

EDITOR'S NOTE

Volume 24 of the *Journal* is proof of the growing strength and diversity of our LRW community. This volume includes more than 420 pages of legal writing scholarship, with ten essays, seven articles, and two book reviews. We are indeed seeing a “rising tide in the legal writing community,” as Suzanne Rowe notes in this volume’s opening essay. Editing this volume required remarkable work by the Editorial Board, aided by the largest team of Assistant Editors I’ve seen in my time with the *Journal*.

As I write this, we are heading into an extended period of social distancing. On the first day my institution sent students home and we all shifted (with varying degrees of trepidation) to online educating, my inbox was flooded with resources from my more experienced LRW peers. We shared those resources with our faculty at my institution, and thus the strength of some generous members of the LRW community became part of the perceived strength of the LRW community, and then increased our institution’s ability to teach well in pressing times.

Our sense of community, and our increased visibility as a community, are the beginning themes for our series of essays. Suzanne’s essay begins the series and sets the theme, with reflections and suggestions as to how we can all build on this strength and deepen our commitment to our community and to individuals who are not being lifted by the “rising tide.” The essays that follow comment in some way on this theme, from essays on personal, professional growth and satisfaction; to essays on enriching a programmatic community; to essays on the future of legal writing and the consequences of and to our growing reputation and value.

This volume’s articles are similarly varied. We are pleased to publish:

- David Cleveland and Jeff Jackson’s next installment on the history of legal writing. This article begins with the end of the Civil War, when many law schools closed, to the 1930s, when the teaching of legal writing and skills generally was robust.

- Mel Weresh’s history of Standard 405(d), which traces the development and modification to the Standards’ purported protection of legal writing faculty. Mel’s article forms the backdrop to support her position, and that of other members of the Professional Status Committee of the Legal Writing Institute, that Standard 405(d) fails to provide meaningful protection for legal writing faculty.
- Jennifer Sheppard’s innovative lessons drawn from the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, a conductor-less orchestra, and applied to law schools seeking to smoothly transition from director-centric legal writing programs to director-less, collaborative programs.
- Julie Oseid’s article on pacing, and why this critical tool in legal writing has been under-emphasized and under-appreciated. Julie draws examples from non-legal disciplines to demonstrate how pacing can add tension, slow down the reader, and create interest.
- Jennifer Will’s article on why substantive emails that replace or supplant what would otherwise be oral communications should be labeled “e-convos.” She argues these emails are “a rich supplement to previously unrecorded exchanges,” and should thereby be independently, purposefully addressed in our teaching.
- Peter Nemerovski’s empirical study of LRW hiring, which looks both at who is getting hired into top legal writing programs and what these programs are offering to those they hire. Peter also offers best practices for all law schools in their hiring.
- Deborah Gordon and Kaitlin O’Donnell’s timely article on what it means to be a committed legal writer and how we as professors and practitioners may respond to concerns about power and illegitimacy without giving up hope and descending into cynicism.

The volume ends with two very different book reviews: The first, by Liz Usman, grew out of a discussion group she organized at the 2019 SEALS Conference on Francis Fukuyama’s fascinating *Identity: The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment*. Liz connects the ideas in the book with our efforts to better help our students find their authentic identity. The second, by Sarah Morath, reviews Debbie Borman’s *A Short and Happy Guide to Legal Writing*. Sarah recommends it specifically as a text for orientations or for those looking for a refresher on the key concepts taught in a first-year legal writing course.

I attended my first LRW Conference as a newly hired, overwhelmed twenty-eight-year old. I left brimming with ideas and hope and purpose. I still leave our gatherings—whether in person or via Zoom—brimming with ideas and hope and purpose. I hope this volume feels like a gathering of our community to all of you. We are grateful to have been a part of it.

Lindsey P. Gustafson
Editor in Chief
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