

Volume XII, April 2010

Preface

As Dean of the School of Culture and Society at The College of New Jersey, I am delighted to welcome readers to the pages of our *Journal of Student Scholarship*. The College of New Jersey has a long-standing commitment to undergraduate research and creative endeavor, and the College's support for the publication of student research from a broad range of fields reflects the breadth of TCNJ's seven schools. As an institutional member of the Council on Undergraduate Research (www.cur.org), TCNJ is dedicated to promoting student research opportunities to challenge our students to generate new ideas and contribute significantly to our understanding of the world around us (or, in the case of psychology, for example, the world *inside us*). Together with our Mentored Undergraduate Summer Experience (MUSE) Program that connects faculty and student researchers and creative teams, and the Celebration of Student Achievement, an annual conference and exhibit of student scholarship and creative activity, *TCNJ Journal of Student Scholarship* provides a forum for students to present their research and for our community to celebrate student success.

Undergraduate research is essential to higher education. As you read the essays included in this year's issue of *TCNJ Journal of Student Scholarship*, you will see how our student-authors have engaged in authentic, inquiry-based learning. These efforts do not mechanically replicate existing patterns; rather, they constitute substantive original research. Our student-authors, having met scholarly challenges in their chosen disciplines, here communicate their insights to you, our readers. Undergraduate research improves student mastery of academic fields and helps students develop enhanced communication skills and self-confidence. Together with internships and study abroad, research such as that published in *TCNJ Journal of Student Scholarship* reflects truly transformative experiences in undergraduate education.

I extend my congratulations to this *JoSS* issue's authors for their accomplishments, which would not have been possible without the unwavering support of their faculty mentors, whom I thank for their efforts. As the great Russian-American writer and critic, Vladimir Nabokov, observes:

Literature, real literature, must not be gulped down like some potion which may be good for the heart or good for the brain – the brain, that stomach of the soul. Literature must be taken and broken to bits, pulled apart, squashed – then its lovely reek will be smelt in the hollow of the palm, it will be munched and rolled upon the tongue with relish; then, and only then, its rare flavor will be appreciated at its true worth and the broken and crushed parts will again come together in your mind and disclose the beauty and unity to which you have contributed something of your own blood (Vladimir V. Nabokov, *Lectures on Russian Literature*, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981, p. 105).

Nabokov's recommendation for our appreciation of literature applies equally to this issue of *JoSS*. I encourage its readers to allow the bits and pieces to come together into a beauty and unity to which we, too, will have contributed something of our own.

Benjamin Rifkin
Dean, School of Culture and Society
Professor of English and Modern Languages