A welcome from the SURG Editor-in-Chief

It is my pleasure to present to you the 18th issue of *Studies by Undergraduate Researchers at Guelph* (SURG), the University of Guelph's multidisciplinary, faculty-reviewed undergraduate research journal. As always, the journal continues to recognize and promote the research conducted by undergraduates in all disciplines at the University of Guelph.

The issue begins with an item of local interest. Taking as its starting point the recent controversy over groundwater extraction and bottling in the Township of Centre Wellington, a study by Kai Bruce *et al.* investigates whether a free market environmentalist approach to groundwater management and allocation in Ontario could resolve future conflicts. Also local in its focus, the issue's Special Series features two undergraduate-involved projects presented at *What We Know: Research and Insight on Guelph-Wellington*, a public event hosted by the University of Guelph's Community Engaged Scholarship Institute. First, Sara Epp, Emma Drake, and Wayne Caldwell propose a method of quantifying farmland conversion in Southern Ontario, with particular emphasis on Wellington County. Sharon Findlay then discusses the *Italian Heritage Project*, a University of Guelph-based initiative to collect and curate the oral histories of Italian immigrants to Canada. These explorations, though local in scope, speak to broader issues of environmental management, resource allocation, and the experience of migration.

In addition to these locally-oriented investigations and initiatives, a review article by Brock Tompkins discusses several drugs prescribed to promote weight loss, evaluating both their safety and their efficacy. Concluding the issue is a selection of abstracts from *ASCI*4010: Arts and Sciences Honours Research Seminar*, a capstone course for students enrolled in the Bachelor of Arts and Sciences program. Attesting to the program's interdisciplinary spirit, these abstracts range in focus from the effectiveness of digital counter-terrorism techniques to the influence of genetic risk information on health-related behaviour.

As SURG moves forward into the 2017-2018 academic year, I am pleased to announce that Andrew Laskary, formerly SURG's Associate Editor, Science and Engineering, will be taking the helm as Editor-in-Chief. Andrew's diligence, vision, and extensive involvement at the University of Guelph make him well suited for his new role. An undergraduate in the departments of Biomedical Sciences and Philosophy, Andrew is an active participant in the University of Guelph's research community, particularly at the Ontario Veterinary College. I have every confidence that under Andrew's leadership, SURG will thrive as it enters its tenth year and continues in its mandate to highlight the University of Guelph's excellence in undergraduate research.

I am grateful to the SURG Editorial Team and Advisory Committee, the staff at the Office of Research, and to our faculty reviewers, who all play an integral role in SURG's operations. In preparing this issue, I have benefitted from the kind advice and guidance of Karl Cottenie, Kim Garwood, Liz Synder, Owen Roberts, and Wayne Johnston, to each of whom I extend my thanks. Finally, I thank the authors whose work comprises the issue, and our readers, both at and beyond the University of Guelph.

I hope that you enjoy your reading.

Sincerely,

Jack McCart
Editor-in-Chief, SURG