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EDITOR'S NOTE



Michelle Vergheze



Elena Slobodyanyuk

It goes without saying that the year of 2020 has been unprecedented. A global pandemic claimed the lives and health of millions of individuals, wrought economic devastation to households, businesses, and nations alike, and dramatically restructured everyday life for most people. The harrowing murders of Black individuals ignited a resonant movement to address deep-rooted issues of racial bias, police brutality, and social injustice. Together, these events largely defined the tumultuous narrative of 2020.

Certainly, these events did not take place in a vacuum. In an increasingly globalized society, we saw the rapid spread of the novel coronavirus across continents and the rapid exchange of information across media outlets. Furthermore, we experienced the synergy of various disciplines and communities coming together to confront these issues. In a period of social distancing, the salience of intersections is particularly clear.

In this issue, our writers explore some of the fascinating intersections that are shaping the modern world. At the atomic level, consider the junction of semiconductor physics with biomedical imaging through the development of quantum dots, or the dawn of bio-inspired smart materials in the form of self-healing polymers. On a broader scale, our writers review the efforts of public health interventions to achieve global salt iodization, and an independent undergraduate research study investigates the effect of urbanization on the abundance of disease vector mosquitoes in French Polynesia. Notably, drawing on the rapidly evolving wealth of expertise at UC Berkeley, we present an interview with several prominent figures in public health and infectious disease research with their insights on the COVID-19 pandemic.

Looking inward, BSJ has reinforced its awareness of the role of science journalism in the contemporary world. Early this semester, our writers engaged in a thoughtful discussion with Caroline Kane, Professor Emerita and BSJ faculty advisor, about the social responsibilities of science communicators. Following the transition to remote learning, our writers participated in a virtual science writing workshop led by Haley McCausland of the graduate journal *Berkeley Science Review*.

With science journalism at the nexus of scientific discovery and public dialogue, we recognize our duty to uphold reliable, responsible, and accessible reporting. We are proud to present this semester's issue of the *Berkeley Scientific Journal*.

Elena Slobodyanyuk
Managing Editor