

Using Open Access Publishing to Promote Undergraduate Research

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Background & Context

1. Undergraduate Journal with 30+ Years of History
2. Due to staffing and student volunteer changes, the journal had gone dormant for 5+ years
3. Journal had been previously hard copy with some online content
4. As Pitt's Honors College began to grow, the need for a public-facing publication to showcase student work also grew



Pittsburgh Undergraduate Review

The Pittsburgh Undergraduate Review

- Instead of starting a new journal, we decided to revitalize the existing journal
- Due to budgetary restraints, the journal had to be completely online

Issue 1
Fall

Steps to Revitalization

- 1) Who – Who will be involved
- 2) What – What will be the content and focus of the journal
- 3) Where – Where will it be housed and how (e.g., paper, online, etc.)
- 4) Why – Why is an undergraduate journal needed?
- 5) When – When will the journal publish its next issue (e.g., timeline)
- 6) How – How will we receive, review, and publish student work?
- 7) Recruitment

Who?

- Student Run (provides experiential learning)
- University Honors College (interdisciplinary home)
- Director of Honors Research (promotes stability)
- Hillman Library (platform support & expert advice)

What?

- An interdisciplinary journal that publishes research, scholarship, and creative work across all disciplines
- A student-run, peer reviewed journal
- A completely online, open-access journal



Where?

- Housing the journal in an Honors College ensures that it receives content submissions from students across disciplines and has an academic unit as a home.
- Partnering with the Hillman Library ensures there are stable resources and digital publishing experts that can support sustainability and administration of the journal.

Why?

- Honoring the existing history of the journal and work of previous students
- Provides an educational experience AND a practical team/applied experience for students
- Undergraduate Research is HIP (high-impact practice)!



When?

Sample timeline from original planning documents:

December 2019 – February 2020:

- Initial journal development and benchmarking (review previous and existing undergraduate journals)
- Formation of journal name, general focus, and student position descriptions.

February 2020 – March 2020:

- Director of Research met with Pitt's Office of Scholarly Communications and Publishing to discuss publishing resources.
- Student editorial board applications advertised.
- Editorial Board formed in March 2020.

April 2020:

- First meeting of the PUR student Editorial Board.
- Student position descriptions evaluated and refined.

Summer 2020:

- Multiple Editorial Board meetings and journal policy and submission development.
- Peer review training development.

Fall 2020:

- Peer Review Training (September or October, 2020)
- First call for papers scheduled to be sent October 1st, 2020. First submission deadline scheduled for December 2020.

Spring 2021:

- First round of submissions and reviews.

How?

- Peer Reviewed by students, for students!
 - Peer Review Training developed by Director of Research
- OJS (Online Journal System)
 - OJS system training offered through Hillman



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Appendix A: Peer Review Training Curriculum & Rubrics

Overview

What's the purpose of peer review?

- 1) In general, peer review serves two important purposes in the scholarly world:
 - a. To ensure that research or scholarship being published in a particular field represents high-quality work, is significant to the respective field of study, and meets professional standards and expectations of the field.
 - b. Ensures the same research/work is not already published or addressed elsewhere.
 - c. Peer review also serves to "improve the quality of manuscripts deemed suitable for publication" within a particular field ([Kelly, Sadeghieh, and Adeli, 2014](#)).
- 2) Moreover, peer review can help scholars and researchers do the following:
 - a. Connect with, and contribute to, a larger academic community.
 - b. Ensure ethical and rigorous research is being conducted in a field.
 - c. Help guide the conversation and direction of research across disciplines.
 - d. Ensure that no research or scholarship is exempt from scrutiny.

What is not appropriate in peer review:

- 1) Criticism of scholarship based on personal bias or limited understanding of a subject.
- 2) Criticism that does not include clear, reasonable, and constructive feedback.

Basics of Peer Reviewer

When considering acting as a peer reviewer, you should ask yourself the following questions:

- 1) Do you have the necessary expertise and training to effectively review and provide feedback for the papers or projects you are being asked to review?
- 2) Are you able to commit the time and effort to review the article?
- 3) Do you have any personal or professional conflicts of interest that might negatively affect your review?
- 4) Are you familiar with the standards and expectations of the journal you are reviewing for?

If you answered yes, yes, no, and yes to the previous four questions, then you might be ready to act as a peer reviewer. Work closely with the editor(s) of the journal who requested your feedback and make sure you follow any directions they provide about the review process.

