EDITORIAL

Letter from Jay T. Akridge, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Diversity

Research can be exciting, stimulating, and rewarding. Research can also be intimidating, frustrating, and challenging.

Ask any of Purdue's exceptional faculty members who are conducting research every day aimed at solving some of our world's most pressing

problems. Or check in with our graduate students who are pushing hard to complete their advanced degrees. While all will likely tell you they enjoy what they do, they will also tell you that research is not easy. On top of sheer intellect, research takes persistence and patience. Experiments don't always work. Paths that seemed promising turn out not to be. Definitive conclusions can be elusive. And successfully publishing results requires equal measures of dexterity with data and eloquence with English.

That's why I am so impressed that more than 2,200 undergraduate students chose to take on research projects over the past academic year. The benefits of undergraduate research have long been recognized as students identify a problem, develop a hypothesis, determine the appropriate methodology, and carry out their investigations.

Our undergraduates move through the research process as part of a collaborative student-faculty team. Many of these partnerships are formed with help from the Office of Undergraduate Research, which serves as

a central hub for undergraduate students, faculty, and staff. With a mentoring guide at their side, students define a researchable problem. They learn how to use primary sources, think independently and creatively, and tell compelling stories with their data. They become proficient in the lab or field. This authentic research experience can help students determine if a research career is something they want to pursue.

Equally important to the research process is the ability to communicate the results clearly and with integrity. The *Journal of Purdue Undergraduate Research* provides an important publication outlet for our students' work. As they participate in the editing process, students learn to convey their results through clear, organized writing—a skill that will serve them well for the rest of their lives.

JPUR is a student-run publication with outstanding support from members of the Purdue University Press, Purdue University Libraries, the Online Writing Lab, and Purdue Marketing and Media. My thanks and congratulations to everyone involved in the excellent content and quality represented in this 8th edition of *JPUR*.

We don't know if the undergraduate students publishing in this journal will one day become university faculty or industry/government scientists who devote their lives to exploration and discovery. What we do know is how hard these students have worked and the effort they invested in summarizing their results for us in this edition of *JPUR*. I hope you will take time to learn about their accomplishments and to appreciate, as I do, these extraordinary students who took on the challenge of original research.

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