At the University of Maryland, signs of transnational activities are everywhere. More and more administrators and professors are visiting abroad for professional assignments and conferences. In our own writing program, the director of the university’s writing center has consulted at writing centers around the world over the past fifteen years in such locations as Stellenbosch University in South Africa, Radboud University in the Netherlands, Nagoya University in Japan, and Technische Hochschule Nürnberg in Nuremberg, Germany (Ryan). In June 2015, two staff members from a South African university visited the center loaded with questions about how, where, and when it operates. In 2014, the Office of International Affairs, with the theme “UMD: A Globally Connected University,” launched the Global Classroom Initiative encouraging faculty to develop courses that bring together UM students and students at other schools around the world through the use of technology (OIA). The School of Business houses an office of global initiatives, established to prepare “internationally-minded” business students who “demonstrate global skills.”

On another front, the chief professional association of writing teachers, the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC), now supports

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a Transnational Writing Special Interest Group and blog. In fact, over the past forty years, CCCC has approved several position statements on the importance of multilingual perspectives in language education, including *Students’ Right to Their Own Language, Statement on Second Language Writing and Writers*, and the recently revised *Guideline on the National Language Policy*. The 2014 call for proposals for a special issue of *Composition Studies*, “Composition’s Global Turn: Writing Instruction in Multilingual/Translingual and Transnational Contexts,” is yet another sign of the growing interest of the profession in such matters. Universities across borders are increasingly seeking to interact with one another in a variety of ways. The two texts reviewed here, *Transnational Writing Program Administration* (TWPA) and *Writing Programs Worldwide: Profiles of Academic Writing in Many Places* (WPW), attend to the variety of ways in which the geography of a writing program affects how writing is managed and taught.

“Barriers of separation and distance” (Flag #29) is the title of the fiber art that serves as the cover image for *Transnational Writing Program Administration* (TWPA). It projects the multiple representations of transnationalism. Along with what appear to be fragments of flags from various countries, replacing the thirteen stripes, are the iconic stars of the US flag dominating the upper right corner of the image. Iranian-born artist Sara Rahbar’s title and image together reflect the frequently conflicted relationships among the locations and peoples referenced in the collection. The essays in TWPA are organized around three aspects of these internationalizing initiatives: transnational positioning, transnational language, and transnational engagement.

**Transnational Positioning**

In the first section, the chapters explore the variety of forms that “administering” a transnational writing program assume. In “Deconstructing ‘Writing Program Administration’ in an International Context,” Chris Anson and Christiane Donahue open the collection by reminding us that the ubiquitous model of writing programs—often headed by what Joseph Harris, borrowing James Sledd’s term, calls “boss compositionists,” who direct the teaching of graduate students, part-time lecturers, and a few tenure-line faculty in the United States—is not common in other countries. Further, they add that this difference is not necessarily an “absence” or a “lack.” They look closely at three very different kinds of writing programs in Saudi Arabia, Belgium, and France to demonstrate their diversity and the impact of location and culture. The authors close by challenging US WPAs to consider what responses to writing instruction in international settings can teach them about alternative methods. This challenge sets the tone for the entire collection.

“Tech Travels: Connecting Writing Classes across Continents” offers important insights into the technical and pedagogical challenges of transnational writing
instruction in the context of linked classrooms rather than linked programs. Described in this chapter is the Cross-Cultural Rhetoric (CCR) project, originally a joint initiative between Stanford University and the University of Örebro, later expanded to include universities in Australia, Russia, Egypt, and Singapore and is currently administered by the Stanford Introductory Studies in the Program of Writing and Rhetoric (PWR). The chapter is particularly valuable not only in addressing the variety of ways in which writers across borders can develop a deeper understanding of cross-cultural differences but also in describing the logistical challenges, including hardware, software, physical space, class size, time differences, and, of course, pedagogical objectives.

The next two chapters in Part I both describe the challenges of transplanting the writing programs at established US institutions—the Weill Cornell Medical College and Carnegie Mellon University, respectively—to campuses in Doha, Qatar. Both chapters define the realities of co-administering a program located in two geographically and culturally distinct sites. For example, in coordinating writing programs in Pittsburgh and Doha, Carnegie Mellon faculty administrators found that they could not ignore local contexts, even though they were told that instruction was to be “the same” (93). One of the most profound influences on the Pittsburgh campus was increased attention to multilingual writers, since at the Doha campus practically all students were multilingual writers. Faculty on the “Pittsburgh campus used the emergent Qatar campus as an opportunity to argue for change” (Wetzel and Reynolds 99). Introducing the academic culture of the writing center was a chief concern for faculty at Weill Cornell Medical College-Qatar (WCMC-Q). They found that writing centers in the Middle East are still considered a very recent innovation and that students were not initially as receptive to such concepts as peer tutoring and collaborative learning. The writing center at WCMC-Q ultimately assumed its own locally appropriate characteristics (Weber et al.).

