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*Zenith! Undergraduate Research Journal for the Humanities* is a student-run, student-reviewed, and student-published annual academic journal. Its purpose is to provide a venue for undergraduates at The University of Kansas to share their research in the Humanities.

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# Kelsey Rolofson

## Letter from the 2020 Editor-in-Chief

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Dear Readers,

Witnessing the transition of the *Undergraduate Research Journal for the Humanities* to the edition of *Zenith! Undergraduate Research Journal for the Humanities* that you see here has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my time at The University of Kansas. As our new name suggests, this publication contains the pinnacle—the zenith—of undergraduate Humanities research at KU, and I am incredibly proud to have seen it blossom over the last two years. Although my undergraduate career, and thus my time with the Journal, wrapped up early, I could not have had a more willing, caring, and determined team to pass it on to than Abigail Byrd, Miles Luce, and the 2020-2021 editorial staff. Their passion for shaping, editing, and critiquing the outstanding work in this issue has carried on the journal's tradition of publishing the brilliant research that KU Humanities students have to offer, a tradition rooted in the work of Savannah Pine and Matthew Dunn and revived by the wonderful Madelynn Kurtz. This edition could not have been possible without the extensive guidance and solid foundation that they have laid out for us. Moreover, this issue of *Zenith!* exists entirely because of the perseverance of the editorial staff, who navigated the shift from in-person to digital, from Editor to Editor, and from URJH to *Zenith!* with patience and grace. Your commitment and resolve are the heart of this edition.

I would like to extend my thanks to our faculty advisor, Dr. Hagel, whose experience with the *Journal* has helped us tremendously along the way, and to Marianne Reed of KU Libraries, who has been integral to the publication of these articles and our transition to the new *Zenith!* name. To our Partner departments, thank you for your endless support of our journal and editorial staff. I am especially grateful to all of the KU faculty and staff who volunteered their time and expertise to help us, and, of course, to the authors who submitted their research. It is a vulnerable and admirable venture to submit one's work for critique, and one that we at *Zenith!* applaud, whether or not you were published in this issue. Finally, all thanks to you, our readers, without whom *Zenith!* would not exist. I sincerely hope that this issue brings you joy, knowledge, and an idea of the passion and drive that went into its creation.

Sincerely,



Kelsey Rolofson, 2020 Editor-in-Chief

# Abigail Byrd

## Letter from the 2021 Editor-in-Chief

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Dear Readers,

More now than ever, it is important to celebrate our accomplishments, academic or otherwise, and I believe this issue of *Zenith!* is a celebration in and of itself. Throughout the publication process, we at *Zenith!* see many faces of the Humanities at the University of Kansas: students, who write and review compelling papers on a variety of humanities subjects; faculty members, who advise, revise, and, most importantly, encourage undergraduate research; and the libraries, who provide research and digital support and work to make publications like ours accessible to all. Each step towards publication reveals how vital these individuals and entities are to the field and how impossible sharing undergraduate research would be without their direction. This and every issue of *Zenith!* is a culmination of the passion for and dedication to the Humanities within our KU community, and we are grateful for all those who made it possible. It is because of the community that I consider this journal to be a celebration of the Humanities – not only of the subject itself, but of all those who engage with and dedicate themselves to the field.

I would like to thank our former Editor-in-Chief, Kelsey Rolofson, who, even after graduating in December, remained an integral part of our team. The transformation of *Zenith!* would not have succeeded without her help and guidance over the past semester. Next, I would like to extend my gratitude to Miles Luce, who, as a first-year student, consistently went above and beyond to prepare this publication and to improve *Zenith!* overall. I am confident that this journal will continue to thrive under his leadership. Finally, I will echo Kelsey in extending my thanks to everyone who put their time and effort into the journal this year – our student and faculty reviewers, our departmental and library partners, our authors, and our readers. I hope this publication reflects the effort and enthusiasm of all those who made it possible, and that, after reading, you come to see *Zenith!* as I do – a celebration of the viability and brilliance of the Humanities.

Sincerely,



Abigail Byrd, 2021 Editor-in-Chief