Call for Proposals for the AAALGrads Newsletter (Spring 2021 Issue)

"Ambiguity, Uncertainty, and Resilience:
New Paths for Applied Linguistics and Higher Education"

1 Rationale

By the time the Spring 2021 issue of the AAALGrads Newsletter appears, the unprecedented Covid-19 crisis will have been with us for a little more than a year. For many (if not most) members of the academic community, this pandemic has been a major disruptor which has created all kinds of ambiguity and uncertainty. From within the graduate student community specifically, we have heard about major challenges and trauma like disrupted research plans, lost funding, lack of childcare, unclear visa regulations, a collapsing job market, mental health problems, or, even worse, sickness or death. Throughout 2020, we also witnessed racial tensions and protests in response to the killings of George Floyd, Breona Taylor, and other Black, Indigenous, and Other People of Color across the United States, as well as a highly divisive presidential race which many believed the country's future to depend on.

In face of the ambiguity and uncertainty these events have created, many of us had no other option but to bounce back, adapt, and keep going. Our current, everyday reality of online teaching, Zoom meetings, or remote research certainly attests to the resilience the academic community is capable of. For some, this changed reality is not temporary but rather heralds a fundamental and irreversible transformation of higher education. However, although we may have heard claims along the lines of "online education will continue to soar" or "Covid-19 will reshape the job market for good," we believe that the long-term consequences of 2020 on the higher education landscape still seem too unpredictable to forecast.

It appears reasonable to assume at this point, though, that while we will eventually return to a feeling of normalcy, academia will likely not revert to its old, pre-2020 form. In fact, the crises and tensions we faced throughout 2020 have drawn new attention to existing problems and faultlines in a neoliberal higher education, manifested, for instance, in an increasingly competitive job market, the growing scarcity of funding, or the ongoing disenfranchisement of minorities in the academic community. As such, this past year amplifies a growing desire for reform and alternative ways of doing, thinking, and being in higher education.

We are dedicating this upcoming issue of the AAALGrads Newsletter to the theme of **"ambiguity, uncertainty, and resilience"** in hopes that it will support our professional community in overcoming the hardship of 2020 by embracing a positive outlook into the future of our profession. We envision this issue as a space where members of the field engage in conversations about new paths for applied linguistics and higher education--paths which make our professional environments more adaptive and resilient. In keeping with this premise, the scope for this issue is intentionally broad and may include topics and questions like:

- How does the applied linguistics community understand, address, and engage with ambiguity, uncertainty, and resilience?
- What does it mean to research "ambiguity," "uncertainty," and "resilience"? How can we conduct research in the face of ambiguity and uncertainty effectively and ethically?
- What kinds of ambiguity and uncertainty have you encountered in your teaching, research, leadership, service, and/or graduate career? To what extent have these

instances of ambiguity and uncertainty allowed you to learn, grow, and thrive professionally? What are strategies to survive in the face of ambiguity and uncertainty?
- How do junior professionals address and mitigate ambiguity and uncertainty as they transition into new roles (e.g., from M.A. to Ph.D. student)? How do they build a sense of resilience?
- How do different populations of graduate students (domestic vs. international students, students with disabilities, students who identify as LGBTQ or racially/ethnically diverse, etc.) respond to ambiguity and uncertainty? What does "showing resilience" mean for these different groups?
- What alternative career paths (such as NGOs, non-profits, industry, alt-ac) can graduate students in applied linguistics explore in the face of uncertainty and ambiguity?
- What role do our personal lives and circumstances (e.g., family, mental health, visa status) play in experiencing and dealing with ambiguity and uncertainty in professional environments? What are some strategies to create better work-life balance?
- How can we create more cooperative and participatory environments to mitigate feelings of uncertainty and ambiguity? What resources and support systems can mentors, supervisors, and administrators in particular provide to help graduate students overcome feelings of uncertainty and ambiguity?
- How can the academic community better prepare for the unexpected? How do we as graduate students, scholars, instructors, language learners, leaders, and/or administrators plan for the future?

