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Letter from the Dean

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Letter From the Dean



The vision for the Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food and Life Sciences and the Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station is to be a “nationally competitive, model, student-centered research organization serving Arkansas and the world.” In partial fulfillment of that vision, we are placing increased emphasis on the participation and involvement of undergraduate students in the research process. *Participation* and *involvement* are the key words. They indicate greater engagement than simply working on a research project, although that in itself is a tremendous learning activity. Full participation and involvement relate to the use of the experimental method in which the student formulates the research idea, structures the hypothesis, tests the hypothesis through experimentation, and draws the inferences. All of this must be done under the guidance and oversight of the research faculty—an association of faculty and student which represents teaching and learning at the highest level.

Science is not brought to fruition until the outcomes of the research are reported to peers and users of the information. *Discovery* was created to provide a reporting outlet for our undergraduate student-scientists. It will not supersede publication elsewhere, especially in the prestigious scientific journals, but rather it provides a forum for the students and faculty to share their results and findings.

We are excited about taking this step to enhance our programs. The undergraduate student research program will become the centerpiece for the College honors program. Seed grants are being awarded by the College and Experiment Station to support student research. Already our alumni are getting involved. Carroll and Sue Walls have established two undergraduate research fellowships in support of the program. We expect that support to grow as our alumni and friends become more closely acquainted our research programs for undergraduates.

I would like to acknowledge the members of the Arkansas Chapter of Gamma Sigma Delta, as well as the newly formed Honors Committee and the staff of Communications Services, who organized and edited this first issue of *Discovery*. The efforts of all these people have allowed Bumpers College to showcase a portion of the outstanding research accomplishments of our students.

In creating this program, we have attempted to do more than go to the next level of excellence. We are working to move to even higher levels of excellence—to skip levels, if you will—and reach those that will truly challenge our students and faculty and provide the most rewarding undergraduate experience possible. We hope that you can become as excited as we are about this venture. Let us know your thoughts about *Discovery*, the undergraduate research program, and how we might make it better. Best wishes.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Scifres', written in a cursive style.

Charles J. Scifres, Dean and
Associate Vice President for Agriculture