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Editor's Introduction

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Editor's Introduction

Dr. Ross Louis, Communications

As *XULAnexUS* reaches its third year of peer-reviewed publication (and seventh overall volume), it is a clear benchmark for demonstrating an important component of Xavier University of Louisiana's mission statement: the use of research as a means of preparing students for post-graduation leadership roles. As evidenced by the work published in Volume 7, Issue 1, Xavier students not only produce quality scholarship, they do it with an eye toward community engagement. The topics addressed in this issue – gender roles, access to health care, the development of self-esteem in college students, and the diagnosis of language development in children – all speak to a community-minded research ethos.

The present issue signals the journal's increasing diversity by including examples of all three categories that *XULAnexUS* publishes: research manuscripts, scholarly notes, and creative scholarship. Research manuscripts represent original scholarly projects generated from Xavier courses, summer projects, or other research projects. Scholarly notes represent scholarly work developed from a course assignment or project that relates to any single component of the research experience (e.g. literature review, clinical observation, research field report, etc.). Creative scholarship includes any instance of peer-reviewed creative writing, visual art, vocal performance, film, or recorded performance.

More importantly, this issue is proof of the journal's increasing rigor. The acceptance rate for Volume 7, Issue 1 was fifty percent, and the authors published here have responded successfully to critique from their mentors as well as faculty and student reviewers. The process of publishing in *XULAnexUS* mirrors the process of publishing in any peer-reviewed academic journal, which offers Xavier students a unique learning experience prior to entering graduate or professional school.

This issue begins with an original psychology study by Domonique Lewis that examines several factors that resonate strongly with the undergraduate experience: shyness, extraversion, self-esteem, and interpersonal relationships. Lewis' research has relevance for both teachers and counselors. Cassandra Shepard's creative writing emerges from her interdisciplinary minor in Women's Studies. Her poem, "Gendered Etiquette," explores the ways in which gender roles are enacted through lived experience. Courtney Thomas provides a critical literature review and policy recommendations for improving access to pre-natal health care in pregnant women. Thomas' scholarly note offers a thorough sociological analysis of the inequalities in access to pre-natal care. Finally, Valerie Davis' scholarly note allows an insider's perspective on how speech-language pathologists diagnose the normal language development of children. Expanding a Speech Pathology course assignment, Davis analyzes a field observation of the speech activity of a twenty-four month old toddler.

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XULAnexUS aims to strengthen the quality and representation of undergraduate scholarship at Xavier through its publication of outstanding student work. That mission continues with the spring publication of a “Global Citizenship” special section in Volume 7, Issue 2. The special section will spotlight student scholarship that emerges from the courses taught by Xavier’s Faculty Communities of Teaching Scholars (FaCTS), an initiative sponsored by the Center for the Advancement of Teaching and funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Submissions are being accepted through February 5, 2010. In summer 2010, *XULAnexUS* will launch a new Mellon-funded program, Enhancing Scholarship through Digital Media, that will use multimedia tools to enhance scholarship already published in the journal. A request for student proposals will be issued in the spring.

Finally, I would like to recognize a vital member of the *XULAnexUS* staff, Courtney Watson, who has served as the journal’s student editorial assistant since 2008. Courtney’s service has contributed directly to our expansion to two annual issues and a steady increase in submissions. Following her graduation from Xavier in December 2009, Courtney will pursue graduate school in a psychology program. I thank her for her commitment to the journal and wish her the best.