

## **Editorial Introduction: Publishing an Academic Journal in a Weary World**

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*My wish for you is that you continue. Continue to be who and how you are.*  
-Maya Angelou

In 2023, our world continues to be weary. Everyone is aware; we all know this weariness and see it impacting our everyday lives, both personally and professionally. Yet, in the face of this weariness, we also continue on with life, finding new ways to adapt, grow, learn, teach, communicate, and overall exist. As we faced the task of publishing an academic journal in a weary world, we approached the work from an ethic of care and a motivation to *continue*. With a genuine belief in the social impact that research and knowledge development have on humanity, we continued. We did so while we held the journal's relationships and people in the highest regard. Seeking to remain attentive and responsive to the needs of our reviewers, authors, section editors, copyeditors, and one another, we made phone calls, sent emails, and followed up with people, not only for journal business, but to also check on each other. With this foundation, we continued, working to maintain the integrity of the journal and the scholarship it features, while also giving much-needed attention to the wellbeing of our authors, reviewers, and editors. The final publication of volume 9 helps illustrate that the two—integrity and wellbeing—are not mutually exclusive and can exist in tandem. And so, inspired by the acts of continuing, we borrow bits from one of Maya Angelou's poems to frame our message of introduction.

The yearly publication of the *Communication Center Journal* continues to coincide with the close of fall semester and the end of the calendar year. This work is so different than it once was, but what in our lives is not. Over time, we have adjusted some of the journal's practices to better support the needs of the good people doing the work. For example, we learned in 2022 that reviews and revisions are most likely to be returned if we ask for a timeline that works best for the people doing the work. We worked with authors and reviewers to discuss feasible deadlines and shifted them as needed. We remained flexible and supportive as we communicated process updates with all involved. We understood the balancing act of teaching, research, and service in higher education. And so, we extended *and* asked for a good bit of grace.

Behind the scenes, we continued to track manuscript progress on a sheet that looked nothing like the tracking sheets of past volumes. Everything is in flux; the status of a manuscript shifts beyond the usual categories and the journal's normal publishing schedule. In meeting the needs of our audience, we began posting pre-published papers for the first time this year. We no longer hold knowledge distribution from the public with "in-press" status. This gave authors opportunities to share their work and, for some, include it in academic year-end reporting.

Our student contributors continue to stand out as we reflect on the journal's publishing year. The greatest place where continuing to be who and how you are is tested just might be in the lives of our students. Those in higher education understand the privilege it can be to witness students' personal,

professional, and academic transformations from the first day of their studies to the last. We considered ourselves especially privileged, seeing some of this transformation take shape through the publication process. Readers will find that CCJ's student authors and section editor in the *Excellence at the Center* section understood the assignment. Their topics of hope, the positive impact of applying economics, developing self-efficacy, motivational interviewing, and fighting crises all give us reason to *continue* in the face of a weary world.

***To let gratitude be the pillow upon which you kneel...Continue.***  
**-Maya Angelou**

We bring our introduction to a close by acknowledging the many people who helped volume 9 come to fruition. Publishing in a weary world can be a challenge at all parts of the process, and we appreciate all who contributed to the final product. Our first gratitude is to the exciting research featured in this year's publication. Authors Roy Schwartzman, Estefani Marchena, Kristen Foltz, Alyssia Miller De Rutte, Rory McGloin, Emily Lorraine Hamlin, and Amanda Coletti provide communication centers with pathways, insights, and essential questions. Mercy Faleyimu earned two graduate student awards at the 2023 National Association of Communication Center's Excellence at the Center gathering at Virginia Tech. We are honored to have their case study in CCJ as an important extension of those successes. Our second gratitude is to all involved in publishing CCJ. We have immense gratitude for our audience, authors, reviewers, collaborators, section editors, copyeditors, and those who play support roles. We are incredibly grateful for the support provided to CCJ's team by their colleagues, students, administrators, and loved ones. Our third gratitude is for distinguished reviewing. This is the third year we have named the journal's Distinguished Reviewer; we are honored to recognize Alison Bodkin of James Madison University as the 2022 distinguished reviewer. When our reviewer pool lacked the subject expertise needed, Dr. Bodkin accepted an unsolicited invitation to join CCJ as a reviewer. Dr. Bodkin exceeded our expectations by communicating her review with a high level of care and regard for the growth of the manuscript, the author, and the journal. Like the distinguished reviewers before, Dr. Bodkin exemplified the values and vision of CCJ.

***May the work of your hands and the strength of your spirit be blessed, as we all continue.***  
**-Maya Angelou**

In 2023, as we watched higher education shift considerably, who and how academics are is still of great debate. The *Communication Center Journal* seeks to provide a place where academics can exchange ideas in a supportive environment that encourages critical thinking, ethical research, inclusivity, and a genuine care for self and others. We do so by centering our actions on interpersonal relationships as we work to contribute new research to existing conversations on communication centers in higher education. We are even more resilient after leading CCJ to publish [Volume 9](#). We hope that the "work of your hands and strength of your spirit" might lead you to participate by answering or sharing our [call for manuscripts](#), as well as our [2024 special topic section call for manuscripts](#) on the intersection of communication centers and artificial intelligence.