

Dear Reader,

We are honored to share with you Volume 5, Issue 4 of the Minnesota Undergraduate Research and Academic Journal. We hope that you find the work of this year's authors to be both insightful and a meaningful culmination of their research as undergraduate students. All twenty-six manuscripts uniquely contribute to our annual publication as our interdisciplinary manuscripts range from a discussion of human diseases to racial privilege to the optimization of carrot growth to additional specialized topics. Our authors represent a wide breadth of undergraduate disciplines, and we are excited to further showcase academic diversity through this year's annual publication.

Our authors have demonstrated an elevated drive in their undergraduate career to deepen the knowledge in their field by pursuing publication of their work in addition to pursuing their undergraduate degree requirements. We commend their efforts as they are a testament to the scholars of the future and how they will continue to grapple with challenging research in an ever-changing world. It is our privilege as editors of this undergraduate research and academic journal to continue to be the platform to document and celebrate the work of our peers.

As in the past, our reviewer team, composed of all undergraduate students who are stellar students within their chosen disciplines, provided careful and critical feedback to our authors regarding the content of their papers and elevated the rigor of our publication process this year. Our reviewer team ensured that our annual publication embodies our three pillars of publication: academic rigor, professionalism, and intellectual merit. We applaud our reviewer team for their ability to engage in the work of their peers and provide our authors with encouragement and suggestions for improvement.

This year we are excited to share student works within our new publication category MURAJ: In Creation which was championed by Drew Brinker, this year's Grant and Finance Editor on the Editorial Board. The new branch of the journal was created to recognize artistic achievements and projects by undergraduate students in the humanities and fine arts as we work to continue to stretch the breadth of the journal and provide opportunities to underrepresented academic disciplines. We hope that this effort will provide an example for other undergraduate journals and encourage them to also publish work outside the traditional sciences.

Though our time is coming to a close as editors of MURAJ, we are thrilled for the future of the journal and are confident that MURAJ will continue to be a strong avenue for undergraduate students to showcase their research. As we look to the future, we hope that future editorial boards will continue to value the three main branches of the journal – MURAJ: In Focus, MURAJ: In Action, and MURAJ: In Creation – as well as continue to grapple with how the journal can be more inclusive to the diverse disciplines of the multitude of undergraduate students.

Sincerely,

Allison L. Graper
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