2 Possible Formats

We extend our call to include feature articles, resource reviews (e.g., books and technological tools), creative pieces (e.g., poetry, art, and video), and short "how to" or "what I wish someone had told me" blurbs for the Professional Development Corner.

- ***Feature Article*.** A feature article should be about 750-1,500 words. It should address and critically develop a question or idea related to the newsletter theme. Feature articles can report on empirical research, take a theoretical perspective, or share completed projects and administrative or service work.

- ***Resource Review*.** A resource review should be about 500-1,000 words. It should critique material (e.g., books, textbooks, technological tools, or a website) that might be helpful to graduate students. You are expected to have read and/or used the material before you write your review. For your proposal, please include a brief summary of the resource and your opinion of its helpfulness for graduate students.

- ***Creative Corner*.** The Creative Corner is an experimental section designed to showcase the creativity and diverse experiences of graduate students in our field. In addition to short essays, submissions in this section may include poetry, art, and/or a high quality video related to graduate student life. In your proposal, please be sure to describe the submission format (e.g., 25 MB .mp4 video). Personal experiences related to the issue's theme are encouraged.

- ***Professional Development Corner*.** Blurbs for the Professional Development Corner are 500-to-1,000-word "how to" or "what I wish someone had told me" reports by advanced graduate students. The format can take several shapes, such as, but not

limited to: a short narrative of a successful strategy, a “do’s and don’ts” list, or a flowchart. The goal of this newsletter section is to give graduate students adequate support and guidance as they navigate their graduate careers. In that vein, please maintain a professional tone and positive outlook. **Do not refer to institutions, departments, or individual people by name.** Authors are encouraged to connect their advice to the newsletter theme.

Possible topics for the Professional Development Corner include, but are not limited to:

1. How to build a mentoring relationship
2. How to start publishing early
3. How to build a versatile professional profile
4. How to job hunt effectively
5. How to find funding
6. How to develop a strategic plan for your graduate program, dissertation, or career
7. How to develop time- and project management skills
8. How to network effectively
9. How to develop leadership skills
10. How to explore alternative/alt-ac career paths

3 Guidelines for Proposals, Submission, and Timeline

Your proposal should...

- be approximately 300 words
- provide your name, department and institution, degree, and area of study
- identify the section of interest (feature article, resource review, Creative Corner, or Professional Development Corner)
- include a brief overview of what you plan to submit
- confirm your ability to commit to the timeline (provided below)

Proposals will be collected through this Google Form and are due by January 15, 2021 @11:59 PM Eastern Time. You can submit a proposal if you’re a graduate student in the field of applied linguistics--you do not have to be a current AAAL member.

Tentative Timeline	
Friday, January 15, 2021	Proposals due
Friday, January 22, 2021	Authors notified of acceptance
Friday, February 12, 2021	First draft (D1) of manuscripts due
Friday, February 19, 2021	Editors provide feedback to authors on first drafts
Friday, March 5, 2021	Revised drafts (D2) due

Friday, March 12, 2021	Editors provide additional feedback **if necessary**
Friday, March 26, 2021	Final drafts (D3) of manuscripts due
Friday, April 9, 2021	Editors return final draft with proofs
Friday, April 16, 2021	Authors respond to proofs and provide short biography & headshot
The issue is expected to appear in late April of 2021.	

For questions or inquiries, please reach out to the newsletter co-editors Mariana Becker, Zhenjie Weng, and Stefan Vogel at aaalgrads@gmail.com.

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New Format "Letter to the Editor"

We are excited to announce that in addition to our four established submission formats, you can now also **respond to articles from the current newsletter issue (Fall 2020)**. With permission of the responding author(s), these letters will be included in our upcoming issue (Spring 2021) to facilitate scholarly and intellectual exchange. Please note that reader responses are **due on Feb. 12, 2021** and must be submitted through a separate form. More information is available on our newsletter website (https://www.aaal-gsc.org/letter-to-the-editor).