



## Editors' Note

*Jennifer L. Holberg and Marcy Taylor*

In some ways, this issue has been over twenty years in the making. When we had our first thoughts of a journal, we were both graduate students, helping to administer our university's writing program—and we lamented the dearth of attention to the scholarship of teaching, particularly that concerned with graduate preparation. As we were finishing graduate school, *Pedagogy* was born—a product of our experience in the 1990s and an emblem of our desire to see the profession transformed. The journal has always been committed to hearing voices from across the discipline—and at every professional level. That is certainly the case in this issue.

In other ways, the cluster on graduate education in this issue is absolutely of the moment. The very week we went to press with this issue, the Modern Language Association published its “Report of the MLA Task Force on Doctoral Study in Modern Language and Literature” to much fanfare. The report's executive summary could have been written by our authors:

We are faced with an unsustainable reality: a median time to degree of around nine years for language and literature doctoral recipients and a long-term academic job market that provides tenure-track employment for only around sixty percent of doctorate recipients. We as members of the scholarly community must insist on maintaining excellence in our research and teaching by recognizing the wide range of intellectual paths through which we produce new knowledge. We must also validate the wide range of career possibilities that doctoral students can pursue.

*Pedagogy: Critical Approaches to Teaching Literature, Language, Composition, and Culture*  
Volume 15, Number 1 DOI 10.1215/1531.4200-2799084 © 2014 by Duke University Press

Although they did not have the benefit of this report, many of the ideas in this cluster are responses to the “unsustainable” conditions the MLA report describes.

At the same time that we focus on pedagogical innovation and cultural impact, *Pedagogy* is fundamentally committed to dialogue. Thus, Michael Bérubé’s commentary in this issue responds not only to this special cluster on graduate education in English but also to Bennett Carpenter and colleagues’ “Feces on the Philosophy of History! A Manifesto of the MLA Subconference,” which appeared in issue 14.3. As a former president of the Modern Language Association, Bérubé is in a special position to engage this central problem of the profession: is graduate education fundamentally tainted by our system of labor upon which the enterprise is built? The organizers of the MLA Subconference take this question as central to their mission. In a response to the MLA report, Carpenter had this to say to the *Chronicle of Higher Education*: “In focusing on tweaks and ‘innovations’ rather than on labor conditions, the MLA task force thus misses the point. . . . Alt-ac will not save us. The digital humanities will not save us. Only a concerted effort to transform the labor conditions of higher education can resolve the current crisis” (Patel 2014). And that resolution demands a commitment to seek out and promote a range of voices. *Pedagogy* will continue to do just that.

We thank our guest editor, Leonard Cassuto, for bringing together this collection of perspectives on the structures of graduate studies in English. Cassuto writes a monthly column for the *Chronicle of Higher Education* called The Graduate Adviser, and he is completing a book on the state of American graduate education; we are grateful that he chose *Pedagogy* for this collection.

## Works Cited

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- Patel, Vimal. 2014. “MLA’s Effort to Reshape Ph.D. Misses Mark, Some Say.” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, June 4. [chronicle.com/article/MLA-s-Effort-to-Reshape/146913/?cid=at&utm\\_source=at&utm\\_medium=en](http://chronicle.com/article/MLA-s-Effort-to-Reshape/146913/?cid=at&utm_source=at&utm_medium=en).

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