

OPENING REGARDS

Dear Mountaineers,

The Pre-Health Professional Development Office is proud to support the eighth publication of the Mountaineer Undergraduate Research Review (MURR). We value our strong partnership with the Office of Undergraduate Research (UGR) and our shared commitment to enhancing out-of-classroom learning opportunities for our students. Thus, we are honored to welcome you to this year's edition of MURR.

From the perspective of the Pre-Health Office, research remains an important aspect of healthcare and the practice of medicine. Research experience provides pivotal investigative skills necessary for a physician's diagnostic process, but it can also broaden and deepen medical knowledge and skills. Physicians and other healthcare providers rely on research to inform their decisions and broaden their understanding of the medical field, and many clinical physicians take the time to conduct research and publish findings to further their careers and contribute to the growing literature of the medical profession. Therefore, we wholeheartedly encourage each of our pre-health students to partake in research and explore what speaks to them and what drives them to pursue a career in health.

Research is also an opportunity to better evaluate the meaning of inexperience and failure. While exploring unfamiliar fields and topics, research has a unique way of revealing what you understand and often what you do not. It is rare that a research project works out exactly (or at all) as you predicted and the conclusions that you reach may be entirely unexpected. But the unpredictable and inconsistent nature of the research process need not be seen as a shortcoming or defect in your competency as a researcher, but rather as a unique learning opportunity to reframe inquiries, challenge previous assumptions, and experiment with new methods and approaches. Trial and error are natural parts of this process, and we hope that the challenges you have faced through your work has helped to refine your research skills and reconsider your definition of success.

Congratulations to our student researchers, as well as their mentors and peers, on another stellar year of quality research! We are delighted to invite our readers to consider and reflect on the work presented in this edition of MURR and hope that this work may kindle inspiration for future research in the coming years.

Sincerely,



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