

2011

Inquiro 5 (Front Matter)

Inquiro Staff

University of Alabama at Birmingham

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inquire

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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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letter from the editor

[The journey of curiosity begins early.](#) Minds are naturally molded to thirst for knowledge, to experience, to interpret, to inquire. All beings, in some way, are a part of this journey. An infant wonders about this new world in the simplest manner; who is that curious figure looking back in this shiny object? A dancer searches to translate emotions into gestures, evoking feelings through choreography. A ship captain seeks to master the mysteries of the sea. An anthropologist strives to understand beings through culture and patterns. A scientist endeavors to inquire about the mechanisms of the natural and physical world.

I showed the signs of a scientist at a very young age. I was four the first time I looked into a microscope, astonished at the tiny cells that make up our body. My parents, both Anatomic Pathologists, inspired the act. I vividly remember watching them when I was young as they meticulously examined slides for hours, dictating the most obscure of words: carcinoma, leukoderma, lymphoma. Fast forwarding into my adult years, I developed a passion for communication through music, art, and debate. I loved performing with my jazz vocal group in music festivals, sharing my work in exhibitions, and exercising philosophical discourse to delve into the structure of society. However, the initial curiosity of my first glimpse of cells never ceased to brew inside of me. As a result, I was moved to examine the three levels of cancer in medicine. I shadowed surgeons and oncologists to see treatment, worked in labs analyzing stage transitions to see research, and took interest in my parents' work to see diagnosis. It amazed me that a simple malformation in a small group cells could lead to an entire transformation of lifestyle for an individual. The field of Pathology impacts patient care in the most profound ways. To be able to see and acknowledge this impact is an imperative driving force in pursuing innovation in holistic patient-centered therapy and treatment. Currently, my interest lies in fostering this realization through contribution in diagnosis and clinical research in Pathology. Such was the deep impact of a small inquiry into a microscope.

Although Rachael's journey took a different path, it was also facilitated by a spark of inquiry. Her first encounter with scientific exploration occurred when she saw her father performing a necropsy on a chick. Captivated, she watched as he cut open the tiny chest and shifted internal organs around. The discovery of the infection site fascinated her. During her studies, her interests shifted from her father's expertise, avian diseases, to medicine. The initial experience of witnessing the identification of a chick's cause of death served as the catalyst for her development. Scientific research can achieve many feats: preventing disease, creating new technologies, and improving our understanding of the world, and these successes are a result of our curiosity to understand the ways the world works.

I have cherished my time as Editor-in-Chief of Inquire, not only because this year Rachael and I have been able to continue the journal's rise to a national scale, but also because I, too, have grown in the process. We are lucky to have played a part in facilitating the interest of undergraduates pursuing research by exposing them to opportunities in publishing their work and understanding the rigors of the reviewing process. I am also lucky to have loved my job. As editors, we are constantly in the middle of reading papers on fascinating discoveries in the natural and physical sciences. In terms of the impact on my personal academic endeavor

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in medicine, I have greatly benefited from my involvement with Inquire. I was able to learn the language of science through direct communication with my peers and was able to make connections with my own cancer research to similar research across UAB and the nation. The interwoven web of innovation in science is a spectacular phenomenon and I am confident that because of these strides, patient care is improving each and every day.

The continued outstanding caliber of Inquire since its first publication in 2007 serves a testament to UAB's dedication to scientific growth through research. Volume 5 stands as one of the most competitive issues, with one of the smallest manuscript acceptance rates. We have received multiple requests to be part of the journal, either through paper submissions or board membership applications. These requests have come from across the US and the world, including from Singapore and India. However, even with Inquire's climbing fame, the journal has preserved its integrity through the submission process, placing full faith in our faculty reviewers' expertise and selections. The thought of such a small initiative expanding to have such a great impact was perhaps unfathomable by its founders. UAB's phenomenal commitment to undergraduate student enrichment has made this possible. This commitment is seen through the many professors who serve as academic and inspirational mentors to their students, the administrators such as Mike Sloane who facilitate the journal's growth through guidance, advocacy, and support, and the undergraduates who take an early initiative to expand their knowledge and impact on science. The continuation of Inquire, then, is a reflection of the values of our institution.

My involvement with Inquire has fortified my belief that creating a collaborative scientific community is imperative for sustaining progress. Inquire builds this community for the next generation of innovators with each issue. May Volume 5 be just another building block on the way to an inspired future.

Cheers,

Khushboo Jhala, Chief Editor 2011 – 2012