
2011

OUR Director's Note

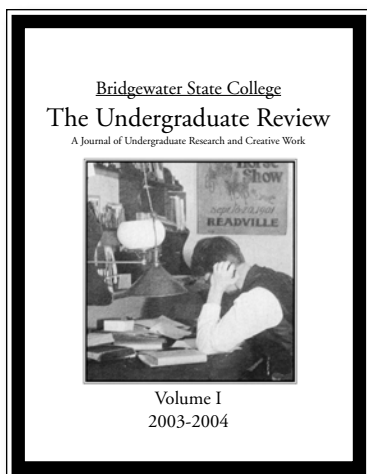
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Inaugural Volume

This journal can tell you a lot.

S herry Blackmon's article on the threat posed by Triclosan to municipal drinking water, for instance, guarantees that you won't ever look at antibacterial household products the same way again. Andrew Linde's graphic art will likely invoke deeper appreciation of the superbly functional design of items of "ordinary" use. (Think salt shakers.) And Sarah Fuller's examination of otherwise-forgotten primary historical documents may well inspire your curiosity about the reasons some powerful women of the early 20th century fought *against* the right to vote.

Within these and all of the fascinating research articles selected for inclusion in *The Undergraduate Review* is also a story of tremendous achievement about which Bridgewater State University can be very proud. It is a story that impelled me to move with my family halfway across the country to take on this job of directing the undergraduate research program at BSU. And it's a story that engages the hardest-working faculty I've ever seen in the challenging and exhilarating endeavor of mentoring student researchers.

You see, this journal tells a story about an undergraduate research program that is like no other: a program that offers access to and support for research opportunities to a true diversity of students. Our researchers are not required to be honors students, though we certainly have many of those. And they do not typically have a family legacy of higher education to set them up for scholarly achievement. What they have instead of certain advantages before they arrive at BSU, are incredible supports once they get here: research and presentation opportunities (at appropriate levels of rigor) from their first semester of coursework; faculty mentors who engage their interest in inquiry and provide supportive initiation into the expectations of scholarly work; and the financial backing of Adrian Tinsley Program (ATP) grants to make it possible to purchase the lab supplies and books needed for research, to travel to research sites and conferences, and to gain a measure of relief from the demands of full-time work in order to secure the necessary time to conduct research.

That degree of access and support to research opportunities is remarkable in and of itself. The fact that the program maintains excellence in student scholarship makes undergraduate research at BSU all the more extraordinary. A student who hopes to become one of the few Cape Verdeans ever to achieve a doctorate in Physics will get his research start in this program. Some of our many students who are the first in their families to attend college will conduct research in China this summer with ATP funding. With the development of strong research skills, dedicated mentoring, and financial support, BSU students who might never have imagined themselves as proficient scholars are becoming bona fide researchers, engaged in some of the most compelling questions and modes of inquiry in their fields.

That exceptional commitment to both access and excellence is the story this journal tells. The articles have been written by students new to college as well as seniors writing honors theses; first-generation college students and grandchildren of teachers; immigrants to this country along with those whose entire extended families live in southeastern Massachusetts—all of whom have taken on the demanding and exacting work of scholarly research, and whose results are proudly shared with you.

JENNY OLIN SHANAHAN, PH.D.
Director of Undergraduate Research