

UCSD Students Launch Biology Research Journal

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Biology majors at the University of California, San Diego have launched their own peer-reviewed biology journal, the first publication on the campus to showcase the original scientific research of UCSD's undergraduate students.

The quarterly journal, called the *Saltman Quarterly* in honor of the late Paul D. Saltman, a biology professor known for his deep commitment to science education, is now available online at <http://sq.ucsd.edu/>. It will be followed next week by the launch of the first printed edition of the journal.

To coincide with the journal's launch, the publication is sponsoring tomorrow an undergraduate research poster session, which will allow students to display their research papers in the lobby of UCSD's Natural Sciences Building from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Randy Hampton, a UCSD biology professor who holds the Saltman Chair in Science Education, will give the keynote address at 11:30 a.m.

The *Saltman Quarterly*, or SQ, as it has been affectionately dubbed by students, not only provides an outlet to showcase their laboratory achievements; it's giving them some real-world experience in the practical aspects of publishing research papers.

"The sooner they learn what it's like to have to write, revise, edit and publish a scientific paper, the more they will learn how science is done," says Lorraine Pillus, a biology professor who has advised the journal editors. "It really is a wonderful way to honor Paul Saltman's memory. I know he would have been thrilled and thought it was a great honor."

Saltman, who served as provost of UCSD's Revelle College and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, died in 1999. While the *Saltman Quarterly's* intended audience is other undergraduates, faculty and UCSD alumni, its student-editors hope its online contents will reach a wider audience.

"There is a lot of undergraduate research," says Marika Orlov, one of three SQ co-editors in chief and president of the UCSD Biological Sciences Student Association. "But much of it goes unnoticed. A student might even have to write a paper about the research, but the paper goes on file and no one sees it."

She and the other co-editors in chief, Louis Nguyen and Gregory Emmanuel, had two related goals in creating a forum for publishing undergraduate research. They wanted to encourage other undergraduate students to get involved in research and give them the opportunity to publish their research and review submissions by other students. Publication and peer review are an integral part of the scientific process that undergraduates rarely get to experience. Each article in the SQ is peer reviewed by four or five undergraduates.

The biggest concern of the faculty and students in starting the SQ is that if a student publishes their research in an on-campus journal, it may preclude them from publishing that same research in another scholarly publication. Orlov says Pillus encouraged the students to think carefully about what they can publish so it would not compromise future publication.

"This could be an opportunity to tell a part of the story that doesn't usually get told," adds Orlov. "It is possible to write about the research without ever getting in the way of publishing elsewhere, by focusing on a different part of the story—one that the undergraduate might be much more involved in. For example, in a genetic screen, people usually only publish research on the interesting mutants they have found, but how you did the screen is also an important story."

Orlov says the support and encouragement the students received from faculty members and the staff in the Division of Biological Sciences dean's office were essential to the journal's successful debut. But Pillus emphasizes that the students did all of the work, from the creation of the concept to the printed journal. "The students are taking all the responsibility," she adds, "so they should get all of the glory."

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Dr. Paul D. Saltman
1928-1999