



## **About the Journal**

The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign School of Social Work's annual publication, *Journal of Undergraduate Social Work Research (JUSWR)*, showcases peer-reviewed undergraduate research from social work and related disciplines that contribute to the advancement of social and economic justice.

## **Acknowledgements**

We would like to express our gratitude to Dean Wynne Korr for her vision, leadership, and unwavering support of this significant achievement.

We also thank all of the School of Social Work faculty for their encouragement and support shown to the authors of the JUSWR inaugural issue. We further wish to extend a very special thanks to Dr. Karen Tabb-Dina, Emily Athena Lux, Maria Pineros Leano, and Carol Wilson-Smith for their extraordinary mentoring, guidance, and support on behalf of the student authors.

Our sincere thanks go out to Becky Ponder for her graphic design expertise. And last but by no means least, we acknowledge and are grateful to Kahlia Roe Halpern and Joy Sugihara for their contributions to the planning and development of the *Journal of Undergraduate Social Work Research*.

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### ***Letter***

Dear Reader,

I am pleased to welcome you to the inaugural issue of the *Journal of Undergraduate Social Work Research (JUSWR)*. This journal is a collaborative effort between students, faculty and staff. Undergraduate student editors were highly involved and instrumental in the selection, editing process, and making recommendations for articles to be included in this inaugural publication volume. As Senior Editor, Rebecca Hawley did a fantastic job of working closely with the editorial board to provide expert guidance through the publication process. Faculty members generously gave of their time to mentor students on research and writing. Dr. Janet D. Carter Black played a crucial role as Undergraduate Research Program Coordinator for the School of Social Work. Together, the team worked tirelessly to bring the first issue of the *JUSWR* to fruition.

The *Journal of Undergraduate Social Work Research* is a crucial initiative for the School of Social Work and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign aimed at actively supporting undergraduate research. Student opportunities range from serving as a member of a faculty directed research team or pursuit of their own line of inquiry. They may also choose from options to author a manuscript for publication, serve as a peer editor, or present their work at the annual Undergraduate Research Symposium. Some students elect to receive credit toward the Undergraduate Research Certificate Program offered by the Office of Undergraduate Research. All of them make scholarly contributions that strengthen vulnerable populations and provide support where it is most needed.

I am honored to introduce the inaugural issue of the *Journal of Undergraduate Social Work Research*. It provides abundant proof of the high quality of undergraduate social work research that takes place on the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign campus.

Sincerely,

Brenda Lindsey, EdD  
BSW Program Director  
School of Social Work

### ***Preface***

The future of the social work profession depends on our ability to provide the best education for practice. The future of the discipline of social work depends on our ability to engage the curiosity of undergraduates in social work, encouraging critical inquiry through research. I am proud that the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign has taken the lead in nurturing undergraduate research.

My thanks to Dr. Janet D. Carter-Black for her unwavering leadership in this effort, and to Dr. Brenda Lindsey for her advocacy to create this journal.

Wynne S. Korr, Professor and Dean  
School of Social Work