Dear Reader:

Welcome to the sixth volume (second issue) of JUSWR: A Journal of Undergraduate Social Work Research, Policy Reviews and Other Creative Works. This journal is a result of a highly collaborative effort between students, faculty, and staff. Undergraduate peer editors were instrumental in the selecting, editing, and submitting recommendations for research pieces to be accepted for publication. These undergraduate peer editors worked closely with the Senior Editor, Rebecca Dohleman Hawley, who did an outstanding job providing feedback, guidance, and prowess throughout the entire publication process. In addition to the work of the undergraduate peer editors and senior editor, we had the help of a doctoral student to help with training, editing, and advising. Faculty members also generously mentored their students in the writing and publication processes, of which we are grateful for their time and energy. Fellow Advisory Board Member, Dr. Jan Carter-Black, provided the team with exceptional guidance and feedback. As the Undergraduate Research Program Coordinator for the School of Social Work and Advisory Board Member of the JUSWR, I approached my role with commitment and enthusiasm, assisting with the peer editor training and editing process. Together, this collaborative team proudly brings you the sixth volume of JUSWR.

The journal was published for the first time in the spring of 2017. This year, Volume 6 is split into two issues to accommodate the number of excellent pieces submitted. Topics range from policy reviews (e.g., SNAP policy, Medicaid, Controlled Substances Act, and policies determining gender affirming care), a research piece on Adverse Childhood Experiences, and a creative piece on invisible labor.

As the Undergraduate Research Program Coordinator for the School of Social Work, I am honored to join such a remarkable editorial team and direct undergraduate research efforts. The journal originated with the aim of supporting undergraduate research and scholarly work, becoming a platform for students to disseminate their findings and work. Some of the ways students can become involved in research at the School of Social Work include: 1) participating as a Research Assistant to a faculty-directed research project, or 2) leading their own area of research with an Independent Study or Project. Students can find more information about these opportunities in the Course Catalog (SOCW 310, 418, and 480). It is from these projects that many students submit posters and papers to this journal or present at the University of Illinois Undergraduate Research Symposium. Other research opportunities include authoring or co-authoring research papers and presentations for peer- reviewed journals and academic conferences, serving as a peer editor for the journal, or pursuing the Undergraduate Research Certificate Program offered by the Office of Undergraduate Research.

The title of this journal was updated to be more reflective of the array of pieces submitted to the journal. For example, the journal includes research pieces, as well as policy briefs and analyses, class papers, and opinion pieces. This journal also accepts original creative pieces for publication. These creative pieces may reflect aspects of students' cultural backgrounds, experiences, or perspectives. As you flip through the current and previous issues of this journal, you will see a glimpse into the knowledge, creativity, critical thinking, and thoughtfulness of the authors across these diverse platforms. Students make contributions that advance social and economic justice, further enhancing their own and their readers' appreciation toward our diverse and constantly evolving social world.

I am pleased to announce the sixth volume (second issue) of JUSWR. This publication provides clear and compelling evidence of the high quality of undergraduate social work research and creative works that contribute to knowledge permeating the School of Social Work and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Sincerely,

Rachel Garthe, PhD
Assistant Professor & Undergraduate Research Program Coordinator
School of Social Work