
THE INAUGURAL ISSUE OF THE *AUGUSTINE* *COLLEGIATE REVIEW*

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The inaugural issue of the *Augustine Collegiate Review*.

That simple phrase bears far more weight than might first appear. The journal, a product of The Augustine Honors Collegium of Boyce College, aims to stand out from amongst the vast sea of publications already on the market. In fact, the publishing world appears to be so saturated that one would certainly be excused for questioning the logic behind yet another journal. Hopefully, this first issue will demonstrate its value to the readership.

That being said, I have been involved in the academy long enough to understand the ludicrous nature of a claim of uniqueness for a publication of this sort, and I have been appropriately humbled enough to recognize both the dangers and the limitations of claims of self-importance. Thus, I have no desire to sell this project as “the next big thing”. I do not believe this journal will change your life, nor do I believe it will change the academic world. Thankfully, those are not the aims.

My hope in overseeing this project can be described in one word: potential. In my years in the classroom, I have had the great privilege of teaching some extraordinarily bright students, students with such natural giftings that even I would have to try hard to get in their way. But those students are few and

far between—even once in a generation. The vast majority of students in an undergraduate or even postgraduate classroom enter as vessels of potential, lacking only the shaping of experience and the lighting of the proverbial fire. In my mind, at its best this journal will be part of that honing, a tool for undergraduates (and their professors) to hone their skills through a rigorous academic process which includes a double-blind expert review.

The academic publishing process can be difficult and even disheartening as authors submit the product of their hard work only to have editors and expert reviewers zero in on the minutest details. For many undergraduates—if not most of them—having papers edited in such a manner is a completely new experience. In fact, several students who submitted papers for this issue responded with amazement at the level of critique their papers received. Sometimes the critique proved positive and led either to publication or at least to more constructive work on the article. At other times, the critique left a surprising wound in the mind of the author. But in all of those cases, the students began to understand the invaluable (and seemingly unending) process of researching, writing, editing, and receiving critique on academic work.

While this publishing process will certainly benefit the student authors—indeed, it already has—the journal also has the potential to benefit the greater academic community. The vast majority of academic journals purport to be publications “of the experts, for the experts,” but this journal seeks to be something different—an opportunity for the academic community to begin developing the next generation of writers and for these talented undergraduate writers to begin sharing the knowledge they have gained in their studies.

Please understand, this endeavor is not an attempt to fast-track students into the academic world—something equivalent to a participation trophy in t-ball. I firmly believe students need to work hard and develop their skills as researchers and writers in order to earn their place in the academic community. This journal is not intended to give undergraduates a false sense of importance or prematurely bestow upon them the title “expert”. The editorial team makes no claims that the undergraduate authors represented here are experts nor that these articles represent a unique contribution to the collective body of knowledge. The articles selected through this rigorous process do, however, represent the best of undergraduate academic writing, combined with some excellent, in-depth—if not exhaustive—research.

Each journal issue will present those select undergraduate-authored articles alongside others contributed by seasoned experts which will serve as entry points into the issue's theme. The goal of this format is to allow the readership to dig into the theme with as much depth as they would like. Readers are not assumed to have prior knowledge in order to benefit from the journal as authors of all ilks have been instructed to write for an educated but non-expert audience. Each of the issues will tackle a single broad theme with authors being instructed to tackle the topic from a Christian perspective.

This first issue, for instance, focuses on the joint themes of metaphysics and ontology—large topics which provide innumerable angles for research. To introduce one of those angles, experts Mark Coppenger and Douglas Blount, both well-published in the fields of philosophy and theology, have contributed articles on their conceptions of God and time. Following those articles, the undergraduate papers tackle themes from a theology of place to fantasy literature, from a philosophical foundation for art to the concept of transhumanism. With each of these articles, I hope readers can engage the topic with a critical interest which, at least for the moment, will keep from thinking about the undergraduate authors and instead will leave them inspired, educated, captivated, or even moved to disagreement. The quality of research and writing will certainly move them to return for more.