

Terry Easton, President's Report, Fall 2017

As I embark on my term as President, I want to first acknowledge the powerful work that Michele Fazio accomplished during her tenure as President. Michele's unflagging enthusiasm, in addition to her leadership skills, set the stage for a highly productive steering committee in 2016-2017. Indeed, much of the work we have planned this year builds upon their bountiful harvest.

We gathered May 31-June 3 at Indiana University in Bloomington for this year's conference. Joseph Varga and his organizing crew assembled US and international panelists to explore the conference theme, *Class Struggle: Race, Gender, and Revolution*. Keynote speakers addressed timely topics in working class life: Sara Goldrick-Rab, "Working Class U: Possibilities for the Future of Public Higher Education"; Josh Pacewicz, "Trumpism before Trump: Rust Belt Populism during the 2008 and 2012 Elections"; and Kim Moody, "The State of the American Labor Movement."

In an effort to guide the direction of the WCSA and align member interests and energy, several special sessions were held at the conference to chart our future. Two action gatherings elicited ideas and leadership for making the WCSA flourish. In a presidential plenary past presidents Christie Launius and Tim Strangleman, along with then-current president Michele Fazio and president-elect Terry Easton, spurred dialogue on topics such as increasing and diversifying membership and participation, building an organizational infrastructure to help us meet long-term goals, and securing more connections with non-academic communities. Conference participants departed Bloomington invigorated and ready to move forward on many fronts inside and outside the academy.

Planning is in full swing for our June 6-9, 2018 conference at Stony Brook University. We are excited about our collaboration with the host, The Center for the Study of Inequality and Social Justice, directed by Christopher Sellers. We anticipate much-needed dialogue and action from the conference theme, *Class at the Border: Migration, Confinement, and (Im)mobility*. We encourage you to attend this conference. We also urge you to create panels and sessions at other conferences and request that they be labeled "Sponsored by the Working-Class Studies Association."

In an effort to support ongoing projects such as conference travel grants and the Young Scholars and Activists Fellowship, and to raise funds for potential future projects akin to these, we now require all conference participants to be members of the WCSA. The Outreach Committee has devised two additional methods of raising funds: a fundraising letter and an advertisement campaign in *The Nation* magazine. We expect these efforts to bear considerable fruit.

In 2016-17 the Communications Committee developed a new website, and Michele Fazio, with the help of Steering Committee member Colby King, continue to increase its breadth and depth, with new areas containing items such as conference programs dating back to 2001, and a mentoring exchange page. Additionally, Colby looks forward to receiving member news and announcements to post on our website, so please send him items you would like to share (c4king@bridgew.edu). Also, please send any WCSA archival material to Secretary Courtney Maloney, as this information will help build our organization's historical record (maloney.courtney@gmail.com).

In other developments, our intergenerational organization is enriching our social media presence on our website and beyond; for example, we recently turned over the reins of our Twitter account to Emma Pleasant and Sophie Rowland, graduate students at the University of Kent, and Katherine Kidd, a recently-minted University of Pittsburgh PhD recipient and former WCSA steering-committee member. We look forward to making new connections and expanding our membership from their efforts.

At the end of 2017 the third issue of *The Journal of Working-Class Studies* will be released. This is a special issue guest edited by Kishonna Gray addressing the theme, *The Poverty of Academia: Exploring the (Intersectional) Realities of Working Class Academics*. Through the exquisite persistence of Editors Sarah Attfield and Liz Guffrie, and Commissioning Editor and Copy Editor Sara Appel, in our online, open-access, peer-reviewed journal published twice a year, we have an outlet for dialogue and discussion about working-class life past, present, and future.

As you can see, there is a lot going on in our organization and we look to continue these efforts in 2018.

President Trump's myopic vision of working-class people and his polarizing maneuvers are alarming, horrific, and dangerous. In this darkness and amid the challenges working-class people face, WCSA members and allies across an array of identity categories have resisted assaults on working-class life, culture, and expression. This solidarity reflects the values of the WCSA while signaling the work that remains to be done. We forge ahead in the spirit of the words of the late, great songwriter, Tom Petty: *We Won't Back Down!*