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Our Mission
The research which is published in FIUURJ is both from the diverse range of university subjects and freely available to the higher education community as a whole. Being an open access, blind-reviewed multidisciplinary research journal ensures that student scholarship receives the proper support in order to impact and enrich a wide range of compelling fields. This journal is run by and for undergraduate students along with faculty advisers and volunteers. The journal provides opportunities for undergraduates and FIU alumni to become involved with and build experience in editing, digital project creating, peer-reviewing, and peer-advising.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

FIUURJ would like to recognize those who helped make this inaugural issue possible. Thank you to the members of our Advisory board, Xuan Jiang, Vanessa Sohan, Allen Varela, Amy Reid, Glenn Hutchinson, David Driesbach, and Michael Sohan, for your dedication to quality and student success. Thank you to our talented Student Editors and generous Faculty Reviewers for your writing expertise and support over a wide range of disciplines. To our Editorial Interns, Julia Hodak, Jonathan Borroto, and Lucas Vieira, thank you for the immense commitment of time and effort constructing, developing, and managing FIUURJ with diligence. Thank you to the Center for Excellence in Writing, FIU Liberal Studies, FIU Libraries, the Honors College, Humanities Edge, FIU Research and Development, MARC U*STAR, the Undergraduate Research Society, and the FIU Writing and Rhetoric Program for your sponsorship which allows us to provide students with resources and opportunities to flourish. Thank you to Jill Krefft from Digital Commons, Robert Zurita of Research Information Systems, and Christine Gregory at the Digital Writing Studio for your valuable technical and design assistance. Finally, FIUURJ would like to share our appreciation to Professor Michael Sohan's ENC 4212 Fall 2022 class for their copywriting contributions; thank you for the extra set of eyes that enhanced the integrity of our student writers’ research.

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Student Writers

Edurne Sosa El Fakih is an Anthropologist from Florida International University (2022). During her undergraduate, Edurne conducted preliminary ethnographic research in the Chiapas Highlands of Mexico, financed independently through a National Society of Leadership and Success (NSLS) scholarship, under the guidance and mentorship of Dr. Douglas Kincaid (FIU) and Dr. Elisa Cruz Rueda (UNACH). Currently, Edurne serves as Student Research Fellow with EII Mellon Foundation at FIU. Edurne is pursuing an MPhil in Social Anthropology at the University of Cambridge, where she will continue her research focused on Indigenous tourism, political and economic agency among the poor, racism, and the politics of exclusion.

Maria Parente recently graduated from Florida International University with a B.S. in Biology. Maria has been working under the guidance and mentorship of Dr. Philip K. Stoddard through independent research in his mosquito lab since the Summer 2019 term, and recently presented a poster of her research at the FIU Undergraduate Research Symposium. She served as the student facilitator of the Honors Dean’s Scholars program, and was the leader of the HEARTS Writing Club from Spring 2020 to Spring 2022. She aspires to continue research in a doctoral program in Epigenetics and simultaneously freelance as an artist and fiction author.

Kiara Taibi-Briz graduated from FIU in Spring 2022 with a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Studies focusing on agroecology. During her time at FIU, she served as the Garden Club President from Fall 2021 to Spring 2022 and as the Garden Manager in Spring 2022. Kiara has been working under the guidance of Dr. Kateel Shetty in the agroecology microbiology lab since Fall 2018. Kiara has presented in the 2021 and 2022 FIU Honors Undergraduate Research Conference. Kiara hopes to continue her education and receive a master's degree in Environmental Studies in the near future.

Vanessa Ponte is a senior at Florida International University, majoring in Psychology while on a Pre-Medical track. Vanessa has been working alongside Dr. Remy Dou in his research pertaining to family science talk and its contribution to STEM identity development since Fall of 2021. She has presented her work in a poster at the annual UndergradResearchFIU (URFIU) Conference, 2022. Following graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, she aspires to attend medical school and continue research in psychology while specializing in psychiatry.

Shaileen Barberena is a senior at Florida International University double majoring in Biological Sciences and Natural and Applies Sciences. She has been working under the guidance of Dr. Dionne Stephens at the Culture, Context, Health & Identities Research Lab since Spring of 2021. Shaileen has worked under graduate students as a research assistant on multiple projects and recently presented her collaboration project at FIU’s Undergraduate Research Conference. She aspires to attend medical school and continue sociological research to expand her cultural knowledge as a physician.

