

Dear Reader:

Welcome to the eighth volume of the Journal of Undergraduate Social Work Research (JUSWR): A Journal of Undergraduate 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. 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 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 eighth volume of JUSWR.

This year, Volume 8 is split into two issues to accommodate the number of excellent pieces submitted. This year's volume includes pieces from students majoring in Social Work, Psychology, Communication, Brain and Cognitive Science, and Gender and Women's Studies. Issue one includes literature reviews (e.g., prevalence of police violence in the disability community; domestic violence risk within immigrant populations), policy analyses (e.g., analysis of a bill enhancing the transition into adulthood for foster youth), and research studies (e.g., sexual communication in sexual education; understanding the number of school social workers in the United States). Issue two includes research studies (e.g., an examination of bullying in Central Illinois; recruitment and engagement strategies for equitable maternal health and child development), policy analyses (e.g., Supplemental Security Income eligibility), a review (e.g., gender inclusion in research within National Institutes of Health policies), and a case study (e.g., examination of a local Gender and Sexuality Alliance).

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.

As the Undergraduate Research 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.

I am pleased to announce the eighth volume 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,

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School of Social Work