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OUR Director's Note

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Just eight years old and
*The Undergraduate Review*

is all grown up!

From the outset it has been a precocious publication: a print journal of outstanding student research that bravely emerged during the high-tech boom—a time of worrisome news across the country about the demise of print media and, worse, the end of American readers glancing at anything more substantive than blogs and social media updates. A Gallup poll in 2004, the year this journal began, reported that one out of three adults in the United States had not read a book in at least a year. Articles with headlines such as “Twilight of the Books” and “Death of the Reader” proclaimed sharp declines in just ten years’ time in newspaper circulations, book sales, and reading of every kind—“for fun” as well as for school or work assignments. Not to be deterred, *The Undergraduate Review* has kept going, publishing sophisticated analyses and inspirational creative work by the students of this university. And each volume has brought an increasing degree of quality, as the number of submissions has grown and the process of culling an excellent and diverse selection of essays has become more meticulous.

There is plenty of bad news in the national reports of failing print publications and deteriorating interest in reading: those who read infrequently do not develop skills of analysis and interpretation, nor understanding of complex matters and different points of view. Furthermore, the less one reads, the more one is likely to experience low wages or unemployment. But this *Undergraduate Review* that you hold in your hands (or read on your screen) stands in plucky defiance to such reports. It is a notable example of good writing and interesting ideas—and of the tremendous stories that continue off the page about the success of those whose work has been published here: advanced degrees, meaningful careers, and lifelong attention to the questions and issues that require thoughtful consideration. It perseveres in engaging readers and inviting their deliberation and response.

We received a record number of student manuscripts for consideration for this year’s volume. And we employed for the first time a two-reader, double-blind review process that provided all students who submitted a manuscript, responses from two professors who are experts in the particular subject area. It is a rigorous, time-intensive, and formative process for the students whose work has been evaluated. The seriousness with which their work is imbued, their openness to critique and revision, and the care with which their faculty mentors and reviewers have read and assisted with their drafts along the way, have created this indomitable and inspiring little journal we call *The Undergraduate Review*.

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