

Subject: Michael Longinow: Finding Community and Purpose in SPIG
Date: Wednesday, May 14, 2025 at 11:58:22 AM Central Daylight Time
From: Ecaterina Stepaniuc
To: spig



[Newsletter](#) [Journals](#) [Awards](#)

THIS 30TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION HIGHLIGHTS AN OUTSTANDING SPIG MEMBER

MICHAEL LONGINOW

Finding Community and Purpose in SPIG

MAY 2025

By Tamara J. Welter, PhD, Baylor University



Michael Longinow

Reflections on Teaching and
Shared Experiences

Michael Longinow joined AEJMC in the mid 90s as he moved from professional work as a reporter into the world of academia. He quickly found community in RMIG and SPIG. He attended board meetings and asked to get involved. “Those two groups were kind of my way of meeting people,” said Longinow. “[AEJMC] is just so huge that unless you get involved with a group, you can kind of feel lost; at least that’s how I felt.”

TJMC Current Issue

LEARN MORE ABOUT SPIG

[SEE THIS](#)

At that time Longinow was teaching at Asbury, a smaller private institution with an emphasis on teaching. He later moved to Biola University, which was also a smaller teaching institution. In total, he will have been teaching 36 years this summer.

Coming from a faith-based university to AEJMC, Longinow appreciates conversations with others at like institutions as well as people of faith working at other schools. He found that people will sometimes pull him aside after sessions and ask him about his experience teaching at a place where he can pray with students or talk about spiritual things.

“To me, that's part of why I'm involved in AEJMC... to be amongst my peers and just live out my faith,” he said.

Longinow's teaching philosophy is to take ideas that students haven't thought about much and make them so interesting that students desire to learn about them, “and keep talking about them,” he said. Longinow uses creative approaches to get students involved and interested. “To me, experiential learning is so much more meaningful to students than just memorizing theory and writing papers and maybe giving... presentation(s) or speeches,” he said.



Photo courtesy of Michael Longinow

Even with the emphasis on teaching, Longinow highlighted the pressure to publish and to do scholarly research, “which is really hard to do when you're in a small school.” What he found within SPIG were people who had similar concerns, that the conversations around budget, curriculum, and pedagogy were from the same perspectives. “We just had a lot more in common,” he explained, than AEJMC members from larger universities. “There was a kind of community of shared experience that I

really needed.” He said that often smaller programs are taking “duct tape and barbed wire” and turning it into a means of teaching. “It’s just genius!” SPIG members can learn from each other, said Longinow, figuring out ways to cope with low budget, small staff and resources.

“We’re all teachers, but SPIG really takes teaching seriously.”

This was a big draw for Longinow to the SPIG community; he found people caring about pedagogy in ways that people from other larger programs weren’t. “Yes, scholars teach,” said Longinow, “but their main focus really is research.” He explained that at a smaller school where faculty teach a 4/4 load as well as overloads, faculty have to figure things out differently. The shared understanding he found in SPIG has been encouraging.

During his years of service to SPIG, Longinow has carried various roles (from PF&R to Teaching chair), but dreaming and brainstorming ideas for the interest group has been one of his most enjoyable experiences. He was part of launching the TJMC Journal with Vivian Martin and Brian Steffan (he noted the involvement of others as well). “The journal was kind of our statement to the entire AEJMC organization that we care about teaching. And, we study it,” he said.

“Pedagogy itself is a scholarly area of research. And, you just don’t hear about that as much in bigger programs... There are all kinds of theory behind why pedagogy works!”



Photo courtesy of Michael Longinow

Longinow is the current editor of the journal for the division. He explained that he loves the journal and the role it plays. He has truly appreciated seeing the various kinds of research that have come into the journal. “It is just really encouraging,” he said.

Involvement with the conference is also a highlight of his involvement with SPIG, he said, “serving on panels with people where we get to share ideas,” emphasizing the interaction with fellow presenters before the panels, during the panels and with the audience throughout the sessions. “It becomes kind of this organic moment of shared meaning,” he said. “It isn’t the same as a research panel, but you’re bringing research to it.” The combination of research and experience presented on panels with people coming from small programs but with different perspectives is something Longinow has found valuable over the years.

But, some of the most important experiences, he said, are found beyond the sessions. His advice for new members is to find other members and get coffee with them. Longinow explained that when he joined AEJMC he just went to sessions and didn’t form community. He said he would talk to people in sessions but then when he left a room, everyone was gone. He said he learned over the years that people are very approachable and that conversations with people can lead to ideas that impact his

teaching and research. “Over the years I've found those chance encounters with people can just make my school year or for years afterwards.”

Design by Kate Stepaniuc



AEJMC
P.O. Box 21647
Columbia, SC 29221



MEMBERSHIP

[Join/Renew](#)

[Learn More](#)



Designed with Beefree