



Dear Readers,

It would be an understatement, I think, to say that the last few months have been an unexpected challenge. From the COVID-19 pandemic to the racial injustice sparking civil unrest across the country, the headlines that have dominated my newsfeed since the start of 2020 seem more the products of a fever dream than reality (murder hornets, anyone?). However, despite the tumult that has transpired thus far, I am continually inspired by my fellow students' commitment to educating themselves – for their own benefit and for the betterment of society. This edition of the *Oregon Undergraduate Research Journal* highlights six research papers written by students who exemplify this desire to learn, grow, and share their findings. Taken together, “The Effect of Emotion on Associative Memory: Anger Versus Fear” (Melissa Adler), “Constructions of Identity: A Reciprocal Relationship in Former Yugoslavia” (Taylor Ginieczki), and “Massacre or Genocide: Redefining the Sook Ching” (Lauralei Singsank) provide insight into the politics of identity and memory. “From Nimble NIMBY to Palpable PIMBY: Anti-Blackness in George Deukmejian’s California Prison Boom” (Jakob Hollenbeck) argues that the rise in the number of prisons in the ‘80s and ‘90s was directly linked to white supremacy, while “Milosz the Visionary: His American Experience in *Visions from San Francisco Bay*” (Ania Grudzien) emphasizes “the importance of richly interpreting one’s reality, especially in a time of change and uncertainty” – that is, a time like today. All of these papers seem particularly prescient given the current divide in America on how to reconcile and understand our country’s history (and ongoing battles) with racism. Finally, “Mating Affects Lifespan Differently in Two Strains of Pseudo-Female *Caenorhabditis elegans*” (Ruben Lancaster), while perhaps more difficult to connect to the current zeitgeist, stresses the importance of taking life history into account when studying organisms’ behavior. I don’t think it’s too big a reach to assume we should apply this principle when studying humans, no matter if it’s from a biological, sociological, or psychological perspective, if only to promote empathy – a core value that is perhaps missing in those who refuse to see anti-Blackness today.

If the chaos of recent months has made anything painfully obvious, it is the importance of having access to credible information; this edition’s faculty editorial, written by Assistant Professor of Psychology and Chair of the UO Faculty Senate Subcommittee on Open Access, David M. Condon, discusses the importance of open access publications (like *OURJ!*) in allowing widespread access to scholarly work. Of course, all journals, even open access ones, would not be possible without the work of editors behind the scenes. I owe many thanks to the rest of the editorial board for their commitment to *OURJ*. Josh, Emma, and Kayla – it’s been a privilege working with you, and I wish you the best with your post-graduation plans. To Jay and Shuxi, I look forward to one more year of editing together. Finally, my deepest gratitude to Barbara Jenkins of the UO Libraries, without whom this journal would not be possible.

On behalf of the editorial board, please enjoy this 17th issue of the *Oregon Undergraduate Research Journal*.