In our relatively short eight-year history, our editorial staff at Journal of Undergraduate Research has worked diligently to showcase the formidable contributions of Rochester undergraduates to academic research. Our past editors have frequently pointed out the unique benefits that research can confer to the undergraduate learning experience and to professional success post graduation. However, the question is no longer “Why should undergraduates engage in research?” Given the dramatically increased number of submissions we have reviewed this semester, the articles presented in this issue put that question to rest—they represent a new, and certainly more competitive, stage of undergraduate academic involvement.

With the articles in this issue, we hope to show that the excitement of this new stage in undergraduate research has broadened to the three core areas: the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities. The topics in the following pages discuss pressing questions in biomedical engineering, healthcare, trade policy, theology, and physics. Our authors will undoubtedly inspire subsequent groups of researchers and students to improve upon the ideas they express herein.

To honor their accomplishments we now pose a new question to our readers: How, and in what manner, should undergraduates engage in research? As educated consumers of research, how can we best extend our education beyond the classroom to make our understanding of the world ever better? Journal of Undergraduate Research will continue to provide a forum for these questions under the University of Rochester’s guiding principle, Meliora.

Sincerely,
Sthuthi David and Cameron LaPoint

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