Shanti Bruce, a transnational WPA at Nova Southeastern University (NSU) in Fort Lauderdale, Florida and at several branch campuses, narrates her experience as commuter-teacher at the Bahamas Student Educational Center campus in Nassau in chapter 5, “So Close, Yet So Far: Administering a Writing Program with a Bahamian Campus.” The program Bruce administers staffs a two-day business writing course in Nassau by flying instructors there over five intensive two-day weekends. In order to learn what the experience was like, Bruce signed herself up to teach a summer course in this setting, discovering some interesting but not surprising cultural differences with respect to “island time,” idioms, and economic priorities (125).

The closing chapter of Part I serves as a companion piece to the first chapter of Part II. They both address issues found at the intersection of US-Mexican border writing programs. Brunk-Chavez et al. describe material conditions at two border universities, the University of Texas at El Paso and New Mexico State University,
and consider the effectiveness of the writing curriculum at the two locations. The authors conclude with several critical questions related to recognizing and incorporating the multilingual features of this setting. This chapter lays the groundwork for the course of action outlined in the chapter that opens Part II, Transnational Language. “Global Writing Theory and Application on the US-Mexico Border” articulates an unsparing critique of the current approach to writing instruction at the border, itemizing several theoretical and methodological weaknesses: ethnocentrism, assumption of a US context, focus on the academic classroom context, ignoring external factors, and failing to take into account global rather than US contexts, all reiterations of the same US bias. The authors then offer their own detailed “Global Theory of Writing and Rhetoric,” and close by identifying what they refer to as “Six key cultural and rhetorical functionings on the US-Mexico Border” (187). They call for resistance to cultural entrenchment and overcompensation. Taken together, these companion essays move through the stases, first describing the problems with US writing instruction at the border, its history, its causes, its good and bad features. The second essay proposes a theory-based methodology for bringing about change.

**Transnational Languages**

The remaining three chapters in Part II move away from the specificity of particular geographies, languages, or categories of multilingual writers and speakers to wrestle instead with the broader contradiction that, while there is apparent wide and growing interest in the idea of internationalization in higher education, there is little substantive evidence that this interest is directed toward learning new languages that will facilitate meaningful international communication. The number of international students attending US universities and the number of US students studying abroad have increased, but Christine Tardy, in her chapter “Discourses of Internationalization and Diversity in US Universities and Writing Programs,” found little information on university or writing program web sites to suggest that their valuing of global initiatives would result in increased attention to language learning. What she did find in the text and images was the promotion of institutional leadership in economic globalization, alongside a somewhat paradoxical celebration of global collaboration and cooperation. The text, photographs, and other images used to promote “diversity” are meant to broaden the term to include people (international students, students of color, the disabled), ideas, and languages considered different from those of the imagined dominant white mainstream. Tardy’s project helps to make these representations visible so that they can be disrupted and replaced.

Nancy Bou Ayash unpacks the unmarked norm of the monolingual American writer and speaker in order to demonstrate how international students and US students can learn from each other. In her chapter, “(Re-)Situating Translingual Work
for Writing Program Administration in Cross-National and Cross-Language Perspectives from Lebanon and Singapore,” Bou Ayash examines how multilingualism is accommodated in Singapore and Lebanon, two countries where several languages are in circulation. In these settings, strategies for addressing the needs of linguistically heterogeneous student populations emerge. Both countries provide examples of how the curriculum is shaped by economic and political pressures based in a long history of power shifts. Bou Ayash observed in Singapore what others have called a “two-pronged response to globalization” (232), where on the one hand, the courses are taught in English but provisions are made for teaching and learning native or local languages as well. She concludes with three local specificities that should be taken into account in approaches to multilingualism: 1) rhetorical situations where language users construct meaning using more than one language, 2) official language-in-education policies, and 3) writing curriculum design that attends to the sociolinguistic context (236).

In “Globalization and Language Difference: A Mesodiscursive Approach,” Hem Paudel carves out a middle space in which to consider multilingualism. Reminding readers that the majority of English speakers are not native speakers, Paudel proposes a “theory of translingual agency that, first, seeks to go beyond the paradigms of dominant language theories that regard languages as discrete and stable entities, and, second, critiques the romanticized version of multilingual agency, where multilinguals are represented as naturally capable of shuttling across languages” (203). Taking on the current-traditionalist notion of a stable, fixed English as well as linguists like Suresh Canagarajah, who in Paudel’s view offer a “hop on and hop off” approach to language, he argues that this mesodiscursive space shifts the focus to what many call “semiodiversity,” a middle space.

