

TCSJ

**TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION
& SOCIAL JUSTICE**

Dedication

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Shortly after this special issue had gone to press, we lost our friend, collaborator, and co-editor, Ms. Kymberly Morquecho.

While it is tempting to highlight her unrealized future potential, it is important to recognize her remarkable early career accomplishments. As a scholar and fierce advocate for equity and justice, Kym was full of conviction. While conducting on-site research for her M.A. thesis at a political rally, Kym was called out by one of the speakers, a major national politician, who directed the crowd to ridicule her. Kym did not waver; she kept observing and taking notes, and then after the rally, she wrote about her experience. Entering into contentious public spaces to observe and learn how political ideas and identities interacted and how ideologies were influenced and reproduced through demagoguery was a methodology of her own design. This is Kym as we will remember her, bold and perspicacious.

Kym's contributions to our collaborative special issue were vital. She joined us as one of the four presenters at the initial Rhetoric Society of America panel that inspired this special issue, and she took an active role in every step of the publishing process, from drafting the CFP to providing feedback to authors and copy editing. In addition to her generous work ethic, she embraced this project with curiosity for her future professional development, as this was intended to be the first of her many scholarly contributions addressing the social justice implications of technical communication and rhetoric.

Like many educators and scholars in our field, Kym was passionate about teaching writing as an adjunct after finishing her master's degree and while applying to doctoral programs. She was also a longtime English teacher at a local public high school. After earning acceptance to all five Ph.D. programs where she applied, she was set to begin her doctoral studies at the University of Massachusetts Amherst in Fall 2025, and they have provided additional commentary below.

Working so closely with Kym over the last year reaffirmed the value of scholarly mentorship not only for the mentee, but also for us as mentors, particularly as we were asked to reflect upon and articulate the unspoken processes and considerations of collaboration within academic

publishing. Collaborating with Kym on this project also reminded us of the intangible value of creating space for diverse lived and embodied perspectives with unique insights into matters of equity, transparency, and social justice in the field. One impactful lesson she demonstrated was how important it is to remain firm in one's convictions while encountering the threats, demonization, and potential for violence that so many professional academics invested in matters of social justice face in this contentious contemporary political climate. In truth, while we were attempting to mentor and teach Kym, she was also always mentoring and teaching us. So it is with sadness, but also deep admiration, that we dedicate this special issue as tribute to our colleague and friend. Rest in power, Kym, and rest in peace.

Sarah, Monty, and R.J.

Statement from the University of Massachusetts Amherst

Due, in part, to her innovative research methods, Kym was one of the top choices for admission to UMass' Composition and Rhetoric Ph.D. program. From UMass, Kym was nominated and received a very competitive university-wide fellowship called the "REAL Fellowship." This fellowship aims to recruit and retain outstanding graduate students, and the financial support was provided so Kym could focus on her research over the summer. The nomination letter described how in Kym's work (and in her words) she sought to "research the effects of rhetoric and the harms it brings when weaponized, especially against marginalized communities like trans folks and people of color." The letter also mentioned that her research would have the effect of shifting the field to reflect our current political and cultural moment, rethinking methods of argumentation and persuasion. Kym's letter of recommendation writers characterized her as a "highly motivated and organized critical thinker," a "diligent researcher," and "an exceptional student, thoughtful colleague, and an exemplary professional." Although the UMass Composition and Rhetoric community only knew her a brief time, her brilliance and wit had already made a lasting impression, and the community mourns her loss.

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