

Your Work, Your Words, Our Future

Lynne Edwards

Your professional journey has had its twists and turns, yes?

As a *Buffy+* scholar, you are in the unique position of studying an ever-evolving collection of popular texts that some of our colleagues grapple to respect and honor. Now, consider your work against the backdrop of this relatively new world of digital academic and public spaces to critique, challenge, or condemn our work and the precarious position that the pandemic has rendered many colleges and departments. For some of us, the academic journey has gone from twisty to apocalyptic, with at least 20 colleges permanently closing due to COVID (Conte). For others, Whedon's fall from grace has added an additional front on which to fight for dwindling conference funding.

So where do you go from here?

At the beginning stages of a scholarly career, I believe we all benefit from networking and up-working with an Early

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Career Scholar Liaison; fresh eyes on our work, new hands to grasp, and more shoulders to stand on. For me, it was Rhonda Wilcox, Sharon Mazzarella, Kathleen Jamieson, and Jeanine Czubaroff, four scholars from vastly different academic institutions, pursuing vastly different scholarly agendas, but unknowingly united in their support for me and my work. Back in the day, we called them mentors, but they were (and still are!) beacons of light who saw scholarly potential in me as a grad student (Kathleen Jamieson), who saw value in my first attempt to publish an essay about *Buffy* (Rhonda Wilcox), who showed me the power of scholarly pivoting by networking (Sharon Mazzarella), and who guided me upwards through our college's mysterious tenure hoops (Jeanine Czubaroff).

Like these women before me, I am honored to work with you as you begin this trek and I look forward to watching you do the same for the new scholars who come behind you.

Work Cited

Conte, Chris. "Colleges Nationwide Are Permanently Closing Because of the Pandemic." *The Denver Channel*, 13 April 2021.
<https://www.thedenverchannel.com/news/education/back-to-school/colleges-nationwide-are-permanently-closing-because-of-the-pandemic>.