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Introduction

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Introduction

As professors, we all treasure those moments when we engage with undergraduate student work that reveals something new or that rare piece of work that genuinely astonishes us. A paper or research presentation will sail beyond the confines of the assignment and stick in our consciousness for days, weeks, or even longer. These papers do more than just impress us: they sincerely contribute to our understanding of the material. We bring them up in conversation. We brag about them. We positively glow.

Equally potent, though, is the nagging, frustrating feeling that after the term ends, this paper or project will simply gather dust—or whatever the digital equivalent of dust is—off in a box somewhere, or in the farthest reaches of a hard drive. One day it will be thrown out or deleted. To be certain, excellent work by undergraduates can occasionally live on, transformed, in a writing sample for graduate school, or as a section of a thesis. But even then, the paper itself becomes simply a stepping stone, not celebrated for its own achievements. One of the aims of Locus is to stage that missing celebration. We feel that great student work deserves a larger audience than just one professor. And so we are thrilled to introduce you to some of the most exciting research currently conducted by undergraduates at Seton Hall—papers that dart and weave their way through diverse corners of our universe, from the surface of the sun to Game of Thrones to the depths of our brains. While diverse in content, however, all of these papers have in common a mission to be both erudite and accessible. These are not papers by wonky specialists, but invitations to a conversation. Their aim is to challenge and provoke, but also to feature clear openings for people of all interests to join the discussion. As with all the best work, these papers are the product of minds whose curiosity has been piqued, whose preconceptions have been challenged, whose aspirations have been stoked. They have grown out of one person's education to become, potentially, a part of yours.

When Dean Shoemaker originally approached us with this idea, our minds began spinning. We thought of all those moments we had held superlative student work in our hands and thought, I wish others could see read this! It is our honor to report that now you can. We are deeply grateful for support from Lisa de Luca, Sharon Ince, Tom McGee, Dean Peter Shoemaker, and Rebecca Karberg. And we are truly honored to be working with such a sterling student editorial committee: Melani Filosa, Laura Mendez, and Karl Hendela.

Sincerely,

The Editorial Committee