MESSAGE FROM THE EDITORIAL BOARD

USC Upstate is proud to announce the publication of the first volume of the *USC Upstate Undergraduate Research Journal*. This Journal provides a glimpse into a few of the many high quality research activities conducted by the talented faculty at USC Upstate. The Journal is a compilation of outstanding papers from numerous disciplines submitted by undergraduate students who have been involved in faculty-mentored research, scholarly, and creative activities. Undergraduate students involved in faculty-mentored extra-curricular projects enter the work-force with an enhanced skill set, including better problem solving, critical thinking, and team-working skills. Since many students who are educated at USC Upstate stay in the region, support of academic research has a direct and positive impact on the Upstate.

We would like to express our sincere thanks to Stäubli for its generous funding of this first volume of the Journal. We would like to especially thank David Arceneaux, Joe Gemma, and Eves Stäubli. Many thanks also to Susan Hodge for her support in securing this funding. Such support from prominent regional businesses and organizations is greatly appreciated and essential for the advancement of academic research in the Upstate. Stäubli is a mechatronics solution provider with three dedicated divisions: textile machinery, connectors, and robotics. With a workforce of over 3000, the company generates a yearly turnover surpassing 1 billion Swiss francs. Originally founded 1892 as a small workshop in Horgen / Zurich, Stäubli today is an international group with its head office in Pfäffikon, Switzerland. To learn more, please visit www.staubli.com.

We would like to thank all the contributing authors for providing such a rich variety of outstanding research articles on a broad range of exciting topics. We also would like to thank Bridget Kirkland, Graphic Designer in the USC Upstate University Communications Department, for designing the outstanding cover of this volume of the Journal. Thanks also to Les Duggins for taking many of the pictures of the contributing authors. Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Reginald Avery, former Executive Vice Chancellor of USC Upstate, who initially proposed the creation of this Journal.

If you have any questions or comments about the Journal, or would like to receive a printed copy of the most recent volume of the Journal, please contact Dr. Sebastian van Delden, (864) 503-5292, svandelden@uscupstate.edu. The Journal is also available online, please visit the following website: http://www.uscupstate.edu/ResearchJournal.

Enjoy!
The Editorial Board