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Letter from the Editor in Chief

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Welcome to the inaugural issue of North Georgia College & State University's *Papers and Pubs*. Our mission in creating this journal was twofold: to provide a forum for young minds to showcase the fruits of their creative and scholarly work, and to give students the experience of going through the process of peer review. In an era of misinformation and overblown headlines, it is essential for the next generation to be directly involved in the production and dissemination of genuine scholarly works.

That is why we so strongly believe in engaging students in research: involvement in this practice helps to shape inquisitive, skeptical, and creative minds that will be better prepared to face (and hopefully address!) the world's future challenges. In addition, research experiences can help undergraduates learn more about themselves, discover how they can contribute to society, and get initiated in what could become their future career.

The art that graces the cover of this issue, *The Keyhole*, by North Georgia Visual Arts student Tiffany McGrath, may evoke some aspects of the research process. By plunging into the "deep unknown" with only a glimpse of the promise that is the light at the end of the tunnel, the researcher unlocks novel possibilities and creates new knowledge. Or perhaps, like in Tiffany's case, this process results in the generation of unique work. This does not come easily or quickly—research and creative activities take time and effort, far above what students normally experience in the traditional classroom—but the payoff is equally great. For students, working one-on-one with a faculty or expert mentor, immersing themselves in a field of study, and making a novel or interesting discovery can be immensely gratifying. Having myself experienced this as an undergraduate, and having been transformed by this experience, I am a staunch advocate of undergraduate research and scholarly involvement.

For this reason, I am extremely pleased to be a part of the *Papers and Pubs* team. Within this issue, you will find student works that are engaging, interesting, and thought-provoking. I hope you enjoy reading this issue as much as I have.

Sincerely,

Miriam Segura-Totten
Editor in Chief
Papers and Pub(lication)s