

Letter from the Editor

Aleksander Gregov



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By Aleksander Gregov
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Dear SOAR Journal Viewers,

Although my tenure as Managing Editor has felt relatively short, for me it has been nothing less than invigorating. The first time I had ever heard of SOAR was around the first winter of the COVID pandemic, confined indoors to my home and hundreds of miles away from the campus I was supposed to be at. However, I had tried to keep some semblance of what a student nearing the second half of their undergraduate career was supposed to do, which was to talk about rigorous and meaningful academic opportunities with whichever professors actually knew me. I was unsure of where these conversations would take me as I had only talked to two teachers in the Sociology Department. With one of these professors, specifically Professor Awash, we discussed potential online opportunities for a student who wanted to pursue and prepare for graduate school or other post-graduation work. Out of the several listings he gave, he remembered one called SOAR. He stated, in what felt like a child listening to an elder recall an old mystical tale, about how this had been an academic journal that was the shining example of what a student would want to participate in. After this brief snippet, I was hooked. I asked him “what's going on with the journal now?” He said how, like with most clubs and organizations, they had essentially dissolved because of COVID. If I wanted this journal to be an experience, I had to help rebuild it from the ground up.

This journey toward making the journal what it is today began in February of 2021, when Professor Fulkerson and I were the only two partners in this endeavor towards making SOAR what it had been before the pandemic. The real question was, "where to start?" We found the solution by finding Milne Library staff, who were excited to hear about what we were trying to

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do. With Jennifer Jensen and Michelle Hendley's range of contacts and services, I was able to complete the first of many steps to spread the word that SOAR was back in business. With word now being spread amongst Student Association officials and other library workers, I began to realize the importance of not going in alone on such a monumental task. Having consistent meetings with this new team would eventually lead to an avalanche of communication with several departments and organizations across campus. Through Professor Fulkerson, I would hear about the CSSR paper competition and different department chairs and professors who wanted to support the journal and would find ways to achieve this desire. These efforts led to the acquisition of new authors and the recruitment of Rachel Aaronson and Brendan Muller to the editorial board for the eventual Fall 2021 issue, which were discovered with the help of their teachers. Through Jennifer and Michelle, they introduced me to what would become the boon of SOAR with SRCA Day. This event provided numerous social science research projects. These students had done the bulk of the work needed for publication and only needed to be contacted unless there were minor errors if they wished to see their work in SOAR. Although not every person I contacted signed up, it provided us with people to give us both peer reviewers and authors. For the first time since 2019, the journal was on course towards publishing a fresh issue.

When I finally returned to campus in the fall, work continued towards finding the remaining peer reviewers needed to move author submissions through the publication process. Each editorial board member provided the necessary information and made an effort towards locating the last piece of the puzzle. Their help led me to presentations in front of senior seminar classes, discussions with several senior professors in social science departments, and for SOAR posters to make their way across campus with the help of Kathy Meeker. As the semester carried on, we were on our way toward publishing. In December, we were able to do so with five

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authors having their work published after the editorial board worked on formatting and other necessary fixes during the end of the semester.

Every semester seemed to introduce new challenges, and Spring 2022 was no different. With it being my last semester, I had double the responsibilities, repeating the process of finding authors and peer reviewers and finding a new Managing Editor, given that the previous student editorial board members had graduated or were soon going to. However, my work on the previous issue had given me the insight and experience necessary to expedite this process. At the time of this writing, Jennifer Jensen, Professor Fulkerson, the newest editorial member Jennifer Le, and I have continued the effort towards producing the issue you are currently reading. I will also be participating in SRCA with my own presentation to help spread the word for this issue and those to come.

Each issue has brought me an immense amount of pride in the ability of what the journal as a whole can accomplish in only a semester. It has taught me the value of teamwork, how to lead, and how exceptional research publications should be conducted. I hope that the journal will continue to succeed and expand beyond SUNY Oneonta, as is the hope of Professor Fulkerson. To whoever reads this, it would mean more than you know to spread the word of what this journal is trying to accomplish. At the end of the day, the whole publication process and advertising efforts are meant to spread the voice of the people we publish: the students.

Best, Aleksander Gregov

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