



Letter from the Editors

Jay Taylor and Kyla Schmitt

Dear Reader,

It is our pleasure to present Volume 22, Issue 1 of the Oregon Undergraduate Research Journal (OURJ) this spring of 2024. This issue showcases the best undergraduate scholarship we have encountered during the 2023–2024 academic year. Strikingly, these articles share a common theme: a focus on the future. Fittingly, we OURJ staffers are now also looking towards the future—the future of our publications, involvement with scholars, and research at the University of Oregon.

Of course, we cannot look towards the future without first acknowledging the past. Over this academic year, OURJ has continued to grow immensely as an organization. Though all are new recruits, the current OURJ team has quickly flourished as a highly skilled, well-rounded slate of editors. These individuals have truly reshaped and redefined this journal—in no small way, these editors ensured that this issue was the best it could be.

We also wish to acknowledge the key contributions of our new faculty advisor, Rayne Vieger, throughout this process. The initiative she has taken to better connect OURJ with resources has helped us navigate the administrative reorganization required to ensure our editors are paid, and her institutional knowledge has been critical for improving OURJ’s outreach to faculty and undergraduate scholars. Most importantly, Rayne’s level head and good intuition are indispensable, helping guide OURJ towards a trajectory of continuous improvement as a journal. We are deeply excited to continue to work with her in the years to come.

Finally, we would like to thank our contributors and readers. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all the authors who have entrusted us with their work. Your commitment to excellence and your willingness to push the boundaries of knowledge are inspirational. At the same time, our readers inspire us to produce the best issues and to reach greater audiences. Thank you all—OURJ would not exist without your continued investment.

To those who are considering submitting their work to future issues of OURJ, I urge you to take that leap of faith. Your research matters, and your voice deserves to be heard. Visit our website, ourj.uoregon.edu, for submission guidelines and deadlines and join us in shaping the conversations of tomorrow.

As we embark towards the future, we are filled with excitement for the possibilities that lie ahead. Thank you for being a part of the OURJ community, and thank you for your unwavering support of undergraduate research.

Until next time,

Jay Taylor and Kyla Schmitt, Editors-in-Chief