

A Letter from the Editor-in-Chief



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Dear readers,

As the academic year once again comes to a close, we are thrilled to present the 2018 *Columbia Undergraduate Science Journal*. This year, we have redoubled our efforts to focus our journal to highlight undergraduate research and scientific thought. To that end, we believe that our new editorial and formatting guidelines have improved the process and product.

In addition, submissions to our other publication, the *Columbia Junior Science Journal* amazed us with the passion and excitement of high school students and the quality and incisiveness of their research. We look forward to continuing to improve this journal for future submitters.

On campus, here at Columbia University, *CUSJ* has vigorously continued to create and support an undergraduate research community. To that end, we have worked to broaden our reach and scope. For example, *CUSJ*, in co-sponsorship with the Columbia University chapter of the American Physician Scientists Association and the Charles Drew Premedical Society at Columbia University, hosted a panel discussion with MD, PhD and MD/PhD students about graduate degrees in the sciences. We also maintained our Glucose and Caffeine study break series, hosted speakers such as bioethicist, Dr. John Loike, and had our annual Spring Symposium. Our Symposium is an open, accessible forum for a diverse array of researchers to present their work.

We also continued our annual “How to get involved with undergraduate research?” event. *CUSJ* wants to encourage and support undergraduates in scientific research, especially those who are seeking their first experience. Fundamentally, *CUSJ* will continue to do so while importantly

keeping in mind the pressing inequities in access and opportunities, the powerful force of community and mentorship, and the role science plays in our society. It would be impossible to undertake this goal alone, and I have to thank the staff for their tireless dedication and hard work throughout the year.

Finally, I wanted to close my letter by sharing a passage from a *Cell* Commentary published by the lab of Victor Ambros, reflecting on their discovery of microRNAs, for your consideration. For me, this quotation encapsulates so much about what makes science research so powerful and so meaningful as an intellectual endeavor, and I hope that it will inspire you too.

“The intellectual backdrop motivating our effort to clone *lin-4* (Lee et al., 1993) had nothing to do with questions about noncoding RNAs or antisense gene regulation. We were simply curious about an interesting worm mutant, and everything we found out about it was unexpected.

We consider ourselves very lucky to happen to have chosen *lin-4* to study. In fact, good fortune appeared at many steps before and during our *lin-4* project, often through the contributions of other people” (Lee et al., 2004).

Kenneth Pham

Editor-in-Chief

Lee, R., Feinbaum, R. & Ambros, V. A short history of a short RNA. *Cell* **116**, S89-92, 81 p following S96 (2004).