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Welcome to Lucerna – the interdisciplinary academic honors journal. Lucerna’s purpose is to offer an outlet wherein UMKC students can publish outstanding academic research. The journal is blind- and peer-reviewed by members of the UMKC Honors Program and we solicit articles from all undergraduate students at UMKC. Of all the pursuits that make this university so rich, the pursuit of academic excellence should always take center stage. This fundamental conviction was the driving force that first brought the journal’s founders together in the fall of 2005. Our inaugural issue is the tangible creation of that collaboration.

The journal aims to reflect the vibrancy indicated by its name, ‘lucerna’, which is the Latin word for ‘lamp’. Light has often been used as a metaphor for knowledge. But knowledge, like light, must have its source. The hope suggested by the journal’s title is that UMKC student research should be this source of knowledge – this light.

With this then we formally invite you to enjoy our first issue. It features seven essays ranging in subject matter from musicology to environmental research, thereby ultimately capturing the interdisciplinary thrust at the very foundation of this project. The editors of Lucerna strive to foster diversity in our approach to knowledge and in our transmission of it. We undertake to encourage debate and bring as many different voices to the table as possible. This is the process that has been the vehicle for intellectual change ever since the first universities in Ancient Greece. We can see this in Aristotle, as he critically examined and then attempted to overcome his teacher Plato’s philosophical doctrine. We can also see this same dynamic today as contemporary scholars enter into dialogue on the more serious business of life. Lucerna fully embraces and works to capture this longstanding dialectical process.

In the coming years our hope is that this journal will continue to grow in unexpected ways: that the lamp that is UMKC undergraduate scholarship will continue to burn bright.

We would like to extend our thanks to the UMKC Student Government Association for helping to offset the publication costs of Lucerna, and our gratitude to Provost Bruce Bubacz and Dean Karen Vorst of the College of Arts & Sciences for their longtime commitment to excellence in undergraduate education at UMKC.

Joshua Earlenbaugh, Editor-In-Chief