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Aleph Letter from the Editor

Dear reader,

However you are accessing this text, through digital or print media, thank you for your interest in undergraduate research. Your engagement with this scholarship is essential to Aleph's mission of highlighting the perspectives and passions of UCLA's undergraduate researchers.

Over the past 2 years, I have developed such a sincere appreciation for the perspectives and passions of our undergraduate researchers. It has been a wildly inspiring experience to have a front row seat to the creativity and diligence of student-researchers across the humanities, arts, and social sciences. One central idea has been made abundantly clear to me throughout my tenure at Aleph: undergraduate research matters because it provides new solutions to the challenges we face as a society.

As the editor-in-chief of this year's volume, I am so proud of our entire staff's efforts at Aleph towards elevating the profile of UCLA's undergraduate researchers. It has been a big year for our team, setting records on author submissions and staff enrollments. I believe that these milestones of growth are a bellwether for the rising sentiment among undergraduate researchers around the world that their voices must be heard.

As a personal note, while I was initially reviewing each submitted article, I was thrilled and amazed to discover the diverse and fascinating topics which each article explored. I can say without question that if this compilation of writing was a regular course offering, it would be the most

fascinating class at UCLA.

This entire publication has truly been a team effort and all the pride I feel in our accomplishment is met with a strong sense of gratitude for exactly those who made it possible. Therefore, I feel it is appropriate to use what space I have to express this gratitude, because I cannot think of anything more important to say than that.

Thank you to every author who submitted their work this year: I wish them all wonderful success in their promising futures as researchers.

Thank you to all of our authors who are published in this volume for their brilliance, their labor, and their collaboration with our developmental and copyediting teams.

Thank you to our entire leadership team (in alphabetical order) for their diligence, professionalism, and contribution to this volume: Harleen Kaur, Kiana Karimi, Mandy Tang, Rachel Lei, Sydney Ward, Selena Perez, and Tahlia Disisto.

Thank you to our entire developmental and copy-editing staff: I do not have the space to thank them each by name, but please notice their names in the credits, they deserve individual recognition for their contribution.

To our graduate student advisor Sarah Alonzi, thank you for your support throughout this process and for sharing your knowledge of research methodology with our team.

To our leader and faculty mentor Dr. Kelly Kistner, thank you for creating such a collaborative and productive environment which truly treats the staff and authors with every bit of respect and professionalism that a journal should have.

To all previous staff members of Aleph, thank you for

creating and growing this wonderful platform specifically for undergraduate research. It is my honor to include myself among your ranks. To all future staff members of Aleph, thank you for continuing to carry this important responsibility forward and know that I am always cheering you on.

And to the reader, thank you for reading Volume 21 of Aleph's Undergraduate Research Journal. I hope these articles will expand your knowledge and deepen your appreciation for the work of undergraduate scholars at UCLA and beyond.

In gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Justin C.M. Brown', with a stylized, cursive script.

Justin C.M. Brown
Editor-in-Chief