Transnational Engagement

In most transnational educational exchanges between the United States and other countries, whether face-to-face or online, in the United States or abroad, student to student, student to teacher, or classroom to classroom, the US perspective tends to dominate in a unidirectional, “export model of international higher education” (Martins, “Introduction” 7). The underlying challenge extended across this collection is to flip the script and approach these exchanges from a non-US-centric perspective. In Part III, Transnational Engagement, the authors direct our attention to this tendency in the practice of outsourcing paper grading, in the ESL instructional practices at US community colleges, and in the emerging policies associated with the globally networked learning environments (GNLEs). Because US community colleges attract large numbers of international students, it is no surprise that some of the most tempting opportunities for exploitation exist. Wendy Olson explains in
“Economies of Composition Mapping Transnational Writing Programs” that as open admissions institutions with lower out-of-state fees, community colleges are often viewed as paths to economic advancement but frequently become sites for the proliferation of gatekeeping ESL and basic writing courses instead. Such courses are most often under the influence of the “unidirectional monolingualism” warned against by Horner, Lu, Royster, and Trimbur in their calls for a translingual pedagogy. In the aptly titled chapter “From 'Educating the Other' to Cross-Boundary Knowledge-Making,” Doreen Starke-Meyerring identifies many of the promising transnational collaborations made possible as a result of GNLEs especially in “alternative learning spaces” (325) that are already engaging in cross-boundary knowledge making. This chapter, describing projects that exist—and those that await—in multidirectional, transnational, knowledge-making collaboration ends the collection on a high note. Bruce Horner’s “Afterword” wisely cautions against merely reifying programmatic differences with “a mosaic or cloisonné understanding” (334). We must engage with and learn from these differences.

In Writing Programs Worldwide: Profiles of Academic Writing in Many Places, the editors have assembled nearly forty profiles, describing writing programs and other kinds of instructional configurations around the world with no more than two profiles from any single location. The locations include Argentina, Austria, Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, England, Egypt, Germany, India, New Zealand, Puerto Rico, Queensland, South Africa, Sweden, Turkey, and the United States. The editors also sought to include a variety of approaches to teaching writing, for example, writing centers, writing in the disciplines, postgraduate writing workshops, and collaborations among regional consortium of universities. In addition to the goal of creating a “transnational community of writing scholars, teachers, and program administrators” (5), the collection seeks to identify trends and patterns in writing pedagogy, and, at the same time, to highlight the unique features of each site of instruction. They point out that this growing international interest in structures for teaching writing can be attributed primarily to a parallel interest among professionals and academics to learn English and, of course, the ability of the Internet to facilitate international teleconferences, the distribution of instructional materials, and the creation of international organizations. Translation software has helped meet the challenge of communicating across languages, given that all the profiles do not focus on the teaching of writing in English, although there is also, in this global economy, growing demand for training in speaking and writing in English.

The contributors were asked to address in some manner their programs’ historical and geographic context, how important literacy is to students and teachers, where in their institutions there is support for writing initiatives, when and where faculty collaborate, and what the successes and failures are. The editors chose to list the profiles alphabetically by country rather than according to any specific thematic
or programmatic focus. Fortunately, there is a detailed index, and using it may be the best way into this rich collection. Of course, if readers are primarily interested in how writing training is structured in a particular location, they can read the writing profile on that location. However, the index will point to specific references, for example, as to how the 1999 Bologna Process, developed to improve articulation among the European universities who participate, has affected writing programs in certain countries. Other topics include student and program assessment, genre and genre theory, peer learning, process writing, and writing across the curriculum. In addition to geographical differences, each profile presents its own unique model and structure for writing instruction.

As we would expect, instruction at some schools operates according to a WAC or WID model. For example, in the City University of New York (CUNY) instruction is managed by Writing Fellows, advanced graduate students from a range of disciplines. As Lisa Ganobcsik-Williams points out in her section essay: “Reflecting on What Can Be Gained from Comparing Models of Academic Writing Provision,” in the 1980s in many British universities little formal instruction in academic writing was provided; she was advised to just “get on with it” (499). She notes, however, that things began to change in the 1990s with growing interest in writing instruction as demonstrated in the establishment of such organizations as the European Association for the Teaching of Academic Writing and the European Writing Centres Association. Further, a 2002 CCCC panel, “Transnational Goals and Practices of Composition: An International Exchange,” signaled that US writing scholars were beginning to pay more attention to writing instruction in other countries. Ganobcsik-Williams also reminds us that while most writing centers in the United States play a supporting role in writing programs, reinforcing what is being taught in classrooms, in most European programs the writing center is the writing program, combining all the roles in one site. In such settings, the writing center serves as the primary site of writing instruction, based on a model similar to those at many of the locations represented in the opening paragraph of this review.

The advantage of a collection like Writing Programs Worldwide is that we can learn from the differences. As Ganobcsik-Williams observes, the goal is not necessarily to adopt or import the practices of programs in other countries or even programs within our own country but to develop a deeper understanding of the contextual differences and similarities. There are many contexts and much to learn. These two texts are excellent tour guides.

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