

## Beyond Covid

We're back! The fourth issue of *Beyond*

The joke around the office when we all returned after eighteen months of close-down due to the Covid pandemic was "So, how was your long weekend?". Because yes, that's what it felt like – booting up the computer, taking our places at our desks, and preparing for the arrival of our beloved students just like we always have. Nothing seemed to have changed, and yet, everything has changed.

We pick ourselves up, brush off the dust, and disinfect our wounds along with everything else we must now disinfect. We forget how much we loathed the crowded streets and now cheer at the sight of tourists and other visitors again. We have taken a beating but we are once again on our feet, perhaps limping, but ready to lead the way, ready to go beyond.

We especially thrive at seeing the latest generation of study abroad students arrive. There is something different about them as well. The disappointed faces of those we had to rush home back in March 2020 have been replaced with glimmers of hope, bravery, and adventure. These students are the new pioneers – the first to adventure out of their lockdowns, homes, and comfort zones. They are eager to move on and their enthusiasm gives us all new drive.

The drive to go beyond was evident during these eighteen months as well. Professors and administrators quickly mastered digital media as we continued our classes, research, and conferences online. In anticipation of the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead of us, we never really stopped at *Beyond* either. *Beyond n. 3* was published in late-July 2020, albeit online only, and was dedicated to the learning experience abroad and the teacher-student role.

And now, from behind the masks and sanitized keyboards, we are proud to bring you our fourth edition – also online for now, but soon we hope to be able to print copies of both n. 3 and this current one.

We close this chapter and open a new one by starting to accept contributions to Beyond n. 5!

Nina Peci, *co-editor 'Beyond',  
Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Officer, ISI Florence*