2002

Front Matter

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Recommended Citation

(2002) "Front Matter," *The Catalyst*: Vol. 1: Iss. 2, Article 1.

DOI: 10.18785/cat.0102.01

Available at: <http://aquila.usm.edu/southernmisscatalyst/vol1/iss2/1>

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Catalyst

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Mission Statement:

To inspire and to give our fellow undergraduates the desire and tools to take the knowledge acquired in the classroom to a new level of undergraduate research. To encourage students to use knowledge in new ways, and to create new knowledge. Undergraduate research can involve experience, travel, creative work, service-learning, laboratory discovery, and traditional library research.

Through *Catalyst: A Multidisciplinary Review of Undergraduate Scholarship*, we hope to take several major steps in achieving our mission:

1. This project will help bring the importance of undergraduate research to the attention of students and faculty.
2. It will be a forum for students to showcase their important work and have it recognized.
3. It will show other undergraduates that great things can be accomplished through research.
4. It will provide interested undergraduates with the information they need to pursue their research interests.
5. It will give undergraduates who work in related fields the chance to get research experience by helping to publish this magazine.
6. It will provide faculty, staff and administration with an important intellectual connection to undergraduates, and a place to direct and encourage those with potential.
7. It will show that undergraduate education requires "thinking outside the box."
8. It will solidify the commitment of The University of Southern Mississippi to a quality undergraduate education

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Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers:

When we began working on this issue of *Catalyst*, we began with the idea of setting a precedent for expansion and improvement that would highlight the best of undergraduate research at The University of Southern Mississippi and the best work of the *Catalyst* team. We had outstanding sponsors, submission, and efforts put into the creation of this issue. This issue of *Catalyst* truly represents the best of team efforts.

Each of our contributors worked incredibly hard to get his or her article in top form for this issue. Many of them have other obligations that ordinarily would have inhibited their commitment to research, but their excitement and ability show through in the contributions they have made. Many of our staff writers have not only participated in the review process, the editing process and the layout process, they also took the time to write a feature for *Catalyst* in order to help demonstrate some of the research opportunities available on Southern Miss's campus.

In this issue, we have two award-winning articles. Erin Hendrick's commentary "'I'll Take Mississippi': The Gubernatorial Campaigns of Charles L. Sullivan" won our award for Best Original Commentary. Jackson Bunch's article won our award for Best Empirical Research. We also feature philosophical research done by staff writer Michael Dodge and commentary on the differences between the British and American education systems by staff writer Anna Gibson. In fact, in this issue, we not only focus on the current research being done and the opportunities available at Southern Miss, we extend our focus to Mississippi College and an innovative research program on their campus in our Undergraduate Research Highlight.

From business to bush babies and even to France, this issue of *Catalyst* truly demonstrates the wide-ranging possibilities of undergraduate research. These student writers and researchers have truly gone above and beyond the call of classroom duty and have sought an above-par education by enhancing it with their own efforts. The value of these efforts cannot be underestimated. We on the *Catalyst* team salute these undergraduates for participating in outstanding research endeavors.

Enjoy this issue! Sit back and read some of the best research that Southern Miss has to offer. Peruse the resources listed in the back. Apply to submit or to be a member of the *Catalyst* staff for our next issue. Let the excitement and ingenuity of the following research inspire you to do some research on your own. Seek the very best that your education has to offer, just as those involved in this issue of *Catalyst* have.

Katherine Anderson

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