



## **LETTER FROM MANAGING EDITOR, SKYE MECKELBERG BAXTER**

Since its inception, one of our primary goals in creating The Motley Undergraduate Journal has been to foster a space for connection between disciplines, stories, and people. In an age defined by constant communication, we find ourselves paradoxically more fragmented than ever. Notifications replace conversation; algorithms mediate intimacy; words are traded faster than they can be understood. Amid this digital din, we hoped to cultivate a site of community members looking to create connections with intention. This issue brings together student collaborators and creators who dare to slow down, listen, and rebuild meaning in the spaces where disconnection has taken root. They remind us that connection is not simply the exchange of information; it is an act of recognition, empathy, and care.

As a collective of editors, readers, and writers, we recognize that communication is never neutral. It carries power, history, and consequence. Our commitment to decolonial communication continues: we remain aware that the privileging of the written word has often come at the expense of oral and embodied forms of knowledge, particularly those of Indigenous peoples. We affirm our responsibility to resist that bias, to value storytelling, ceremony, and relationship as legitimate and vital forms of scholarship.

We acknowledge that the Motley Journal is created on the traditional territories of Treaty 7: the lands of the Siksika, Kainai, and Piikani Nations of the Blackfoot Confederacy; the Îyâxe Nakoda Nations of Bearspaw, Chiniki, and Wesley; and the Tsuut'ina Nation. This territory is also home to the Métis Nation of Alberta, Region 3, within the historic Northwest Métis homeland. The word "connection" takes on a deeper meaning when we recognize that this land has always been connected, through kinship, language, and story, long before colonial borders divided it. To connect is to remember.

In a time when our social and political worlds feel increasingly polarized, communication holds both danger and promise. It can entrench isolation, or it can rethread our shared humanity. The pieces in this issue explore that fragile tension. They examine how communication technologies, social movements, art, and media can alienate us or draw us closer together. They ask how we might build networks rooted in empathy rather than extraction, care rather than consumption, dialogue rather than dominance.

As ever, our gratitude extends to those who make The Motley possible. The Department of Communication, Media, and Film faculty at the University of Calgary continue to champion undergraduate scholarship with tireless dedication. We thank Dr. Maria Bakardjieva, Professor and Chair of Communication and Media Studies, and Editor-in-Chief of the Motley, for her wisdom and steadfast guidance. We are especially grateful to Dr. Maria



Victoria Guglietti, whose endless support, nominations, and mentorship continue to sustain this journal year after year. We also honour the vision of Melissa Morris, whose labour and leadership created the foundation upon which the Motley still stands.

To the professors and graduate students who reviewed submissions, offered thoughtful feedback, and supported our authors — thank you. To our student writers, your courage and insight remind us why this journal exists. Your work proves that scholarship can be both critical and compassionate, that to write is to reach out.

Finally, to you, our reader: thank you for choosing connection. By reading this issue, you participate in a quiet act of resistance against apathy and detachment. You remind us that communication with intention still has the power to build bridges across distance, culture, and time.

As I write this, I am filled with deep gratitude. This issue marks my last as Managing Editor of the Motley Undergraduate Journal. Over the past two years, I have had the privilege of working alongside brilliant peers, generous mentors, and fearless student authors whose ideas continually challenge and inspire me. To help shepherd their voices into print has been an honour beyond words. The Motley has shaped not only how I think, but how I listen. For that, I will always be grateful.

Thank you for allowing me to be part of this remarkable community. It has been an absolute joy.

In connection and gratitude,  
Skye Baxter  
Managing Editor, The Motley Undergraduate Journal