



Guest Editorial—“The Long Road to Knowledge”

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As the director of the Oregon Humanities Center (OHC), I am truly fortunate to have a regular front row seat on the University of Oregon’s leading-edge humanities research. UO’s only research institute devoted exclusively to the humanities, OHC sponsors competitive research fellowship programs that support the most exciting new humanities research produced by faculty, graduate students, and undergraduates. And because our fellows are required to present their work publicly, I get to spend at least an hour each week learning about the fascinating discoveries our humanities scholars are making and the ground breaking new knowledge they are creating. Whether listening to professor of music Drew Nobile analyzing “form as harmony” in rock music, history graduate student Hillary Maxson examining women’s consumerism and the Japanese Kitchen in the mid twentieth century, or undergraduate philosophy major Sarah Carey investigating depictions of the Algerian War in contemporary French cinema, I am continuously awed by the variety, interest, and innovation of UO humanities research.

These experiences have taught me a number of essential lessons about the research being conducted every day at UO, in every school, department, laboratory, studio, and library carrel. I’ve gotten a glimpse at the vast range, diversity, and value of the research topics and projects our students and faculty are pursuing. I’ve been convinced that there is a unique, exciting, and worthwhile research problem waiting to be identified and explored by every member of our community, no matter one’s interests or inclinations. I’ve learned UO offers a wealth of professors, mentors, and peers ready and willing to help you discover and conduct your research wherever it takes you. I’ve realized that even the most specialized, seemingly obscure research questions yield significant results, results often unclear until the research is well advanced. One of the most fascinating—and important—aspects of research, indeed, is that it is done best when pursued for its own sake, the problems studied on their own terms, the larger benefits often unclear but always waiting to be discovered. But what has struck and excited me most as I’ve listened to dozens of UO researchers report on their experiences and findings is how inspiring and inspired their research has made them. There is a contagious energy and excitement animating these researchers, whether undergraduates, graduate students, or faculty: the energy and excitement of discovery, creativity, and accomplishment.

In the following pages of OURJ, you can experience first-hand that energy and excitement as these talented undergraduate researchers share their work. I think you will agree with me that their results are inspired and inspiring. I hope their research motivates you to pursue your own research questions and projects, whatever your interests and talents. There’s important work to be done!

* The OHC collaborates with the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program (UROP), the Vice President for Research and Innovation (VPRI), and the Division of Undergraduate Studies to sponsor the Humanities Undergraduate Research Fellowship (HURF) program. Learn more about HURF at <https://uop.uoregon.edu/hurf/>; learn more about the many other research programs and resources for undergraduates offered at UO through UROP at: <https://uop.uoregon.edu/>.