

2008

## Inquiro 2 (Front Matter)

Inquiro Staff

*University of Alabama at Birmingham*

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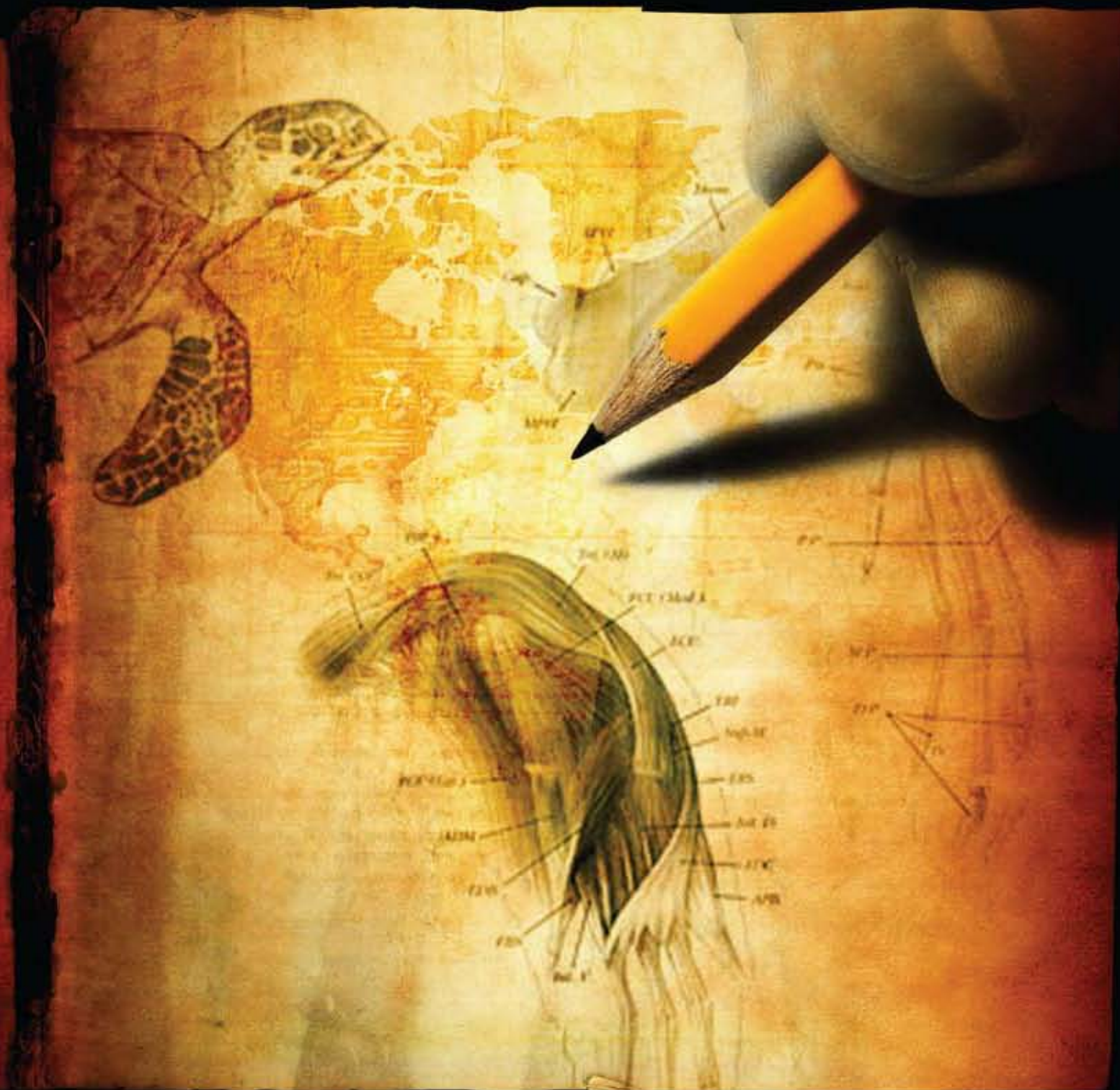
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# inquire

Volume 2 • 2008



THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM



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# inquire

Volume 2 • 2008

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*Founded and staffed* by undergraduate students at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, *Inquire* is an annual research journal produced as an outlet for the publication of undergraduate scientific research. UAB is an excellent undergraduate research university, and with the addition of a journal such as *Inquire* in which to publish their findings, the package is complete. Any undergraduate student at UAB, as well as any student participating in a summer program at the university, is eligible to submit research. The rights to every paper published in *Inquire* are retained by the author, leaving each individual free to submit to and publish in a larger national journal or magazine. Students are invited to submit research papers, short reports derived from posters or research narratives throughout the year.

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# from the editor

**Inquire: to search; to know.** Curiosity about the natural world has been a defining trait of our species since the beginning of time. Ancient civilizations all over the world developed methods to harness the power of nature and to explain the mysteries of the universe. The human spirit of discovery has survived millennia and flourishes now more than ever before. As we uncover the secrets of the human genome, the laws of modern physics, and the delicate balance of our environment, we embark on unprecedented journeys into the unknown. Furthermore, it is a journey which allows us to escape national borders, age differences, and even language barriers. This journey is for all humanity.

