EDITORIAL

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

At Purdue, we view undergraduate research as an essential, high-impact learning opportunity for our students—so much so that it is a required part of the curriculum for Honors College students, and we encourage all of our undergraduates to include research as part of their

academic experience wherever they can.

The positive effects of undergraduate research have been well-documented. We know that students who participate in research gain intellectual skills of inquiry and analysis. They build resiliency in the face of setbacks. They learn how to pursue, appreciate, and critically evaluate primary literature. And they improve their ability to communicate clearly.

Engaging in research also advances personal development as students gain greater self-confidence, independence of work and thought, and a sense of accomplishment. Almost all students will develop a better understanding of the research process, and some will clarify their career paths.

Purdue's Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR) helps students who participate in research expand their opportunities and make the most of their experiences. OUR connects students with research mentors, offers an innovative online curriculum in research skills, and provides funding through scholarships and grants.

Once their research is fully developed, students have a number of opportunities to share their findings. One outlet is this *Journal of Purdue Undergraduate Research*, a student-run publication with professional support from members of the Purdue University Press, Libraries and School of Information Studies, the Online Writing Lab, and Marketing and Media. Through the publishing process, students develop their findings into concise scholarly papers. This discipline of clear, logical, objective writing will serve them well for the rest of their lives.

Students also are encouraged to share their research results in a poster and presentation conference sponsored each spring by OUR. Participation in this event helps students practice and improve their presentation skills and network with the broader research community. This year, our undergraduates missed the opportunity to make their presentations in person because of COVID-19. In late March, the virus forced our faculty to transform our entire teaching enterprise to a remote format, and nearly all of our students left campus for their homes. Working remotely, our undergraduate researchers were invited to record their presentations to video for a virtual spring conference. More than 370 students submitted their work, and they did an outstanding job—two students featured in this issue of JPUR won awards at the conference.

This year, the *Journal of Purdue Undergraduate Research* has special meaning. It marks a decade of showcasing Purdue's extraordinary students and their important, exciting, and creative work. And this edition of JPUR reminds us that although life can dramatically change at any moment, our students will always come through, displaying the resilient spirit that so proudly defines a Boilermaker.

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH AT PURDUE

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