

Letter from the Editor

Ava Sechrist

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Dear Reader,

I am proud to present Volume 24, Issue 1, of the Oregon Undergraduate Research Journal (OURJ)! As our first issue of 2026, and since our last publication in Spring 2025, this journal is much anticipated. What follows is incredible scholarship received throughout 2025, with more to come in future issues.

OURJ has experienced a season of change. Our brilliant Editor-in-Chief, Kyla Schmitt, graduated from the University of Oregon with a BS in Environmental Science and a BA in Humanities, among numerous other accomplishments. Many of our editors also graduated or will graduate in the Spring. Though we will miss our past team, I am excited to announce that we have gained an amazing new group of editors. These first and second-year students will carry OURJ forward for future generations. With this new team, OURJ is officially full steam ahead into 2026.

It is my honor to step in as Editor-in-Chief this academic year. As an editor at OURJ for the past two years, I have been consistently impressed by the outstanding research conducted by my peers. It has been a joy to work with fellow students on their scholarship. One of the wonderful aspects of OURJ is that it unites research across fields. I began my research journey in the psychology department, engaged by questions about human nature. The dedicated professors of the psychology department introduced me to working in a psychology research lab. Like many liberal arts students, my interests led me in new directions. As a senior, my honors thesis is within the English department. Varying interests routinely inform and shape one another, grounded in common academic research practices. Interdisciplinary education and collaboration across disciplines are imperative for advancing a nuanced understanding of the world.

The research in this issue covers a broad range of topics, including psychology, environmental science, and political science. The following papers are prime examples of Oregon undergraduates matching their expertise with their passion. It bears repeating that now more than ever, we must hold close our passion for seeking knowledge and truth. The commitment and enthusiasm of Oregon's students embody the spirit of research that will energize current academic work and propel future generations.

I know you will enjoy the thoughtful research in this publication. I am beyond excited for 2026 as we have more insightful research on the way.

Until next time,
Ava Sechrist, Editor-in-Chief