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## Front Matter

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# MOUNTAINEER UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH REVIEW

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The Mountaineer Undergraduate Research Review (*MURR*) publishes outstanding research performed by undergraduates at West Virginia University. *MURR* is a publication of West Virginia University Honors College, and its initial publication was sponsored by West Virginia Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (WV EPSCoR). *MURR* is published on the Honors College website ([www.honors.wvu.edu](http://www.honors.wvu.edu)). Papers are reviewed by qualified faculty members at WVU, and are reviewed and edited by a Student Editorial Board. Questions about the Mountaineer Undergraduate Research Review should be submitted to:

Lisa DeFrank-Cole, Ed. D., Director  
ASPIRE Office  
Honors College  
109-A Honors Hall  
250 2nd Street  
West Virginia University  
Morgantown, WV 26506  
Phone: (304) 293-2100  
E-mail: [Lisa.DeFrank-Cole@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:Lisa.DeFrank-Cole@mail.wvu.edu)  
Website: [leadershipstudies.wvu.edu](http://leadershipstudies.wvu.edu) / [aspire.wvu.edu](http://aspire.wvu.edu)

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## Acknowledgements

The Mountaineer Undergraduate Research Review is the product of West Virginia University's dedication to undergraduate research at every level. The idea of a research journal exclusively for undergraduates was

met with overwhelming enthusiasm and support from Dr. Lisa DeFrank-Cole, Dr. Keith Garbutt, and the Honors College. The showcased research would not exist without dedicated students who ask the questions, dedicated faculty who mentor the students, and the many faculty reviewers who generously donate their time to review the papers. In particular, the editors would like to thank Dr. Robert Blobaum, Dr. Ryan Claycomb, Dr. John Lamb, Dr. Duncan Lorimer, Dr. Jeffrey Petersen, Dr. Daneesh Simien, Dr. Letha Sooter, and Dr. Bradley Wilson.

Cover design by Elissa Dray

*From Dr. Lisa DeFrank-Cole, Faculty Supervisor of MURR*

Research is important not just because it helps our students pursue their passions and reach great heights, but because research can change the world. West Virginia University undergraduate researchers offer new studies in the sciences, close readings, and the distinctiveness of their respective experiences as students engaged in research. Who knows where these investigations and investigators may lead us?

The importance of research has been underscored for me in a unique way. As the director of the ASPIRE Office, I help students prepare and apply for graduate and professional school as well as prestigious scholarships; as you can imagine, undergraduate research is an important asset for many of the students I advise. As director of the Leadership Studies Program, I am interested in helping build intercultural connections and as part of that I will be conducting research in the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Royal University for Women this summer. It heartens me to see that WVU is emphasizing research as something with life-long implications for all those who are curious about their world and who believe they can change it.

Congratulations to all of our *MURR* contributors and many thanks to the editorial staff. This is truly a student-run endeavor and I am proud to be a part of it.

Lisa DeFrank-Cole, EdD  
Director, ASPIRE  
Director, Leadership Studies

## ABOUT THE EDITORS

### LEA BRIDI

Lea Bridi is graduating in May 2011 with a B.A. in English with minors in history and biology. She served as managing editor for the inaugural issue of *MURR*. Lea studies language variation in a socio-linguistics lab as part of the ongoing West Virginia Dialect Project, works as a technical writer for Administrative Technology Solutions, and volunteers at Milan Park Elementary School. In June 2010, Lea is traveling to Guanajuato and Puerto Morelos, Mexico, for an Amizade service learning and study abroad trip. In Mexico, Lea will teach English as a second language and study Latin American history. In her spare time, Lea enjoys reading (especially the modernists), writing, watching movies, and running distances.

### DWIGHT PAVLOVIC

Dwight Pavlovic will graduate in May 2011 with a B.A. in English and Religious Studies. Dwight has done design and editorial work for several organizations at West Virginia University, including the Physics, English, and Philosophy departments, and most recently with the Honors College to help develop the contents and appearance of *MURR*. Since 2008, alongside a variety of freelance projects, he has worked primarily with the West Virginia University Press in their marketing section. He is also the owner of Royal Rhino Flying, an active Morgantown-based record label and multimedia arts blog that plans to publish the inaugural issue of its journal *Ambivalent* in September. When unencumbered, he enjoys everything you would imagine someone that runs a multimedia arts blog might enjoy, but is particularly enamored of following developments in new music, admiring Bauhaus furniture, and reading Classical history.

### MOLLY SIMIS

Molly Simis will graduate in December 2010 with a B.S. in biology, a B.A. in environmental geoscience, and a minor in geography. As an undergraduate student at WVU, Molly worked in population genetics, and geography labs, served as the Community and Academic Ambassador of the Honors College, participated in club ultimate Frisbee, became a certified scuba diver, studied environmental issues from a geologic perspective in the American West, studied abroad in Bahrain, and somehow found time to create and serve as the chief editor of *MURR*, the University's first undergraduate research journal. In her spare time Molly likes to explore the great outdoors and sharpen her Frisbee skills. Molly is passionate about scientific literacy and hopes to one day make its furtherance her career.