Starting Your Review

When you begin your review, use the following guidelines:

- 1) **Step 1:** Read the abstract and introduction. Are you comfortable reviewing this work? Do you think you will be able to provide the necessary feedback? If not, go back to the editor and state your concerns. Maybe this paper isn't for you. If you are comfortable, move on to step 2.
- 2) **Step 2:** Review the paper once, quickly skimming the entire article to get a sense of the focus of the paper and its subject. Pay special attention to the following items:

Journal Proposal & Approval

- Title of Publication
- Frequency & Schedule of Publication
- Scope, Focus, and Description of Content
- Target Audience
- Types of Content (i.e., essays, research, etc.)
- Description of Peer Review Process (if applicable)
- Journal Personnel & Support
- Open Access and Copyright Policies
- Target Implementation Dates
- Rationale (for new journals only)

Journal Bylaws & Guidelines

- Students developed bylaws and submission guidelines after reviewing previous journal documents and undergrad journals



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Author Guidelines

Eligibility

- The submission cannot have been previously published or in the process of being considered for another publication
- Submissions are only open to students affiliated with the Honors College
 - Affiliation can come from being a part of the Honors College Cohort
 - It also includes students who have developed a project through an honors class, an Honors College fellowship, and/or extensive work with a faculty associated with the Honors College
- Submissions should reflect work done under the mentorship of a Pitt faculty member
- There is no limit to the number of submissions per author, but a maximum of one (1) piece per author would be published if it passes the review process

General Writing Guidelines

- Format
 - Word document or PDF
 - Redact any personalized information in the name and content of the article document (ex. names, organization titles, etc)
 - Upload a separate cover page document containing your name and affiliations (you will be able to upload multiple documents in 1 submission)
 - Single spaced
 - 12 pt and legible font
 - Max 20 pages
 - Citation must be the correct style according to the specific discipline
- Quality
 - Must use proper grammar, syntax, and language unless it's a creative work
- Content
 - All works must be original and excellent; more details regarding plagiarism can be found on the website: <https://www.plagiarism.org>
 - While students can submit works from any discipline, special attention will be given to interdisciplinary works
- Style
 - All submissions must be written in English unless it falls under the creative writing category
 - Students should avoid the heavy use of jargon in their work
- Table, figure, and image
 - They should be numbered to show their sequence with a short title and a description
 - They can be submitted within the article or as a separate document
 - Authors have the responsibility to receive permission for copyrighted works

Specific Requirements for Submission Categories

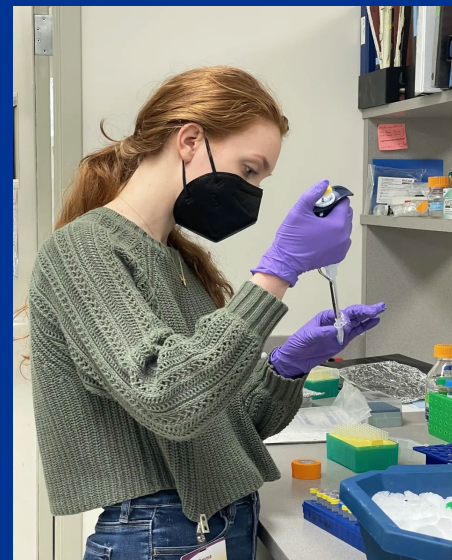
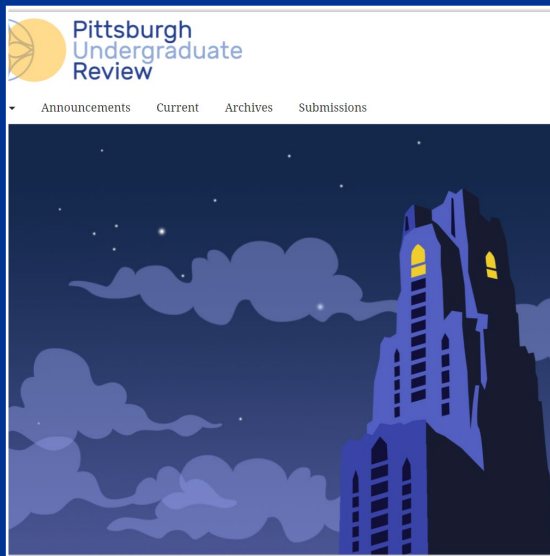
- Research
 - Includes work belonging to STEM, social science, humanities, as well as literature reviews
 - Must include an abstract
 - Each research article will be reviewed by two peer reviewers, using a double-blind review and scoring rubric. Scores from the two reviewers will be averaged. Scores for all applications will be reviewed by the Editorial Board. Recommendations are made by Editorial Board members. The Editor-in-Chief makes final acceptance decisions based on Editorial Board member recommendations and final review.
- Creative Writing
 - Includes works of short stories, poetry, and essays exploring a topic

Obstacles, Costs, and Considerations

Obstacles	Costs	Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student Recruitment• Marketing• Reinvention	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• OJS Platform (minimal)• Student Stipends (eventual)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consideration of Other Student Journals• Timeline• Sustainability Planning• Student Training



Questions?



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