

## Letter from the Editors

**W**e are pleased to present Volume 6, the 2016-2017 full edition of the Journal of Undergraduate Research in Alberta. This year's edition features excellent contributions of undergraduate authors from a variety of backgrounds including but not limited to Biomedical Engineering, Urban Design, and Business. Accordingly, our multidisciplinary journal offers both reviews on hot political topics such as "Regulation of Biotherapeutics" as well as articles that describe innovation in the area of cell biology and mechanics.

The highly relevant conclusions drawn by our authors underline once again the value of research programs at the undergraduate level. However, JURA's Volume 6 is not the only piece of evidence for the value of undergraduate research. In fact, many qualitative research studies have been performed that clearly pinpoint the benefits of undergraduate research experiences. One particularly thorough study evaluated the experiences of undergraduate students who participated in summer research programs in "core" sciences (DOI: 10.1002/sce.10131). An overwhelming 91% of the interviewed students reported positive gains, starting with personal attributes such as increased confidence and professionalism all the way to improvements in communication skills. Interestingly for us, less than 10% of the reported gains in communication skills were related to skills that are needed for publishing scientific work: Writing skills, reading comprehension skills, and information retrieval. This finding reinforces JURA's motivation to keep promoting undergraduate research articles and emphasizes the need of additional programs that foster the development of writing skills of undergraduate researchers.

For further encouragement of current undergraduate scientists who are considering to publish their work, this year's JURA edition features two novel elements. First, we have initiated the "JURA Best Paper Award", a \$250 recognition for the original research article that received the highest ratings from the JURA editors. We are happy to announce that the first JURA Best Paper Award goes to Jared Collette and his research article "Mechanics of Sarcomeres in Series and Instability". Congratulations! Second, JURA Volume 6 includes an interview series with decorated faculty members of the University of Calgary who describe their early career experiences related to undergraduate research and scientific publishing. The reports of our interviewees cover different facets and a wide range of experiences, providing insightful and encouraging advice for undergraduate as well as graduate researchers.

We hope that you enjoy reading our 2016-2017 JURA edition and encourage you to share this journal with your peers. Please do not hesitate to send us any feedback or suggestions for future editions. We would like to acknowledge the support of our peer-reviewers and particularly the continued support of Dr. Walter Herzog, Killam Memorial Chair at the University of Calgary.

Sincerely your JURA Editorial Board,

Maurice Mohr, *Editor-in-Chief*;  
Yang Yu, *Managing Editor*;  
Lindsay Loundagin, *Publishing and Layout Editor*;  
Stacy Gibson, *Publishing and Layout Editor*



**JURA**

The logo for the Journal of Undergraduate Research in Alberta (JURA) features the word "JURA" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. A graduation cap is positioned above the letter "A", with its tassel hanging down to the right.