

Dear Reader,

Over the past year, we have witnessed unprecedented times, marked by the ongoing crisis in public health due to the spread of the COVID-19 virus and the rise of a civil rights movement throughout Minneapolis and Brooklyn center. In the midst of the chaos and pain experienced by our community, our team at the Minnesota Undergraduate Research & Academic Journal (MURAJ) has put forth the largest number of articles to ever be published by our journal. For the first time, MURAJ is publishing our annual issue in a series of sections dedicated to each of our major focus areas. I am incredibly proud and grateful to present the work of our amazing undergraduates in the Business, Law, and Politics collection as the first of the series to be released this spring.

The spectacular growth that MURAJ has achieved this year is because of the amazing work of our undergraduate students who act as our authors, reviewers, editorial board members, and leaders in the research community on campus. Our reviewers spent countless hours pouring over the substantial number of submissions with trained eyes to provide guidance and prudent judgement in order to ensure the journal is publishing the highest possible quality of articles. As an interdisciplinary journal, our reviewers and authors come from a variety of fields, but they share the same dedication and commitment to enriching the academic community and advancing our understanding of the world.

In the mission of shedding light on the work of our undergraduates and expanding our connection to the wider community, we are also excited to announce that MURAJ has founded a new program dedicated to social justice and research-based projects. In January, we awarded our first MURAJ: In Action grant to award a student with the funding needed to take the results of their previous research and put them into action, using their findings to improve the lives of Minnesotans and our local environment. The program is open to all disciplines as long as the purpose of the proposed project is seeking to address injustices facing our communities in at least one of the realms of racial, social, economic, and environmental justice. In the face of the immense work to be done and the ending of my term as Outreach Director, I strongly advocate for the next editorial board to continue and expand the MURAJ: In Action program, making it a focal point of MURAJ's future.

While I am graduating and leaving my position at the journal, I will continue to follow MURAJ as it grows and prospers with the next generation of reviewers, authors, and editors. The potential of MURAJ is boundless, limited only by the perseverance, creativity, and enthusiasm of the students who wish to become a part of its journey to bring undergraduate work into the wider community. As for now, I am excited to have the opportunity to present the astounding articles in the Business, Law, and Politics sections and to once again express my gratitude to everyone who made this year's issue possible.

Sincerely,

Alexa Carlson  
Outreach Director & Section Editor