



1-1-2006

## Letter from the Department Head

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### Recommended Citation

Renner, Tari (2006) "Letter from the Department Head," *Res Publica - Journal of Undergraduate Research*: Vol. 11

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/respublica/vol11/iss1/1>

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## A Note from the Chair

Aristotle believed that all things tend toward a natural end. It is the nature and purpose of little acorns to become great oaks; humans, as political animals, achieve their highest purpose in political communities. Dubious as this claim is as a general matter, it is frequently confirmed in particular cases. The journal you now hold in your hand nicely confirms Aristotle's thesis. When the department instituted the research methods/senior seminar sequence in 1995, our graduates began to do their own research on a regular basis. To adopt the terminology of the second volume, every student experienced the "research odyssey" in the ordinary course of the major. The faculty instituted *Res Publica* to record how the best of the department's students marked this milestone in their intellectual independence.

But as soon as the creature was born, it began to grow. We all soon recognized that publishing a journal was its own experience in intellectual independence. The journal itself would epitomize and consummate the great end intended in the development of the department's students. Each year the production of the journal became more independent of faculty oversight. Last year a rubicon of sorts was crossed for two reasons. First, Greg Shaw served as interim faculty adviser, and he inspired the editors (with the proper support) to make the journal their own creation. Second, IWU's student senate threatened to withdraw and then withdrew funding for the journal unless the student editors' made the final decision selecting the articles and widely circulated the finished product. With this incentive, the faculty made the necessary reforms in the article selection process this year, and student control was insured.

I congratulate this year's staff on moving our collective venture one step closer in its consummatory journey. The end is not in sight; we are making it up as we go along. That, we now realize, was the point all along.

**Jim Simeone**  
**Acting Chair**