

Editor's Message:
Graduate Studies and *Spanish and Portuguese Review*

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Citing a survey of graduate students, a recent *Atlantic* article concludes that “Graduate students are disproportionately likely to struggle with mental-health issues.” The statement comes as no surprise to many of us familiar with the rigors of graduate studies. The combination of coursework, research, and teaching coupled with a lack of economic stability put enormous psychological pressure on graduate students. When I think back on my own first year as a doctoral student, I am not quite sure how I dealt with the stressors. Between teaching an early morning course and studying late into the night, one could have said of me what Cervantes said of Don Quijote: “Del poco dormir y del mucho leer, se le secó el cerebro” (Part I, Ch. 1).

Graduate students are certainly overworked and underpaid. They operate in a precarious, liminal space within the university structure somewhere inbetween student and faculty. Their status as employees is, unfortunately, often tenuous, and they are not afforded the same labor rights as many departmental colleagues. All of these systematic problems contribute to the pressures of graduate students, but not many of us have the power to change or improve these conditions. Nevertheless, it is imperative that all of us within academia make the effort to improve working conditions for graduate students, proving that their labor is valued and appreciated.

Thinking back, what made that first year hard for me was not necessarily the work load, which only increased over time. The difference that first year was that I was still developing a lot of the skills I needed to be a successful graduate student, including a good sense of time management and balancing work and personal obligations. As I continued in the program, I was lucky to have a kind and supportive advisor to help me, but I also found encouragement from others both within and outside of my department. All of these people helped teach me what it means to be a teacher, a researcher, and a colleague.

It is that same sense of mentorship that serves as a guide for the mission of *Spanish and Portuguese Review*. While we are proud of the research published in these pages, this journal is, without pretense, a graduate student journal. We want authors to publish their best work in our journal, with the hope that those same author's will continue to grow and produce even better work as they progress along their career paths. By submitting and publishing their work in this journal, graduate students gain more than another line on their CV. They

learn how to read and conform to a specific style guide, how to navigate the process of peer review and revisions, the difference between a seminar paper and a journal article, and how to enter into larger conversations about the subjects they are studying.

I believe in this journal's value for graduate students and its ability to help prepare them for successful careers in academic publishing. I have been lucky to work with the journal over the past four years, but I have decided now to step down as editor. I owe a debt a gratitude to many people for the help they have given to the journal. The AATSP has funded and supported the journal thanks to former Executive Director Emily Spinelli, the current Executive Director (and *SPR* faculty advisor) Sheri Spaine Long, and the Board of Directors. Former AATSP Communications Director David Wiseman created the journal, served as its first editor, and brought me aboard as part of the editorial team. I have been reliant on fantastic Managing Editors: Electra Fielding, Laura Colaneri, Anna-Lisa Halling, Brandon Rigby, and Megan Jeanette Myers. And most importantly, the journal can only work with the support of the numerous graduate students who, over the years, have served as Associate Editors and peer reviewers as well as the authors and book reviewers who provide the content that fills out our pages.

I am very excited to know that taking over as Editor for the next volume will be Stacey Margarita Johnson. Stacey is an accomplished scholar and leader who has additionally created her own community of language teachers through a very successful podcast. Stacey has an excellent vision for where this journal can go, and I am thrilled to see where she can take the journal this year.

I hope that the pages of *SPR* the past years have been valuable to readers, but if not, I leave with the words of Machado de Assis's *Brás Cubas*: "A obra em si mesma é tudo: se te agradar, fino leitor, pago-me da tarefa; se te não agradar, pago-te com um piparote, e adeus" (1).

Works Cited

- Cervantes, Miguel de. *El ingenioso don Quijote de la Mancha*. Ed. Tom Lathrop. Rev. ed. Newark, DE: Juan de la Cuesta, 2005. Print.
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