It was this same spirit of inquiry and curiosity about the natural world that spurred me to begin this journey six years ago. Early in my academic career, I strived to realize the real world application of all of the theories, facts, and concepts learned in my science classes. “When will I ever use this in the real world?” was the recurring question posed to my science teachers. As a high school junior, my question received its first clear answer when I began working on my first research project at UAB’s Department of Pathology.

On the very first day when I was instructed to make up a TE buffer, I realized that the stoichiometry I learned in chemistry was essential. When I dissected transgenic mice to determine the areas and extent of metastasis, I knew that I needed a basis in anatomy to differentiate the mouse organs. The entire semester was full of epiphanies like these. I no longer thought of science as just a body of knowledge and facts; I realized that science is a way of thinking that increases our understanding of the world and enables us to save and improve lives.

Now, as a college senior, my initial curiosity has developed into a strong enthusiasm for research. I currently work with Larry DeLucas O.D, Ph.D at UAB’s Center for Biophysical Sciences and Engineering. Having the opportunity to enter a top research lab in my freshman year at UAB and work alongside a world class researcher, astronaut, and mentor is the starting point for many of my achievements. I’ve had the chance to present my research in poster sessions, national conferences, and ultimately be recognized as a 2008 Barry M. Goldwater Scholar. Looking back, none of my accomplishments would have been possible without the environment at UAB that encourages undergraduate research. The lab experiences that I have acquired here have enabled me to lay a foundation upon which I can build my future career as a researcher and health professional. What is most exciting is that I don’t stand alone in my research endeavors.

Many of my peers and undergraduate students in various disciplines throughout UAB's campus are getting to work with top-tier researchers early on. With the newly created Office of Undergraduate Research and other initiatives, the systems in place are being strengthened to increase the level of scholarly activity in which UAB students participate. *Inquiro*, now in its second issue, has exceeded all of the standards set by the inaugural issue. The undergraduate research journal has been well received by the students, faculty, and administration. This year we have had the highest level of involvement and submissions by undergraduates at UAB. The success of *Inquiro* is a testament to the unique atmosphere at UAB that encourages undergraduate students to participate in research.

*Inquiro* was established because of the need for an outlet through which the high caliber research that UAB undergraduates produce can be featured. Every year, many students participate in departmental honor theses, summer fellowships, and various laboratory experiences. *Inquiro* provides students with the opportunity to display their work before peers and faculty from other disciplines, as well as to the university community as a whole.

The second issue of *Inquiro* marks the continuing of a new tradition at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. This journal gives students the opportunity to partake in the scientific process and prepare their research for publication; each paper is reviewed by one or two faculty members. The concept of the undergraduate journal has previously been embraced by other universities such as Harvard, Columbia, and Yale. With the continued success of *Inquiro*, UAB students now have the opportunity to ascend to the undergraduate publishing ranks with the best and brightest students in the nation. Please join us as we blaze the trail for the future of undergraduate research at the University of Alabama at Birmingham!

—Larry Lawal  
Chief Editor

## table of contents

<b>Letter from the Editor</b>	2
<b>Science News</b>	4
<b>Research Narratives</b>	8
<b>Short Reports</b>	
Utilizing a Unique Study in the Peruvian Amazon to Assess the Malaria Vaccine Candidate Antigen Plasmodium falciparum Merozoite Surface Protein 6	16
Polymer Waveguides for Explosives Detection	20
<b>Biology</b>	
<b>Faculty Interview:</b> Dr. Watts, The Importance of Echinoderms	23
<b>Papers</b>	
Collagen mRNA Expression in Human Fetal Lung Fibroblasts Treated with Varying Concentrations of Ascorbic Acid, PGE <sub>2</sub> , and TGF- $\beta$ 1	26
Correlation Between Hypertension and the Progression of Alzheimer's Disease	31
Extracellular ATP Activates Multiple Calcium Signaling Pathways in Osteoblasts	37
Movement Patterns of the Common Periwinkle <i>Cenchritis muricatus</i> in the Rocky Supralittoral Zone of San Salvador, Bahamas	42
<b>Faculty Interview:</b> The Fight Against HIV: An Interview with Dr. Michael Saag	46
<b>Chemistry</b>	
<b>Faculty Interview:</b> Dr. Graves, Exploring the Chemistry of Nucleic Acids	48
<b>Papers</b>	
Cocaine Contamination of Currency in Birmingham AL	50
CpG-Oligonucleotides Induce TLR9 Mediated Cellular Invasion in a Sequence and Structure Dependent Manner	63
<b>Physics</b>	
<b>Faculty Interview:</b> Dr. Perry Gerakines, Astrophysicist at UAB Investigates the Origins of Life	68
<b>Student Feature:</b> UAB's Three Goldwater Scholars	70
<b>Biomedical Engineering</b>	
<b>Paper</b>	
Wear Testing of Zirconia Coatings for Applications in Total Hip Replacement	71
<b>Inquiro staff</b>	76
<b>Submission Guidelines for 2009</b>	77
<b>Acknowledgments</b>	78