



IU South Bend

URJ

Undergraduate Research Journal

IU South Bend Undergraduate Research Journal

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Letter from the Editor

Dear readers,

It is with much enthusiasm that I present to you the Undergraduate Research Journal of IU South Bend for 2017. What you now hold in your hands is the culmination of months of hard work that began nearly a year ago. After having worked as an Editor on last year's journal under the direction of then Editor-in-Chief, Christine Deutscher, I was inspired to take on the same role. Christine did such a great job with last year's journal, I was hoping I could maintain such a high level of excellence. That would not have been possible without the involvement of our Graphic Designer, Jenna Fink. Jenna has been working toward a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Integrated New Media Studies with a concentration in Graphic Design and, as you can tell from the quality of the design work you will see in this journal, is well on her way to a promising career as a Graphic Design artist. The fact that she did all this while preparing for her first child is just another shining example of the kind of committed students we have here at IU South Bend.

I have to thank my team of Editors for taking on the responsibility of being a sounding board for me and working with various authors to get their articles in the best shape possible for publication. As SGA President this year, I recruited a team of fellow SGA members to serve and they did not disappoint. The SGA not only provides the allocated funds for Student Publications, but this year they got involved in working with their fellow students, as they love to do, and I have to thank Vice-President Leah Klopfenstein, Secretary Stuart Settle, Chief Justice Craig Johnson, Associate Justice Ryan Murray, and Senator Lois Kassem for making themselves available to work with our authors. Your help was greatly appreciated.

I also want to thank the other members of our Student Publications board for providing guidance and direction throughout the year. Professor Kelsey Parker Ervick, Ph.D., provided great leadership as Chair, our Advisor for the Undergraduate Research Journal, Dr. Peter Bushnell, gave us the freedom and encouragement to make the book our own creation, and my fellow Editors-in-Chief of the other Student Journals on campus, especially Jen Kucharski (Winner of this year's Library Prize for Undergraduate Research) from the Undergraduate Research Journal in History offered many collaborative tips toward making the project a success.

A huge debt of gratitude goes out to Professor Barbara Mociulski, who let me come to her class to recruit a Graphic Designer, in which I connected with Jenna. Deb Richards from Purchasing and Angie Klontz from the Student Activities Director's office helped me get all of the paperwork together to make sure we could pay to get the Journal published, and, last, but not least, Ray Mann, from Service Printers, gave me a crash course on how a book gets made and was extremely patient while he waited for us to get all

of our design work done so he could start the printing process during a very busy time of the year for him.

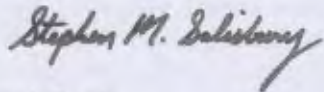
My main contribution this year, aside from doing a lot of editing myself, was to arrange the articles in a non-traditional way. Normally, the articles are arranged by discipline in sections, but this year I chose to publish them in a more randomized, but strategic, order simply because I wanted you, the reader, to be able to take a journey through the various types of undergraduate research being done here at IU South Bend. We start with an article from Christine Deutscher herself, which she graciously chose not to publish in the book she produced last year, which looks at retention and graduation rates here at IU South Bend using a qualitative approach and we end with an article of mine (I'm not nearly as gracious as Christine) that looks at similar issues using a quantitative method. In between, we have material from a variety of disciplines from authors that provide a diverse field of perspectives both academically and culturally. I hope that after having finished reading this journal, you will be impressed by the amount of great work that is both being taught and executed on this campus.

None of this would have been possible of course without the willingness of so many students taking a chance through submitting their work. Nothing pains an Editor more than having to tell someone their article is not getting published. For those who submitted, but did not get published, please don't let that deter you from submitting again in the future. Poet William F. O'Brien, inspired by Tennyson, wrote:

*Some say risk nothing, try only for the sure thing,
Others say nothing gambled nothing gained,
Go all out for your dream.
Life can be lived either way, but for me,
I'd rather try and fail, than never try at all, you see.*

We've tried to bring you a high quality academic journal this year. Our hope is that we've succeeded, but the joy in the journey of trying has been worth the effort! Enjoy!

Stephen M. Salisbury; Editor-in-Chief



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Bearing the Weight: Student Support Systems Inspiring Retention and Graduation at IU South Bend

Author: Christine Deutscher
Subject: Sociology

Abstract

Faced with the possibility of federal funding cuts, public universities feel constant pressure to evaluate and increase retention and graduation rates among their students. Being a nontraditional campus with many nontraditional and diverse students, it becomes more imperative than ever to explore factors which contribute to low retention and graduation rates at IU South Bend. By examining prior literature on the topic and performing qualitative research with individual IU South Bend students, this study aims to identify, analyze, and propose solutions to keep IU South Bend students in school and on their way to timely graduation while simultaneously offering them the best education possible. Research methods used in this study include field observation of current students on campus and interviews with previous, current, and recently graduated students. Strengths and potential weaknesses of research methods used are also discussed. The major themes identified pertaining to student retention and graduation include support (or lack of) from parents, peers (in the form of campus involvement), professors, and academic advisors.

Introduction

As an institute of higher learning, Indiana University South Bend has an obligation to provide the best education possible for its students while also offering them opportunities to develop and grow as individuals, coming away with a stronger sense of confidence and self-awareness. Students who attend IU South Bend are often demographically different from ones who attend traditional universities. They come from many walks of life, some of them are older than traditional students, many of them have children and families, and most of them have jobs. They choose IU South Bend because they can get the best of both worlds- a distinguished and respected degree from Indiana University, and a valuable college experience with smaller and more intimate classes, the option of living off campus, and paying more affordable tuition fees. There is a concern, however, that many currently enrolled students will be unable to complete their undergraduate degrees in the projected four years, if they graduate at all. This trend places IU South Bend in an unfavorable position for new and prospective students. If the university is unable to help keep students in school and assist them toward graduation, the reputation of the institution will suffer, federal funding may be limited for IU South Bend to utilize, and students will not receive the quality of education and experience they seek. The research I conducted for this project was done to better understand what is happening