

Editor's Note

Happy New Year, 2024! Welcome to the new issue [volume 22 (2)] of the *Inquiry Journal*. At the outset, we would like to thank Dr. Margaret Sova McCabe, Vice Chancellor of the Division of Research & Innovation (DRI) for her unflinching support to the Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR) in all its endeavors to improve the quality of undergraduate research on this campus. We would also like to express gratitude to Dr. Cynthia Sides, Assistant Vice Chancellor of DRI, and her staff for their relentless behind the scenes efforts to support the multitude of activities undertaken by OUR, including the publication of the *Inquiry Journal*. More importantly, I would like to welcome our new Undergraduate Research Coordinator, Amy Epps, aboard! She already has made significant contributions in bringing this issue of the *Inquiry Journal* about.

The Office of Scholarly Communications, University Libraries, kindly shared with us the current visibility of the articles published in the *Inquiry Journal* from Jan-May 2023. We are pleased to share with the readers the statistics of the viewership of articles published in the *Inquiry Journal* worldwide. In this context, we would like to congratulate both the undergraduate students and their faculty mentors for considering this journal as an avenue to publish their research. Given the impact, we urge the faculty on this campus to seriously consider publishing their best research in the *Inquiry Journal*. The *Inquiry Journal* is published in the digital repository ScholarWorks@UARK and is amenable to citation in research articles published in other research repositories. In this context, we would like to personally thank the faculty who had generously allocated their precious time to peer review research papers published in the *Inquiry Journal*. We believe that the academic rigor afforded via the peer-review process is one of the main reasons for the reliability and current high worldwide visibility of the journal. This issue features a research paper published by two undergraduate students, Suraj Kolluru and Kelli Ludwig. Suraj's undergraduate research paper reports a novel protein expression tag, RUBY-RUBY, for the overexpression of Anginex, a protein that is known to play a major role in the inhibition of tumor metastases. It is believed that that the RUBY-RUBY tag is likely to help in overcoming a major hurdle in the overexpression of biomedically relevant recombinant proteins. Kelli, in her undergraduate work entitled "Pop Goes the Weasel – How Greed and a Good Barbecue Hoodwinked a Small Town", narrates how some oil companies in Arkansas and its investors in Eureka Springs, AR, were presumably out to "fleece" the citizens located in the vicinity of these oil companies. We would like to congratulate both Suraj and Kelli for their excellent and thought-provoking undergraduate research. OUR has funded the research of 12 non-honors undergraduate students in this past academic year. We hope to continue funding the research of the bright and motivated non-honors undergraduate students on this campus.

We thank Ms. Sophia Nourani, our undergraduate student worker, who has tirelessly strived hard to interview the faculty who have shown their interest to provide opportunities to undergraduate students to get involved with their high-quality research. This issue highlights two such outstanding faculty members, Drs. Jennifer Webb and Laurence Hare, who have a wonderful track record of working with undergraduate students. We salute these faculty members for their commitment to support high quality undergraduate research on this campus.

Our special thanks also go to Dr. Suzanne McCray, Vice Provost, Office of Nationally Competitive Awards (ONCA) and Dr. Chelsea Hodge, Director of Grants and Research Innovation, for her constant support and encouragement in the publication of the Inquiry Journal. Our sincere thanks to Dr. Chelsea Hodge for her help with the information published in the Honors Corner. We also want to extend our deepest gratitude for Mae Switzer from Digital Commons for helping us navigate ScholarWorks. This issue of the *Inquiry Journal* could not have been published without her diligent help and contributions. We hope to highlight additional new features in the forthcoming issues of the *Inquiry Journal*. So, please stay tuned!

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