

## Editor's Introduction

This issue of *Royal Road* is a special one for several reasons. First, although the essays were originally composed during the 2018-19 academic year, most of the revision, editing, and layout of the issue was completed during the spring of 2020, a semester that introduced "coronavirus," "social distancing," and "global pandemic" into the popular lexicon. Our student authors worked with faculty mentors and editors throughout the term, transitioning from face-to-face meetings to Zoom sessions and email correspondence as the rules that governed our daily lives changed. Some authors remained dedicated to the project, completing multiple rounds of revision and improving their essays draft by draft; others fell off the pace as the realities of online education, moving mid-semester, and family life took precedence. The end result is an issue that is shorter than previous years', but about which we are no less proud. The students who completed the journey of revising papers produced in their composition classes into publishable essays have done tremendous work, and their efforts deserve to be memorialized in the pages of *Royal Road*.

As if the all-around craziness of producing an academic journal during a global pandemic weren't enough, we also implemented several changes to our production process for volume 4. We greatly expanded our review board, inviting a broader range of faculty who teach in our Academic Writing Program into the journal's selection process. We modified our publication timeline to account for the turmoil stemming from the COVID-19 outbreak. And the three faculty editors of the publication all took on new roles at the institution—Dr. Letter becoming President of UT's faculty senate, Drs. Dooghan and Reamer swapping places as department chair—leading us to take on different roles in the construction of the issue as well.

Most significant of all, we brought our first student editor on board, a development that we are particularly proud of. Beck Lazansky got hands-on experience with the publication, meeting regularly with the editorial staff, contributing to our in-house style guide, corresponding with authors about deadlines and revisions, copyediting all accepted submissions, and completing the digital layout of this entire issue—all while completing her coursework and negotiating the new normal of life during a pandemic. Beck also conducted market research for a new student imprint of the University of Tampa Press, under which we will be publishing future issues of *Royal Road*. Beck's contributions to this issue cannot be overstated, and her success under these trying circumstances reaffirms our commitment to involving students in all elements of the production of this journal moving forward.

All told, this issue is a testament to the talents and perseverance of our students at The University of Tampa, who came together under the most trying of academic circumstances to complete the projects published herein. We are proud to present the following exemplars of student research and writing, and we hope you enjoy reading them as much as we enjoyed putting them in your hands.

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