

Dean's Message

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the inaugural edition of *The Oculus*.

For many students, conducting research is a transformative educational experience. It certainly was for me! My own research experience as an undergraduate provided a range of expected and unexpected experiences, from problem-solving and troubleshooting to project management, grant writing, and state purchasing procedures. Along with the valuable guidance given to me by my faculty mentor, advice that informed decisions well beyond my undergraduate education, I was immensely appreciative for the opportunity to participate in the discovery process – to pursue a question that could add to the disciplinary knowledge in a field for which I was passionate.



Upon reflection of my experience, I realized my communication of the work I performed focused solely on speaking with individuals within the discipline. As with most fundamental research, there was little discussion about how the work would be applied, subsequently limiting the audience with whom I interacted and who learned of the research I had undertaken.

What excites me about *The Oculus* is its mission to communicate, highlight, and promote the research being done by students at Millersville University. This publication presents the research performed by students and their faculty mentors in a manner for readers to gain an understanding for why the research was pursued, how it was conducted, and what they found.

The articles in this publication have been written by students whose interests align with science writing and the communication of science to the public. Through interviews with researchers, combined with information from presentations, reports, and theses, these students have summarized the excellent research being performed by their fellow students in the areas of Biology, Chemistry, Meteorology, and Ocean Sciences & Coastal Studies.

I am immensely grateful to Dr. Justin Mando, who has served as this project's faculty advisor. Along with acknowledging the undergraduate student researchers and their mentors who conducted the research featured in this publication, I greatly appreciate the hard work of each article's author in compiling and summarizing their efforts. Finally, I am extremely appreciative for Ms. Michella Salvitti's devotion and leadership in this initiative. As Founding Student Editor for *The Oculus*, she has done a phenomenal job in creating a vision, selecting topics to feature, recruiting authors, as well as reviewing and assembling the articles for this inaugural edition. Ms. Salvitti's effort in spearheading this publication is another fine example of the creativity and ingenuity exhibited by Millersville University students – something that continues to impress me time and again.

Now, I invite you to read, enjoy, and share the great work published here.

Sincerely,
Dr. Michael Jackson
Dean, College of Science and Technology
Millersville University