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From the Editor, Special Issue: The United States, Canada, Quebec and the Problem of the Border

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From the Guest Editors

In April 2021, 33 undergraduate students from a variety of higher education institutions across North America gathered in the middle of a pandemic via Zoom to meet and share with one another their research and writing on current and historical subjects involving Canada, Quebec, and the United States. The one-day symposium was co-hosted by BSU's Canadian Studies and American Studies programs and its Undergraduate Research Office, and generously supported by the Government of Canada's Consulate for New England and the province of Quebec's government office in Boston. Named "The United States, Canada, Quebec and the Problem of the Border," the event featured the insights of students from BSU and other places: the University of Maine, St. Lawrence University, SUNY-Buffalo, and Western Washington in the United States; Acadia, Brock, McGill, McMaster, and York universities, as well l'Université du Québec à Montréal in Canada. These papers explored topics ranging from refugee experiences in Canada to women's rights and suffrage in Quebec, Canadian literature and identity, Indigenous rights and Reconciliation, the effects of COVID-19 on the border, security, and trade. And more. The presenters were greeted and encouraged by both Marie-Claude Francoeur, Quebec's Delegate to New England, and Rodger Cuzner, then newly appointed Canadian Consul General for New England. A timely luncheon keynote address was delivered by St. Lawrence University historian Dr. Neil Forkey.

Like its predecessor in 2018, this cross-border, interdisciplinary student conference produced presentations of the highest caliber. That quality and the enthusiasm they generated among participants on the day have prompted us to produce a second special issue of *The Undergraduate Review*, BSU's established student research journal. The 12 essays featured in these pages reflect the hard work, the insight, and the genuine curiosity that exists among our students and their colleagues in Canada and the United States. They clearly show us how extensive research and polished writing has become a central part of undergraduate learning in many institutions across North America. For all of us in the Canadian Studies and American Studies programs at BSU, we express our thanks to all the conference participants and establish these 12 writers, whose work we proudly feature in this special issue.

Dr. Andrew C. Holman
Director, Canadian Studies Program

Dr. Simone Poliandri
Director, American Studies Program

From the Editor of *The Undergraduate Review*

Bridgewater State University (BSU) has built a signature program of Undergraduate Research with significant funding and opportunities for students in any major to discover new knowledge and make original contributions to their discipline or community. Undergraduate Research has been an institutional priority at BSU for nearly a quarter century because students who are mentored by professors on projects in which they are deeply invested, gain highly valued experience and skills in critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration, and communication. The experience of conducting authentic research under faculty mentorship makes undergraduates more successful students and outstanding candidates for post-graduation competitive opportunities, thereby changing the trajectories of their lives.

Undergraduate Research includes the scholarly work from any academic field, and can take several different forms, from collaborating with professors on their scholarship to taking on long-term course assignments that go beyond traditional research papers and projects, such as by including a presentation of the results at a campus or disciplinary symposium. Dissemination of one's findings is a key criterion of high-impact Undergraduate Research. When students share their work with an audience of peers, experts, and others in the academic and broader community, they become much more invested in the work than if they were "writing to the professor" to earn a passing course grade. They think more intentionally about the audience, purpose, and overall quality of the research and writing. They also develop deeper understanding of their areas of study as they reflect on and respond to audience members' questions.

For all of those reasons, BSU is proud to have hosted the "The United States, Canada, Quebec and the Problem of the Border" undergraduate-research conference and to publish some of the highest quality research presented there in this, the second special issue of *The Undergraduate Review*.

Dr. Jenny Shanahan
Assistant Provost, Center for Transformative Learning