

A Warm Welcome

It is with great pleasure that we present to you our fourth volume of the *Journal of Integrative Research & Reflection*.

This journal cycle presented itself as the most difficult to date; yet, what can be said without hesitation is that our journal is a labour of mental perseverance, teamwork, and an integrity toward providing the unique platform for cross-disciplinary work that undergraduate students deserve.

The veneer that is the COVID-19 pandemic has lain thickly over our heads for nearly two years, and it has invariably shaped this edition. The content – from the superbly imaginative cover art, to the high quality articles presented herein, and in the behind-the-scenes processes of reviewing and publication – have all been impacted by the unexpected twists afforded by a mindless virus that has upended the world in ways not even two world wars could achieve! It is within this context that our fourth volume has taken a more special meaning.

Our group has made it a point to center wellness during this entire cycle. Our weekly meetings served as a place to unwind amongst friends just as much as they provided a space for rich ideas to flourish. Our notions of productivity and efficiency shifted as we took time to listen to one another, over our little computer screens, tell stories of how we were finding ways to stay mentally and physically active in a time where interpersonal engagement was stifled. This journal has proven to be a centerpiece of human connection for all of us at *JIRR*: engaging together as a team as well as with creative authors and dedicated reviewers has highlighted *JIRR*'s mandate as both a physical and abstract space for relationships to bud and ideas to take root.

This year has also afforded us the opportunity to bring into the fold of *JIRR* new editors from across Canada. We are thrilled to have received an enthusiastic response from students wanting to be a part of this journal and continue to foster its growth.

There is no unifying theme for this journal – instead, we encourage the reader to look beyond the superficial connection between articles that is the pandemic, and question how the article topics can and should apply in other contexts. We should challenge ourselves to ask why certain questions have only been asked now. Why do we accept certain subject matter in different times and places? Whose responsibility is it to provide dedicated spaces of critical and uncomfortable inquiry when we are not sensitized to abnormal social conditions? The four articles found within this edition will provide an excellent starting point. These papers, as well as all of the submissions we received, have prompted us to consider the power of written word,

and the difficulty in producing meaningful work. Every time we pick up the pencil, we have a responsibility to contribute to new knowledge, to shape our perspectives of our world, and to share with others so that we may become more inquisitive, understanding, and connected.

Participating in this journal has been the highlight of our undergraduate tenures. We have learned and grown alongside it, and we are humbled by the excitement of the next iteration of the journal management. Allow us to thank our tireless reviewers, patient authors, inspiring mentors, and earnest teammates.

Finally, allow us to thank you, the reader, for sharing in the experience that is the brilliant cross-disciplinary work we have the honour to curate.

With warmest wishes,



Yousuf Ramahi



Maryam Mughal