

Letter From the Editorial Board

Dear Reader,

It gives us great pleasure to welcome you to the inaugural issue of the Duluth Journal of Advanced Writing (DJAW), an academic journal containing articles written by undergraduates studying Advanced Writing at the University of Minnesota Duluth. Each of the essays was written for a College of Liberal Arts Advanced Writing class, or a class that fulfilled the Advanced Writing requirement. At UMD, Advanced Writing courses are designed to help students become more knowledgeable about the academic and professional writing processes, as well as different documentation styles and the process of peer-reviewing. This journal, in part, is meant to reflect that knowledge.

Our team, that is composed of undergraduate students in the Electronic Publications course, has solicited contributors from students of all disciplines, asking for texts they have written in Advanced Writing or classes that satisfy Advanced Writing (e.g., History, English). From the submissions, we have curated a collection of superior work that gives a testament to the aptitude of the University of Minnesota Duluth students. Unfortunately, we were unable to accept all of the submissions, and therefore give great thanks and appreciation to all of the students who took the time to go through the submission process. We also express our gratitude to the students and faculty who helped us in the peer-review process. Without you, this journal would not be published. We hope that you find the content of our first issue to be both insightful and thought-provoking.

While creating DJAW the editorial team has been presented the task of moving all interactions online due to the current state of the COVID-19 pandemic. To continue the creation of this journal during quarantine, we decided changes needed to be made. Since we could no longer meet as a group, we continued our operations online. We continued to work together as a class, using Zoom for meetings. During these meetings, we were able to make executive decisions, present designs to each other, and continue the peer-review process. Though the world was changing around us, we were able to carry on through these difficult times and create a journal for not just the students of UMD, but the general public, as well.

DJAW is openly available to view and read, which is known as Open Access (OA). OA is a collection of online scholarly publications made available to all readers free of charge. The information presented in the journals is easily accessible to anyone who may want to read it because OA removes the barrier for those who may not be able to access other journals due to licensing. Because Open Access uses creative commons licensing the student editors of DJAW were able to create a journal for students to submit their work and gain recognition for it as well. Due to the fact that this is the inaugural issue of DJAW, we had a lot to learn regarding the creation process. Developing this journal from start to finish came with the challenge of learning about scholarly journals, and how to explain to fellow students what scholarly journals are and

how they may benefit them. As the project went on, the COVID-19 pandemic came along and created more of a challenge. We, the editorial team, had to make adjustments to our operations and build an environment completely online to continue the production of the first issue.

When initially creating this journal, we put out a call for papers that allowed us to get submissions from students across campus. We reached out to professors that were either currently teaching an Advanced Writing class or had taught one in a previous semester and asked if they could contact students about submitting to the journal. Additionally, we created physical and digital posters that were displayed across the campus and reached out to people through social media.

For the peer-review process, we also had to contact potential reviewers—including current students, faculty, and friends of UMD who are professionals in various relevant fields. It was important to us that we got multiple perspectives for each submission and had essays that were precise and factually accurate.

Another important part of the creation process was the aesthetic of the journal—both the design of the website and the published essays. Many of us did not have experience with graphic design and had to learn how to use Adobe InDesign. This step in making the journal did not occur until after classes went completely online, due to COVID-19, so the learning process was made a bit more difficult.

The road to creating the Duluth Journal of Advanced Writing's inaugural issue has been unconventional, and at times trying, but ultimately the process has been enriching and fulfilling. It has been an extensive learning experience for all of us, and our hope is that this journal contributes significantly to the larger academic world and the specific fields each article discusses.

Signed,
The Editorial Team

