

# Synthesis: A Digital Journal of Student Science Communication

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## Editors' Note

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## Editors' Note

A growing interest in at the University of Iowa led to two new science communication initiatives in the 2015-2016 academic year. The Latham Science Engagement Initiative (LSEI) gives undergraduates the opportunity to design and carry out multifaceted communication projects through its Fellows program and associated coursework. The Rhetoric Department brings some of the same opportunities to graduate students through its new course Science Communication in the Digital Age. Central to both initiatives is the goal of helping students reach real audiences beyond the classroom, and it is for that reason that we decided to launch *Synthesis: A Digital Journal of Student Science Communication*.

As editors, we decided that *Synthesis* would feature many forms of communication. The courses we offer allow students to explore various forms of media, modes of expression, and channels for communication. Students' projects range from web publication to documentary-style videos to social media campaigns to animation. *Synthesis* is a venue that values communicative experimentation, and our first issue features projects with an array of goals and approaches. The creators published in this first issue are undergraduate and graduate students from Iowa's science communication courses. These students are not professional journalists, designers, or videographers, and submissions were judged with the understanding that students experimenting with forms would not be expected to produce perfect work but should be held to the standard of communicating compelling ideas.

We wish to thank the University of Iowa Libraries' Digital Scholarship and Publishing Studio, in particular Mark Anderson who helped set up this publishing platform and Heidi Bartlet who helped with the design. Thanks also to Drs. Robert and Sue Latham for their donation to the UI College of Liberal Arts and Sciences which allowed for the creation of the Latham Science Engagement Initiative (LSEI) and to Dan Eberl, Stefan Strack, and Susan Lutgendorf, whose NIH-funded T32 Administrative Supplement made possible the graduate Science Communication in the Digital Age course along with the assistance of the Graduate College. We are grateful for the generosity of our editorial review board, Mark McDermott (Science Education, Teaching and Learning) and Kevin Ripka (Journalism and Mass Communication) whose comments helped to shape the published pieces.

The cover art for this issue is Brittany Todd's sketch for a public art display on the pedestrian mall in Iowa City, IA.

-Lori Adams (LSEI), Matthew Gilchrist (Rhetoric), and Brinda Shetty (LSEI)