

Letter from the Editor

Ava Sechrist

Dear Reader,

I am proud to welcome you to OURJ's Spring 2026 issue!

This academic year, we have received an unprecedented volume of outstanding research, and it has been a joy to witness the work being conducted by Oregon undergraduates. At a time when conveying the value of research can feel like an uphill battle, Oregon undergraduates continue to produce thoughtful, nuanced, and cutting-edge investigations. Their dedication is inspiring and encouraging.

OURJ began as a journal dedicated solely to the University of Oregon. In keeping with our mission to amplify undergraduate research, we have begun expanding to include work from institutions across the state, such as Oregon State University, Portland State University, and Lewis and Clark College. This is an exciting development as we expand the reach and community of our journal.

As a senior a few days away from graduation, I find myself overwhelmed with gratitude for my four years at UO. To my fellow graduates: congratulations! This university has given me lifelong friendships and expanded my academic horizons in ways I could not have anticipated. It is the students at UO who made all of this possible. I have been honored to participate in and learn from the research happening at UO.

The research in this issue spans the full spectrum of disciplines. What unites these papers is a shared commitment to advancing their fields. It is love of inquiry that drives this kind of progress. These students are bringing fresh perspectives and curiosity, and together their work illustrates the importance of every field being pursued here at UO and across Oregon. Vastly different in content, these papers are united by the goal of progress, a testament to the strength of a liberal arts and research university. I am glad to be a part of the network of UO students and alumni spread across the country and the world; a community that will continue to support and champion all of its members.

I also want to take a moment to thank our editorial team, especially our graduating team members, Charlotte Olds and Annika Segesta. I have had the privilege of working with Charlotte and Annika for the last three years, and I am beyond grateful for the dedication they have brought to this journal. Be sure to take a look at Annika's conversation with OURJ's founder in our Journal Editorial. I look forward to watching this journal continue to publish exceptional undergraduate work.

Wishing everyone a summer full of sunshine, and sending my very best to the graduating class. As always, SCO Ducks!

Ava Sechrist, Editor-in-Chief