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Preliminary Pages and Letter from the Editor

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Letter from the Editor
Jonathan Gore, Ph.D

We are pleased to announce this as the first issue of the Kentucky Journal of Undergraduate Scholarship! The journey to this point has been a long one, involving several planning sessions with numerous committees and colleagues, including members of the Kentucky Council of Undergraduate Research, formed in May, 2014. The outcome of these meetings was clear: Kentucky needed a place to showcase undergraduate research and creativity that went beyond the classroom and conference posters. We needed a repository of student work that we could showcase for years to come. We needed a way to display this work in a format that allowed for scholarly work across disciplines, including research manuscripts, works of art and even dance performances. This is the product of those meetings. We have developed Kentucky's first multidisciplinary, intercollegiate, online journal for undergraduates.

The inaugural issue of KJUS highlights the work being done in Kentucky's post-secondary institutions, and we are proud to be the choice of so many students. Madison Swiney's and Kellye Cole's papers shine a light on the American South and how its history and culture can be understood in the present day. Swiney provides us with a bridge between the present and the past with an analysis of how 19th century slavery practices have influenced contemporary voting behavior, whereas Cole gives us a thorough account of the only Jewish person to be lynched in America. Steven England's paper reaches further into history with an analysis of mollusk shells from Northeast Florida as a key to understanding humans in the Late Archaic period. Hayley Sparks' and Benjamin Chartoff's two articles examine some of the deepest questions of human psychology: the influence of group memberships (defined as religion by Sparks and student organization by Chartoff) on our thoughts and emotions. James Summers' article investigates the merits of wild hog population management in a continuation of the cultural discourse on sustainability. Lily Thacker's and Emma Comery's articles both examine the importance of media depictions of women. Thacker takes on modern media as a perpetuator of rape culture, whereas Comery examines the literary works of Carmelo Rodriguez Torres as having a surprisingly important voice in the feminist and anti-occupation movements in Puerto Rico. To complete the issue, William Beams and his colleagues provide important insights into the role of a virus in gene mutation.

I would like to acknowledge the work of several people who made this journal a reality. First, I would like to thank my Graduate Editorial Assistant, Camille McQueen, who has dedicated many hours to the structure and style of this issue. I would also like to thank her predecessor, Nicole Wells, for her hard work in creating the foundation of this journal, and for handling the initial submissions with patience as we became more efficient. Dr. Darrin Smith and Russell Carpenter were also the architects of this journal in its

formative years, creating the editorial structure and content plan. Dr. Tom Martin, Darrin Smith, Mike Henson, David Pizzo, Mary Janssen, Pamela Feldhoff, John Farrar all provided invaluable insight into the mission of this journal. Laura Edwards and Linda Sizemore served as consultants and contacts through the process, as we learned how to best handle the online framework of this journal. I would like to thank the associate editors and reviewers for volunteering their time to evaluate the rigor and validity of each submission. Finally, I would like to thank the students and their mentors for providing us with high quality work that continues to amaze me. We are certainly doing something wonderful here, and I appreciate everyone's willingness to stick with it as we continue to build this journal as a repository of academic excellence.