



Letter from the Editor

Starla Chambrose, Biology and History*

Dear readers,

When I try hard enough to remember my elementary school days, I can picture myself sitting next to my dad at the dining room table, legs swinging because my feet couldn't reach the floor. While he graded his sophomore English students' essays, I would read the papers he had just corrected, trying to catch some mistake that he had missed; I guess I've always fancied myself an editor. So when I learned about the *Oregon Undergraduate Research Journal* (OURJ) in the fall of my freshman year, I was thrilled at the prospect of joining the editorial board. I had always loved the challenge of helping people improve their writing, so OURJ seemed like a natural fit. But now, two years and five editions later, I've realized that the *editing* part isn't my favorite aspect of working on the journal. Rather, I've discovered that the greatest reward that comes from serving as an editor, and now as Editor-in-Chief, is the ability to interact directly with fellow undergraduate students from a variety of disciplines who are conducting truly fascinating research. In return for this opportunity to engage with such inspiring and impressive young scholars, our journal provides these budding researchers the chance to publicize their work.

OURJ, however, is just one of the many platforms on campus that seek to broadcast undergraduates' research achievements. I would be remiss to neglect mentioning the Undergraduate Research Symposium (URS), which celebrates its tenth anniversary in May of this year. This edition of the journal is fortunate enough to feature a guest editorial from one of the co-chairs of the symposium, Kevin Hatfield, Assistant Vice Provost for Undergraduate Research. Additionally, all four of the authors featured in this issue presented their work at the URS last year. Literature, political science, psychology, cultural anthropology—the types of papers featured in this issue represent merely a sliver of the breadth of research both OURJ and the URS are committed showcasing.

If the goal of this journal is to highlight the best of the university's undergraduate research, it achieves this aim only because of the editorial board working diligently behind the scenes. Josh, Emma, Kayla, Shuxi, and David—thank you for your endless support and hard work. I would also like to extend my gratitude to Barbara Jenkins, whose constant advice and guidance make publication possible year after year. And finally, sincere thanks to the readers. There's little point to a publication without an audience to read it.

On behalf of the editorial board, please enjoy the 16th edition of the *Oregon Undergraduate Research Journal*.

*Starla Chambrose is a junior in the Clark Honors College majoring in biology and history. In addition to serving on the OURJ editorial board, she volunteers through the university's Rotaract club, serves as a crisis counselor, works as a tutor and lab assistant for Biology 214, and conducts research in the Cresko Laboratory. In her free time, Starla enjoys watching football, cooking, and playing the piano. Please direct correspondence to ourj@uoregon.edu.