Nicole Rodriguez is a Senior at Florida International University who double majors in Behavioral Neuroscience and Liberal Studies, and minors in Psychology. Nicole has been working under the guidance and mentorship of Dr. Elisa Trucco and her student Benjelene Sutherland through directed independent research in Advanced Research and Creativity in Honors (ARCH) since August 2021; and has presented at the URFIU conference. Following graduation with a Bachelor of Science in Behavioral Neuroscience and a Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies, Nicole aspires to attend graduate school and continue research while obtaining her PhD in Behavioral Neuroscience.
Camila Garcia
Camila Garcia is an alumnus at Florida International University who majored in Biochemistry. Camila conducted her first independent research project under the mentorship of Dr. Stephen Winkle, where she explored the intricacies of melatonin-DNA interactions and binding selectivity. Under the ARCH program offered to members of the Honors College, Camila was able to depict her findings through her thesis Sequence Selectivity in the Binding of Melatonin to PhiX174RF DNA. She presented her research at the following poster conferences: FURC 2022, NCUR 2022, URFIU 2022, and LSSF 2022. In April 2022, Camila was accepted into the University of Pittsburgh's Bioengineering doctoral program, where she majors in Neural Engineering and is a member of the B.I.O.N.I.C. Lab.

Hayley Serpa
Hayley Serpa is a current accelerated master’s or 4+1 student in the Department of History at FIU. She has a minor in Religious Studies and is currently embarking on the final year of her master’s program. Her personal research interests lie in the modern history of Latin America, specifically examining the history of gender, sexuality, and social movements in Peru. Her undergraduate research through the Honors College ARCH program examined the military regime of General Velasco in Peru. For her master’s research, she plans to analyze the development of autonomous peasant patrols known as rondas campesinas through oral history research in Peru’s Amazon. Outside of her research and classes, Hayley serves as a Head Delegate for FIU’s Model United Nations team and works closely with the Humanities Edge Program.

Artistic Contributors

Lucas Cicarelli Vieira
Lucas Cicarelli Vieira is pursuing a B.A. in English Literature, a minor in Art History, and a Certificate in Professional and Public Writing. He is expected to graduate in Spring 2023. He has been practicing photography for the last three years, focusing on architectural subjects and intimate portraiture through a combination of digital and analog film techniques. He works at the Center for Excellence in Writing, consulting undergraduate students on their personal statements and research papers in a wide range of fields. Lucas also works as a research assistant with Xuan Jiang and is a digital projects assistant for FIUURJ. He plans to pursue an M.A. in English; when he’s not reading for his degree, he’s usually taking photos across campus. Lucas is the FIUURJ Spring 2023 cover art contest winner.

Saya Ritz
Saya Ritz is a multidisciplinary artist calling on the practices of printmaking, experimental video, textile, sculpture, and performance. Using her background in science and mastery of different mediums, her art transcends genres and knowledge in order to explore what it means to be an Hispanic/Arab woman while pushing boundaries in order to find her own way in life. Since 2019, Ritz has been studying at Florida International University working towards obtaining her BFA in the Fall of 2022. In the meantime, she has exhibited in several spaces such as the MBUS Washington Avenue Gallery, The Steven and Dorothea FIU Green Library, and The Albrecht-Kemper Museum of Art. Saya is a runner-up for the FIUURJ Spring 2023 cover art contest.

Maria Parente
Maria Parente is also a student writer for this issue of the FIUURJ. For her biography, please see page ii. Maria is a runner-up for the FIUURJ Spring 2023 cover art contest.
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The school of fish is misunderstood. So many metaphors exist for de-individualization – sheep herds, anthills – and yet oftentimes it's the grouping that helps the animal survive. I’d rather be alive than be an individual, which saying aloud might make me a shred less a patriot. After all, our status quo dictates individuality. It feeds on our isolation, our pride; our need to prove ourselves and shack up in the wilderness and fight the forces of nature on our lonesome. We want achievement, not progress. We want endurance, not ease, because anything worth making is worth sweating and suffering over. No pain no gain. Hoo-rah.

