Letter from the Co-Editors

Dear fellow graduate students,

Welcome to the Fall 2020 issue of the AAALGrads newsletter! We have planned this issue of our newsletter as a space where professionals from within and outside our field can come together and engage in critical discussions about race, equity, diversity, and allyship in applied linguistics, higher education, and beyond. We also envision this issue as a wealth of resources which can provide support to BIPOC members of our community and their allies during the on-going pandemic.

As excited as we are to bring you this issue, we do so with a heavy heart. The idea for this fall's theme was born in response to the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and the many other BIPOC members of our communities who have experienced police brutality and institutionalized violence at a disproportionate rate. The protests we have witnessed throughout the nation and the world in 2020 are a painful reminder of the racial inequality, systemic oppression, injustices, hateful ideologies, and historical trauma that Black, Indigenous, and Other People of Color still face to date in their everyday lives.

As Black, Indigenous, and Other People of Color continue fighting for their voices to be heard and centered, many professional organizations, educators, scholars, researchers, administrators, and graduate students have joined the fight for anti-racism and taken a stance for racial equity, social justice, inclusion, and diversity. It is our sincere hope that this issue will help do and support the on-going work that contributes to this cause.

As we write this letter, we recognize that race and racism are sensitive issues. As such, readers may encounter ideas in this issue that make them feel uncomfortable or that they may not immediately agree with. Although we understand that some readers might respond in this way, building anti-racist spaces is not an easy process and most certainly will not be achieved if we refrain from addressing the harsh reality of the matter. As editors, our role is not trying to ensure that no one feels uncomfortable or offended, nor is it our call to reshape our authors' perspectives. Therefore, our newsletter delivers pieces with authors' original voices that reflect their diverse and emic views on race and racism in higher education and society.

Doricka Menefee, who reflects on the role of allyship in her feature article, puts it aptly: True allies do not attempt to shape the discourse around race or racism but rather give Black, Indigenous, and Other People of Color a space where they can express their views and concerns, and communicate what they need others to do. As editors, we hope that our issue attests to this kind of allyship as it provides graduate students and other members of our field with a platform where they can express their subjective ideas and views about race and racism in our professional and everyday environments. We sincerely hope that the issue makes different perspectives on racial inequality visible and that it will engage the professionals reading our newsletter in thoughtful dialog and action.

In keeping with this premise, let us give you an overview of the items you will find in the Fall 2020 issue of the AAALGrads Newsletter:

- **Letters:**
  - **Letter From the GSC Co-Chairs:** The GSC Co-Chairs, Sally Ren and Laxmi Prasad Ohja, provide an overview and update of the Graduate Student Council's mission, governance structure, sub-committees, and operations.
  - **Welcome to Our 3rd Co-Editor:** We recently expanded the newsletter team and would like to welcome Mariana Lima Becker (Boston College) as our third co-editor. In this section, she introduces herself, talks about her academic background and research interests, and shares her vision for future newsletter issues.

- **Feature articles:**
  - In **"White Ignorance and the Struggle for an Anti-Racist Applied Linguistics,"** Nicholas Subtirelu (Georgetown University) discusses the implications of white ignorance and inaction for racial justice work.
  - In **"Grading Contracts as a Pedagogical Tool to Minimize Racist Language Ideologies,"** Sarah Wilhoit (University of Arizona) discussed alternative forms of assessment that actively work against racist language ideologies.
  - In **"We Need True Allies: Working Beyond Performative Allyship Towards Collective Liberation,"** Doricka Menefee (The Ohio State University) describes the experiences of BIPOC members of the academic community and reflects on the nature of true allyship and genuine support.
  - In **"Addressing Injustices in and Through Research as a Methodological Rich Point,"** Adrian Lundberg (Malmö University) lays out how "Q Methodology" can be used to fairly describe participants' viewpoints and epistemes during the research process.

- **"Creative Corner":**
  - In this section, you will find a story poem entitled **"Frames."** In it, Bri Alexander (City University of New York, Graduate Center) reflects on the phenomenon of linguistic framing and its oft-harmful effect on BIPOC communities.

- **Resource reviews:**
  - Xinxin Liu (Middlebury Institute of International Studies) provides a thorough and thoughtful review and reflection on an edited volume entitled **"Seeing Language as a Transformational Tool to Address Social Inequities: Reflection on the Book *Language and Social Justice in Practice*."**

- **"Professional Development Corner":**
  - In **"Time-Management Strategy as a Parent and Ph.D. Student,"** Yoko Mori (University of Otago) shares her approach to harmonizing academic and parental responsibilities. In her piece, she also addresses the ways in which parents can involve their children in crucial discussions about social justice issues.
  - In **"How to Write a Diversity Statement,"** Ahmad Alharthi (University of Washington) shares excellent tips for planning and crafting this increasingly relevant genre.

- **Resources:**
  - **Follow-Up to Our September GSC Webinar:** In September, the event planning sub-committee organized a webinar on navigating and thriving in graduate school. You will find the panelists' information, a summary of their talks, and the link to the recordings in this section.
  - **Follow-Up to AAAL's Summer Webinar Series:** Similar to the previous item, this section gives an overview of the different webinars on race, justice, indigenous language revitalization, and critical applied linguistics that AAAL organized this past summer.
  - **AAAL DEIA Initiatives:** This section showcases different Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access (DEIA) initiatives that AAAL has launched and pursued. You will receive background information about the respective initiatives and the contact information of the individuals in charge, should you be interested in getting involved.
  - **Crowdsourced Resources on Race, Diversity, and Equity:** This section contains a list of resources surrounding race that graduate students and GSC members have compiled. You will find hands-on materials, scholarly publications, videos and podcasts, as well as relevant readings and articles.
  - **Awards, Grants, and Funding Opportunities:** In this section, we list awards, grants, and funding opportunities targeting racially and ethnically diverse students or research projects on racial/social justice and diversity.
  - **Interviews with Awardees of AAAL's Indigenous Language Scholar Support Fund:** This section recognizes the 2020 and 2021 recipients of AAAL's ILSSF. It also features interviews with some of the awardees sharing their research and how the fund has supported them in their careers.

- **Interactive items:**
  - **Diversity Climate Survey:** We invite all graduate students to complete a survey about their diverse backgrounds and their experiences with diversity in the profession. This will help the GSC to improve our operations and to better support our graduate student members.
  - **Letter to the Editor:** From now on, readers can respond to articles published in the current issue. You can read more about this new format and find the submission form in the "Letter to the Editor" section.
  - **Call for Proposals for the Spring 2021 Issue of the AAALGrads Newsletter:** We cordially invite you to contribute to our spring issue, which will be centered on the theme of "Ambiguity, Uncertainty, and Resilience: New Paths for Applied Linguistics and Higher Education." You can learn more about the rationale, submission formats, and submission guidelines in this section.

Finally, the co-editors would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this issue, either as an author or a reviewer. We realize that this year has been exceptionally exhausting and demanding due to Covid-19. We feel fortunate and honored to have worked with so many kind and patient individuals. We value your input, diligence, and commitment to the applied linguistics community.

Sincerely,

Zhenjie Weng, *Mariana Lima Becker*, & *Stefan Vogel*, Co-Editors

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