



Letter from the Editor

Starla Chambrose*, Biology and History

Dear Readers,

As for many students this past year, the COVID-19 pandemic completely derailed my research plans. I had been working on my thesis in a lab in the Institute of Ecology and Evolution since the winter of my sophomore year. By the spring of 2020, the end of my junior year, I felt like my project was close to completion. Just a more months of benchwork, I thought, and I would have finished with all my data collection. But then the pandemic hit, and I was prevented from entering the lab for the foreseeable future. I brainstormed with my thesis advisor, but by mid-summer we had reached a sad conclusion; even if the lab were open by the end of the summer, there was no possible way for me to finish my project. I had to scrap my entire thesis. Fortunately, it all worked out in the end. In early June, I finished my thesis—not in biology, but in history instead.

My research story is certainly not unique. Over the past year, students across the university were forced to adapt to the new situation—and adapt they did. The following manuscripts in this edition of *OURJ* are proof of that. When their access to sources was limited, our authors turned to focus on close-reading analysis. When they might have previously conducted research in a lab, they took the opportunity to conduct literature reviews and evaluate prospective areas for future study. Although their research projects may not have panned out in the way that they had originally planned, I am incredibly impressed by and proud of what they were able to accomplish; I hope you, dear reader, are, too.

As much as I am grateful to the authors for submitting their work to *OURJ*, I am equally thankful for the editorial board members who worked tirelessly to ensure that this journal would continue to publish student work even during a pandemic year. To my fellow seniors, Shuxi and Noa, thank you, and best of luck with your future plans. While I am sad to leave *OURJ* after four years and four issues as editor in chief, I am confident that I'm leaving the journal in good hands. Taylor, I know you will be an outstanding editor in chief, especially with Jay, Micah, and Anna by your side. Finally, I owe the biggest thank you to Barbara Jenkins, who retired this spring after helping behind the scenes since the journal's inception in 2010. For all that you have done over the past eleven years, thank you, thank you, thank you.

On behalf of the editorial board, please enjoy this 19th issue of the *Oregon Undergraduate Research Journal*.

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