

## EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Since the first issue of *Scientia et Humanitas* in 2011, the journal has upheld a twofold mission. Not only does *Scientia* strive to showcase the highest quality of student research at MTSU, but it attempts to introduce students to the rigor of the peer-review publishing process. Publication is no walk in the park. Authors are asked, usually several times, to revise their work in the fullest sense of the word—i.e., to re-envision and to reevaluate the content, purpose, and organization of their articles. Revision can be discouraging because it sometimes requires the writer to remove whole paragraphs or to go in search of more sources. In her book *The Writing Life*, Annie Dillard describes the writing process in terms of building a house. The writer uses her hammer to tap the walls of the building, checking for stability, and sometimes comes to the sad realization that not all of the walls can stay: “There is only one solution, which appalls you, but there it is. Knock it out. Duck.”

The articles featured in *Scientia's* eighth issue are the product of the patient and determined writers, from both the undergraduate and graduate student body at MTSU, who persevered through peer-review, faculty review, and multiple rounds of copyediting and proofreading. Their houses have stood the test of a thorough revision process. I am proud of their work and of the opportunity as this year's editor to present their efforts in a formal publication.

In keeping with the journal's title, this year's issue features a variety of topics and disciplines that range from the sciences to the humanities. Jennifer Rideout received the Deans' Distinguished Essay Award for her analysis of the way Joseph Conrad uses the tragic event of the Russian influenza as an extended metaphor in *The Secret Agent*. Andrew Black, another representative of the humanities, writes about Ralph Waldo Emerson's essay, “Self-Reliance,” and the various misreadings that have been applied to Emerson's infamous question, “Are these *my* poor?”

In addition to the humanities, there are a series of articles that range from nursing to communication studies. Elizabeth Jordan assesses the current state of the science related to nursing-driven protocol for enteral feeding of critically ill patients. Cassandra Mihalko investigates whether a callus tissue culture of the King of Bitters plant can be made of its anti-inflammatory property, neoandrographolide. Mary De La Torre conducts an ethnographic study of the way societal attitudes affect the treatment of prison inmates in rural Tennessee. Finally, Katelyn Brooks examines how the new media landscape ushered in by the rise of social media platforms requires a reassessment of the long-standing assumptions established by Agenda-setting theory.

I am also grateful for the team of people who volunteered their time as reviewers and copyeditors. This year's *Scientia* staff includes the following group of graduate and undergraduate reviewers: Andrew Black, Gregory Bronson, Corey Cummings, Jasmin Laurel, Rachel Marlin, Wyatt May, Ella Morin, and Hillary Yea-

ger. Without their help in (re)reading articles, attending to minute issues of syntax and grammar, and without their general enthusiasm for the journal itself, this year's issue would not have made it into your hands. A special thanks goes to Megan Donelson, my associate editor, who headed up our social media campaign to solicit articles, and who also helped review and manage many of the submissions we received this year.

I would also like to thank the Honors College administrative faculty of *Scientia*. Both Dr. Phillips and Dr. Vile helped us secure some of the faculty reviewers for this year's issue. Susan Lyons is responsible for the design of the printed edition. Finally, Marsha Powers has been an indispensable support for *Scientia*. Not only did she solicit articles, she was also generous with her time by allowing me to sit in her office and talk through all of the challenges that come with publishing an academic journal.

I hope that you enjoy the eighth edition of *Scientia et Humanitas*. This is my third and final year working with the journal. *Scientia* has been an invaluable resource for me as a writer and researcher, and I hope that it will continue to be beneficial to MTSU students for many more years.

Nicholas Dalbey  
Editor in Chief