

# Editorial

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I am delighted to welcome you to the first issues of a new refereed psychology journal. What is unusual is that this journal is one of a few that accepts contributions from only undergraduate students. Why does this journal exist? What are the attitudes of the reviewers and editors? How often can you expect the journal to be published? Who has contributed to the development of the journal? When did the idea for this journal begin and where? In this editorial, I will answer those questions.

The journal exists for a variety of reasons, and a primary one is to illustrate the high quality of undergraduates' scholarly work. Scholarly work encompasses a broad range of investigation and includes more traditional data-based activity, as well as literature reviews and historical research. Transmitting the results of one's scholarship through a printed medium requires development of formal, written communication skills. Promoting the refinement of such skills is another goal for the journal. According to employers, and professional and graduate school faculty, increasing undergraduates' written communication skills would make those students more attractive for employment and for admission to post graduate training or education. Increasing students' success in life following graduation is another aspiration associated with the journal. Because modeling can facilitate learning, showing students what their peers have accomplished should help to encourage ever widening circles of students to become engaged in and excited about research.

In many meetings and discussion with faculty, I have found ample evidence to conclude that there is a strong commitment to promote writing and scholarship among undergraduate students. Furthermore, these same faculty believe that the use of constructive and informed feedback is the most effective way to improve communication skills. Personal or degrading criticism of students' work is not an acceptable ethic among the journal's reviewers and editorial staff. If you submit a manuscript, you can expect to receive thorough and encouraging support for your effort. Moreover, editors frequently encourage revision and resubmission of manuscripts that they do not accept.

The editorial staff decided to start by publishing only one issue during the first year. After determining the requirements for producing a high quality journal, we can evaluate the feasibility of increasing the frequency of publication. The frequency of publication also depends on the

number of manuscripts students submit. Finally, as more faculty supervisors mentor their students' research, we expect that the need for additional issues will increase.

Contributions to the journal have come from many individuals. Betty Dahl's dedication to encouraging and supporting undergraduate research provided inspiration for the journal. Members of the editorial staff have given unselfishly of their skills, time, and energy. Reviewers have offered their expertise and perspectives. Of course, without the students and their sponsors' commitment to scholarship, the journal could not exist. Financial support for the journal has come from contributions by numerous organizations, and colleges and universities in Nebraska, Kansas, Missouri, and Oklahoma. Faculty members from those institutions have also made contributions to offset the journal's startup costs. Eventually, I hope that subscriptions and purchases of back issues of the journal will support production costs. The creation of a nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation will provide a mechanism for soliciting financial support for the journal and, in the long run, for helping defray costs for the Great Plains Students' Research Convention.

Identifying the date and circumstances for starting this journal is a difficult task. What Ebbinghaus said about the origins of psychology might apply to the origins of the journal ... it has a long past but only a very short history. I can say with confidence that a more extensive discussion about starting this journal occurred at The Fourteenth Annual Great Plains Students' Psychology Convention held in Kansas City, MO on February 18 and 19, 1994. So enthusiastic was the response to the proposal for a journal that one faculty member said that we should produce the journal by the end of that year! In retrospect, such a deadline was overly optimistic. The editorial staff met during June of 1994 and 1995 to discuss policy and practice issues. Almost two dozen faculty members and graduate students have participated in one of three reviewer workshops designed to establish a standard for the quality of publishable research. Almost three dozen faculty members and graduate students have worked as reviewers to produce the journal. Two years after that meeting in Kansas City, the journal's first issue appears, but I think that the preparation was worth the wait.

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