Welcome to the inaugural issue of Scientific Terrapin, the University of Maryland’s first interdisciplinary research journal dedicated to undergraduate research. As two undergraduate researchers ourselves, we are strong proponents of research both from a professional and personal standpoint. The skills that research imparts, hard work ethic, spirit of inquiry, communication and writing skills, are those we think all undergraduates can learn from as they prepare to enter the world of employment, graduate or professional school. However, despite the hundreds of hours of hard work and diligence we and other undergraduates devoted to our work, the, we found that the culminating products of these efforts were seen by only a few people. We felt like that these authors deserved sufficient readership with which to disseminate their findings and inspire academic discussion.

The confluence of all of these factors inspired us to create Scientific Terrapin, whose mission is twofold: to provide an outlet for the publication of high quality undergraduate research in all fields (humanities, social sciences, physical and applied sciences and life sciences) to showcase the talents and efforts of undergraduate students here and to increase the visibility of undergraduate research on campus and in doing so, further the goals of University of Maryland as a research university.

This journal has been the result of a year’s hard work and dedication from those who first believed in us and in the mission of this journal. From its inception, the vision for this journal has been shaped by a small, core group of students with a range of background and experience. We could not have accomplished this feat without our dedicated staff of editors, writers, advisors, and design team, and the finished product has truly been a collaborative effort. As entirely student staffed and led organization, we would also like to thank those who have shown enthusiasm and provided support for this mission. Through these months of hard work, it has always been encouraging to see our idea take root and generate excitement and interest.

In keeping with our goal of increasing the visibility of undergraduate research on campus, we have hosted workshops on finding research opportunities on campus and next year will continue to host these sessions to make research more accessible to you. We will be accepting submissions for the fall issue of the journal throughout the summer, so we encourage you to submit your abridged Honors theses or Gemstone papers, your work with a faculty mentor or campus, or your findings from an internship. Details and submission guidelines can be found on our web site, [www.scientificterrapin.org](http://www.scientificterrapin.org). This fall, we will be looking for interested and dedicated individuals to continue to carry the torch, so we also encourage you to apply for positions on next year’s staff. We are still in the beginning stages of this process and welcome all feedback in hopes to constantly work to better the journal and our practices for the future.

In this issue, you will find the work of three dedicated researchers in the social and applied sciences, as well as interview with faculty members who share how their experiences in research have contributed to their careers and their lives. Thank you for reading, and we sincerely hope that you enjoy what we have worked so hard to produce over the last year.

Sincerely,
Baijia Jiang and Jasjeet Khural
Editors-in-Chief