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Editor's Prologue: Welcome to the 9th Volume

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EDITOR'S PROLOGUE WELCOME TO THE 9TH VOLUME

What an academic year this has been! The Coronavirus, officially **COVID-19**, has disrupted the academic calendar more than anybody could have imagined. As I'm writing this prologue, nearly all schools in the USA and many parts of Europe and Asia have closed or are about to close face-to-face instruction. The closures affect or will affect elementary schools, secondary schools, and institutions of higher education. Government and education leaders everywhere are doing their best to salvage what remains of spring semester 2020. Many schools, including St. Cloud State University (SCSU), are moving courses online and/or are contemplating alternative modes of instruction. The effects of the pandemic have affected every aspect of life, not only academics. However, the Linguistic Portfolios (*LP*) has been impacted only mildly because most of the articles were reviewed and accepted for publication before the pandemic struck. The amount of downloads has remained high. As of 3/23/2020, *LP* has been downloaded **90,624** times! *LP* continues to make its impact and its presence felt on every continent!

Readers will find the diversity of articles in Volume 9 to be academically stimulating. The topics covered include a comprehensive review of the acoustic correlate of intensity, the acquisition and processing of compound words, the evaluation of English proficiency in Japan and Saudi Arabia, the description of adjectival errors made by Spanish learners of English in their written essays, a sociophonetic comparison between Northern Minnesota English and Winnipeg Canadian English, and the acoustic correlates of lexical stress in Japanese-accented English. Two papers in particular investigate the application of acoustic phonetics to voice-enabled smart devices. The authors demonstrate that users of Alexa, Siri, Google Voice, etc. do not need to change their speech style when using them. There is no need to overarticulate because these smart devices are really smart. They "hear" everything that is said to them at a normal speech rate. The other paper expands on the Arpabet transcription system so that indigenous languages in Africa and elsewhere can one day be used in smart devices.

I would like to thank the authors who contributed to this volume. I would also like to express my deepest appreciation to **Mahdi Duris, Firas Ismael, Michel Lopez-Backstrom, Barbara Kennedy, and Phillip Klopfenstein** for taking time out of their busy schedules to review and proofread papers for this volume. I'm sad to say goodbye to my dear colleague **Rachel Wexelbaum** who has served as the administrator of *LP* for the Repository. This is the last volume of *LP* that she will publish. She will be sorely missed. Farewell, my friend!

LP is open to all students from Minnesota and neighboring states whose papers are innovative and of extremely high academic quality. The only requirement is that papers be recommended by the faculty member who taught the course or who supervised the research project. His/her name appears at the end of the paper as the recommender. Co-publication with students is highly recommended because it is an integral part of the academic mentoring process. The deadline for submission is always **December 31st** of each year. *We are now accepting submissions for Volume 10, 2021. LP* adheres to the guidelines of the National Academy of Sciences, as explained in the prologue of Volume 7, 2018.¹

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¹ National Academy of Sciences. 2018. *Fostering Integrity in Research*. National Academic Press. Online at: www.nap.edu/21896.