I’m a person. To keep from burning myself into ashes every workday, I need help. We need each other’s support to carry the weight of the progress we seek. For every rockstar – the Bill Nyes and Neil DeGrasse Tysons – we have a million more underappreciated scientists puttering around their laboratories putting in the real work. To truly collaborate isn’t about stamping your name on the product at the end. It’s about uplifting each other and sharing what you know in the hopes someone will understand it with a completely unique pair of eyes, and that their perspective is exactly what you needed. There is nobility in swimming together, however buffeted we are by currents and however cooked we get by warming waters. This is a survival strategy that can’t be beat, and we’re better off holding hands and facing each day as one community than splitting off and hoping we survive on our own. I think this encompasses the FIU Undergraduate Research Journal fairly well. The robot fish front-and-center represents STEAM, ushering in new technologies that fit right in with us and may even look like us.
When creating the piece Spore I gathered research from many sources. I reached deep into my memory from the first time I read a scientific book on some of the worlds “ugliest bugs,” specifically alluding to the Red Velvet Mite as well as referencing photos of different fungi growing in petri dishes. My main inspiration was my time in the FIU Agroecology High School Internship I participated in the summer of 2017, where we were trained to use microscopes and how to identify different types of bacteria that we collected in petri dishes. It was an experience that has always affected my art work and the symbology I use especially here in the piece Spore. I wanted to use my knowledge learned in high school as inspiration for the art career I am building now; I truly believe that both fields are beneficial to each other. I have always been intrigued by the formation of fungi and bacteria as it cannot be manufactured. It is an organic form that grows in spontaneous patterns as do my ideas for my art pieces. Spore first began with the idea that the art and science fields are interrelated, and how some fungi grow a network of myceliums in order to communicate with each other; this is expressed in the background of the piece where tendon-like structures spread across the mesh, citing the human connection to the varying subjects. The structure of the center is a configuration of cell diagrams from scientific textbooks, where shapes and colors varied at times. The result of this cover spawns from being attracted to science and all it can offer, what started as a seed of fascination became a playground for me to interpret science and use it as a metaphor to explain my own life.
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Interested in Publishing with FIUURJ?

We are currently looking for new research proposals to publish in our Spring 2024 issue. If you are a current (or recent) FIU undergraduate student interested in submitting an article, literature review, IRB approved humanities-based research, or creative artifact, please visit the FIUURJ website for submission information: www.fiuurj.fiu.edu/submissions.

For any application questions or clarification, please contact us by email at fiuurj@fiu.edu. We strive to provide an encouraging, inclusive, and collaborative platform for prospective student researchers to gain recognition for their work.

Interested in Joining FIUURJ?

FIUURJ relies on the diligent work of student editors to review, edit, and collaborate on proposals and manuscripts for the highest quality possible. If you are interested in supporting student writers during the writing process and have completed any upper-level writing course, please visit the “Get Involved” page on our website for application information:

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Faculty reviewers are also essential to the publication process by contributing valuable expertise and sufficiently assessing the quality of submitted student research. The FIUURJ committee encourages interested faculty to apply for this voluntary opportunity and enrich the publication experience of learning students by mentoring new groups of successful writers. For more information, please visit the “Get Involved” page on our website at:

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¡Mira que belleza, todo es posible!

The FIU URJ is spearheaded by several members of FIU’s Center for Excellence in Writing (CEW). A great deal of the tutors there learned their craft from observing and learning from Carlos Borges, a dedicated tutor at the CEW for over 25 years. With his unmatched thoughtfulness and expertise in working with others, he assisted hundreds of students in learning ways to improve their approaches to writing. Carlos enjoyed talking about language and getting to know his students, skills that he passed on to generations of new tutors as one of the most valuable mentors ever to work at the CEW. He was an exceptional listener whose students would visit him regularly at the CEW. He always sought to learn from his students and their writing projects, their disciplines, and their dreams.

Carlos cared deeply about students and staff members at FIU. He would always take time to engage people in conversation and forge deep, lasting human connections. Carlos’ attention to detail, his kindness, and his passion for words made such an important impact on the Writing Center and our university. His warm-hearted spirit made the Writing Center a special place for so many. In honor of his lasting memory and profound legacy at FIU, efforts are being made to rename the CEW’s main tutoring room the Carlos Borges Tutoring Room.

To pledge a donation for the **Carlos Borges Tutoring Room**, please scan the QR code or visit the CEW’s Give page at

https://case.fiu.edu/writingcenter/give