


Undergraduate students who engage in research, scholarly, or creative work gain life-changing skills and experiences seldom found outside of research-intensive universities like West Virginia University (WVU). These experiences elevate the career trajectories of our students and contribute important discoveries to the Mountain State. The Mountaineer Undergraduate Research Review (MURR) showcases the very best of undergraduate research at WVU and the Office of Undergraduate Research is enormously proud to support the student-led efforts that have resulted in this publication.

MURR provides an outlet for students to publish scholarly and creative works while deepening their engagement within their fields of study. From internet imagery to the design of a first person perspective robot, this issue of MURR epitomizes the breadth of research conducted by undergraduates at WVU. MURR enables students to participate in the full editorial process from article submission, review and revision to formatting, proofreading, and publication. Through publication of MURR, students play an active and critical role in solidifying WVU's reputation as an institution with very high research activity and in building the creative culture where innovation thrives.

At MURR, students lead all aspects of the publication. Not only do students create the cover art and write the articles, student-editors determine MURR's focus, timeline, and publication standards. They interview and approve volunteers, recruit reviewers, and typeset journal articles. They work together with faculty and staff in the Honors College and across the university to foster institutional partnerships and mechanisms to enhance the sustainability of the journal. The benefits of participating in MURR by contributing work or leading its publication, cannot be overstated.

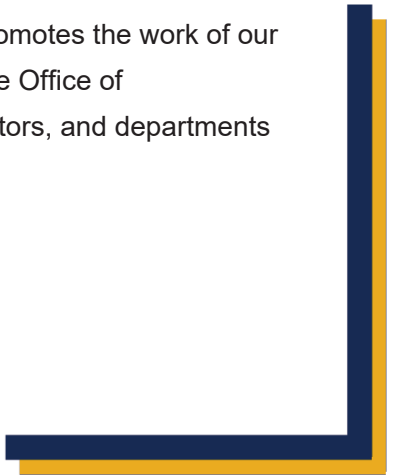
MURR has demonstrated itself to be an incubator for student success. Former editor-in-chief Jeffrey Petty was recently hired as an editorial coordinator with the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), publisher of the journal Science. Teagan Kuzniar, the current editor-in-chief, was named WVU's 2021 Udall Scholar. Managing editor Wren King was selected to serve as an associate editor of URecA--the National Collegiate Honors Council's undergraduate research journal. Savannah Hays, a 2021 graduate and STEM editor, was named WVU's 2021 Newman Civic Fellow. When students lead MURR, they publish a journal and launch their careers.

WVU benefits tremendously from MURR. It elevates research within WVU, promotes the work of our students, and connects our research enterprise to the world outside WVU. The Office of Undergraduate Research sincerely thanks all the students, faculty, administrators, and departments that have contributed their support to this endeavor.



Dr. Amy Hess

Director, Office of Undergraduate Research  
Professor of Geography



Dear Mountaineers,

I am thrilled to have been asked to provide an opening letter for Volume 6, Issue 2 of the Mountaineer Undergraduate Research Review (MURR).

According to the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, West Virginia University is a “Very High Research Activity” institution. This designation in combination with WVU’s land-grant status makes research an undisputed focal point of the university’s mission. Thus, the continued publication and circulation of MURR, in my opinion, demonstrates WVU’s ongoing and unequivocal support for undergraduate research.

Nowhere is this support more evident than in the plethora of opportunities available for undergraduate students to become actively involved in research at WVU. I recently met a prospective student who indicated that one of the reasons they were drawn to WVU, was due to their ability to become involved in undergraduate research as a first-year student. WVU diverges from other universities, where such opportunities are only available for upper-class students.

At WVU, undergraduate student opportunities to be involved in research include, but are not limited to, the Research Apprenticeship Program, Chemistry Research Experiences for Undergraduates, Summer Undergraduate Research Experience, Undergraduate Robotics Research in Human Swarm Interaction, KY-WV Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation, and Summer Undergraduate Cancer Research Fellowship Program. While this is truly an impressive list of opportunities, more noteworthy is the fact that these programs have produced tangible outcomes by undergraduate students which include 46 WVU students presenting their research at the 18th annual Undergraduate Research Day at the Capital, 62 peer review publications co-authored by Summer Undergraduate Research Experience participants from 2017 - 2020, 183 presenters at West Virginia University’s 4th annual Undergraduate Spring Symposium and 944 students involved in scholarly activity via research coursework in 2019 - 2020.

As evidenced by the above-mentioned programs and numbers, undergraduate students’ involvement in research at West Virginia University is in a very good place. As such, I invite you to read, and enjoy, a subsection of these students’ scholarly activity in this edition of MURR.

Sincerely,



Dr. Damien Clement  
Associate Dean, Honors College  
Professor of Sport, Exercise and Performance Psychology

