Dear Reader,

Welcome to the Minnesota Undergraduate Research & Academic Journal (MURAJ), an open-access publication celebrating the breadth of undergraduate research being performed at the University of Minnesota- Twin Cities. As a student-run interdisciplinary journal, we hope to bring attention to the strength of the UMN research community while empowering undergraduates to share their diverse research perspectives.

We believe strongly in the free exchange of knowledge and aim to overcome the obstacles of accessibility that may be encountered by researchers and readers alike. To enable publishing, we accept submissions of all media types from all disciplines while also granting published authors a non-exclusive copyright. Our publishing process utilizes a double-blind system in order to maintain author integrity and to prevent unintentional publication bias. To support reader accessibility, we provide an open-access platform free of membership fees, courtesy of the UMN Libraries. We hope that by providing this toll-free highway of access, MURAJ will serve as an ethical and impactful medium by which undergraduates may share their research.

We would like to extend a message of gratitude to all individuals who made this issue possible. First and foremost, we would like to acknowledge the dedication of our reviewers, who spent countless hours peer-reviewing submitted papers to uphold the quality of this journal. Second, we would like to thank our advisor, Victoria Munro, for providing guidance throughout the publication process. Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to the Undergraduate Research Advisory Board and the UMN Libraries for their continued support in growing MURAJ as a journal.

If you have any questions about our work or if you would like to become involved with MURAJ as a reviewer or author, please e-mail muraj@umn.edu. Thank you for your interest in MURAJ. We hope you enjoy our publication.

Sincerely,
Miranda Van Pilsum-Johnson
2018-2019 Editor in Chief, on behalf of the MURAJ Editorial Board