's 2010 conference in Minneapolis. Finally, at least some members of the *Young Scholars in Writing* editorial board met Sean!

Amy was by far *Young Scholars in Writing*'s first and biggest fan! I remember receiving emails from Amy, then a PhD student, asking to come to Penn State Berks to observe and interact with peer reviewers. Amy wrote about *Young Scholars in Writing* in a kind of blog (before blogs really existed). She was genuinely enthralled with the journal's focus on undergraduates as researchers and authors, as evidenced in her 2006 *College English* article, "*Young Scholars* Affecting Composition: A Challenge to Disciplinary Citation Practices," an article that gave the journal wider exposure and greater stature.

❖ Volume 5 also debuted with great success the feature "Young Scholars in First-Year Writing," led by Shannon Carter and Doug Downs. Doug is deeply committed to undergraduate research generally and to first-year writers specifically. Throughout these years, I have appreciated Doug's wonderful sense of humor (his Facebook play-by-play accounts of conferences are unforgettable) and the courage he exhibits in speaking his mind over listservs and in person with frankness and collegiality.

Shannon and I continue to find that our interests evolve in similar ways. We have both become involved in our scholarship and our teaching in community-based research with local, marginalized histories. Shannon joined me as a faculty mentor in a new undergraduate research journal I founded and edit, *Undergraduate Journal of Service Learning and Community-Based Research,* which blends our passions for both undergraduate research and community-based teaching and scholarship. Although I did not name this journal *Young Scholars in Service Learning and Community-Based Research*—yes, I toyed with that idea—I have brought to it so much of what I've learned from *Young Scholars in Writing*. From the start, I worked with a great editorial team of colleagues from around the country and the world, most of whom I'd never met. I also knew how high the bar could be set for quality undergraduate scholarship. And, as I continually reassured the editorial board as the 30 June 2012 submission deadline approached, the vast majority of student submissions came in just a week or two ahead of the deadline!

❖ Last April, my son, Andrew, and I visited George Washington University. As part of his decision-making process on where to attend college, we met with Rachel Riedner, director of Writing in the Disciplines at GW and a member of the *Young Scholars in Writing* editorial board. One of Rachel's students was Andrew Noel, who published "Ócutl, or 'Being the

Torch': Examining the Conversation between Indigenous Voices and Colonialist Discourses" in volume 5 and Comment and Response dialogue in volume 6. When my son and I were leaving Rachel's office, we saw volume 9 of *Young Scholars in Writing* on the reception desk of the GW Writing Program. My son looked at me and smiled. I beamed from ear to ear, overwhelmed with the pride he felt for his mom. (And I ran back to Rachel's office to tell her!)

Young Scholars in Writing will always mean a great deal to me, especially the people I've met along the way. First and foremost, *Young Scholars in Writing* is about working with undergraduates who love to write, explore, and investigate in the heady and exhilarating world of ideas and language; it is about the joy shared by mentor and mentee when the writing, investigation, and language come together. But *Young Scholars in Writing* is also about relationships cultivated, nurtured, and sustained by these shared experiences and commitments. More than anything else, *Young Scholars in Writing* is a reminder for me of the friend and colleague I had rather than the friend and colleague I lost. Thank you to everyone for making it such a memorable journey.