

UC Merced

UC Merced Undergraduate Research Journal

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Table of Contents

Letter from the Editorial Staff

Undergraduate Research Journal Editorial Staff

Humanities

Exploring Middle Eastern Immigration: History and Contemporary Diaspora of Middle Eastern Immigrants to Latin America and Culinary Practices Influenced by Their Culture

By Susana Vejar Delgado

Natural Sciences

In Vitro Meat: An Ethical Solution to an Unsustainable Practice

By Manpreet Takhar

It's Getting Hot in Here so Take Off All Your COS's: Climate Change and its Effect on Well-Being and Happiness

By Christian Laspada

Species Abundance of Fungi is Greater in Landslide Areas Compared to Undisturbed Areas of the Forest in Monteverde, Puntarenas, Costa Rica

By Sunshine Lopez

Social Sciences

Perfectionism and Stress

By Spencer A. Cole

The Many Factors of Growth: How Innovation Plays a Part

By Mariela Godoy

Police Brutality Against Black Women

By Madison Rose Lawson

The Possible Causes and effects of Racial and Cultural Socialization Among Transracial Adoptees

By Faith Taylor

Table of Contents (Cont.)

Science Fiction Twenty Years Ago, a Nanotechnology Reality Today: Human Microchip Implants

By Neel Patel

Reviewing the Association between Early Attachment Style and Bystander Behavior in Instances of Bullying during Childhood and Adolescence

By Roisin Shannon

A Review of the Werther Effect and Depictions of Suicide: 13 Reasons Why

By Eva Rose Schaffer

Editorial Staff

Dear Readers,

The editorial staff of the UC Merced Undergraduate Research Journal, more commonly known as the URJ, is proud to present the Spring 2018 edition of the journal. In Fall 2017, the URJ celebrated its 10th year of continuously publishing the works of UC Merced undergraduates. In this second issue of our 10th anniversary volume, the URJ has continued our tradition of publishing excellence in research by presenting the works of eleven authors. These authors represent both the interdisciplinary quality of research and the high standards that UC Merced undergraduates strive to achieve.

Although the URJ is a class under the Merritt Writing Program that utilizes writing skills in journal production, its operations are those of a registered student organization. The URJ is fully funded as a dependent service under the Associated Students of UC Merced (ASUCM). What this entails is the responsibility of the students serving this organization to carry out outreach efforts to ensure that all undergraduate students at UC Merced have the opportunity for their academic work to be published.

This task involves hard work! Once our job assignments were finalized, it was our responsibility to organize how to carry out what duties needed to be carried out. One example included how to organize lines of both internal and external communication. Outreach utilizing social media was essential to getting our message out. Students in the organization were responsible for creating effective content and for distributing that content on platforms including Twitter and Facebook. In this regard, credit goes to our social media directors Selena Valencia and Jemena Nesbitt for having developed content such as flyers that were distributed throughout campus. Brianna Barajas effectively ran our tabling presence on Scholars Lane, which resulted in face-to-face interaction between students and URJ staff. Eva Ordonez coordinated room assignments for the events we held. Although individual staff members presented about the organization to those they knew, it was the duty of class presentation manager Cydney Caradonna to visit classrooms and to inform UC Merced students about publishing opportunities with the URJ.

The editorial staff made decisions on what supplies we needed to procure. Examples include ordering T-shirts to be handed out as prizes to UC Merced students. Brianna Barajas and William George coordinated those efforts with the supplier. The editorial staff discussed the associated costs and voted on the final design that was presented. Managing our funds was an important consideration. We bulk purchased when appropriate and price matched with local retailers when the opportunity presented itself. Relations by individual staff members were established with elected student government representatives at ASUCM to both represent our organization and to advocate for our annual budget proposal.

Organization was key to keeping everything running. Senior editors Vivian Chu and Jorge Luna had to organize the layout of our online files and to determine guidelines for how editors would process the work that was submitted to the URJ. They also had the additional task of managing a transition of processing student works onto the e-Scholarship platform and learning about its features. In fact, this was the URJ's first semester managing submissions through the e-Scholarship interface. In addition, with regards to event planning, events had to be arranged in a timely manner and purchasing orders were processed by treasurer Selena Valencia and William George. Lastly, we would like to acknowledge editorial team member Sabrina Hossain for assisting us with the layout and for creating and organizing the table of contents.

The editorial staff of the URJ had to learn a great deal in the sixteen weeks we worked together. We learned the value of teamwork and are grateful for the opportunity we had as undergraduate students to have managed an organization with an established history that provides so much for the campus. Some of the staff have served for two semesters and even they were still figuring things out! This past January, the URJ was honored by being listed in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ). This inclusion was based by the quality of the work being published and a viewership of over 1200 per month! We were also proud that of the fact that the overwhelming majority of journals indexed on the DOAJ are administrated by professional academics, whereas ours is managed by undergraduate students.

There are persons at UC Merced who have made our work possible and the editorial staff would like to acknowledge their contributions. We would like to thank the assistance we have received from the staff at the Office of Student Life (OSL) and especially from Connie McBride, James Hatten, and Jim Greenwood. Their help has ensured that we could effectively manage our student organization with the knowledge and resources we need. The URJ also thanks the ASUCM for allocating the funds we use to provide UC Merced students the opportunity to have their work published.

The URJ would also like to acknowledge the roles that academic instructors including graduate students, lecturers, and tenured faculty have had in working with our authors in preparing them for academic success. The URJ would like to especially thank the writing instructors at the UC Merced Karen Merritt Writing Program who have worked directly with our authors and encouraged them to submit their works to the URJ. This includes past URJ advisors and instructors Brigitte Bowers, Susan Varnot, and Kris Van Bebber. We would also like to acknowledge programs such as the Meritt Writing Program (MWP) and Peer Assisted Learning Support (PALS) for providing facilitative feedback for our authors and helping them finalize their submissions for publication.

Of course, the editorial staff would like to acknowledge the importance that an advisor has on a student organization. It is this person who provides the framework and guidance for the success of a student organization. For over five years, Dr. Iris Ruiz has served as faculty advisor and instructor of the URJ. During that time, the URJ transitioned from being a paper edition to being published on e-Scholarship. The framework and structure established during this time has allowed for both the operation of the journal and for allowing undergraduate students in the URJ the ability to independently bring forth their best talents. Even when Dr. Ruiz was not actively instructing the course, she represented the URJ during the application process to secure inclusion within the DOAJ. To date, Dr. Ruiz's active support for the URJ can be further exemplified by her collection of both new and old flyers all over the front of her office.

In closing, we would like to share how a member of the editorial staff recently had the opportunity to meet Jared Stanley, one of the co-founders of the URJ, who expressed how excited he was that the URJ has continued to publish undergraduate research for 10 years. He signed a book for the staff member, and wished the URJ another 10 years. Our editorial team shares those same wishes and hopes to continue Jared Stanley and Anne Zanzucchi's mission for the URJ. With that said, we are proud to present you the second edition of our 10th anniversary volume of the URJ.

Sincerely,

The URJ Editorial Staff of Spring 2018