

## A Letter to Our Patrons

Perusing through back-issues of the *UTMJ*, one comes across the most important page of the *Journal*, the list of patrons. The names on this page mean much more to us than the generous monetary contributions made by these individuals and institutions. Rather, this page serves to remind us that our patrons are keenly aware of the value and importance of maintaining Canada's oldest student-run publication. How can we be so sure that our patrons feel this way? Because, for the most part, the names on this page have not changed. This support, although greatly appreciated, has been mostly quiet in nature. In order to understand why this was the case, we decided to meet many of you this past summer.

Many of our patrons were very receptive to our scheduled meetings. Praise, tributes, and compliments on the success of the *Journal* were made. It was through our one-on-one meetings, however, that we discovered that the mandates of the *Journal* might have been misinterpreted over the past years. "Why should I subscribe to the *UTMJ* when there is a plethora of journals out there?" Or, "Why should I encourage my students/residents to submit an article when it can go somewhere else?" were common questions we were asked.

Our answer to these questions required some introspection and examination of the founding editor's, Dr. Benjamin Johnstone (2T4), two goals: 1) to encourage writing and preparing papers among medical students; and, 2) to keep students abreast with recent advances appearing in the current literature. Back in 1922, it might have been a realistic goal to make the *Journal* a central, one-stop resource to read about recent innovations in science and medicine. As the end of this century draws to a close, we would challenge any medical journal to uphold this goal! Thus, we felt it was time to amend the founding goals of the *Journal*, while upholding their spirit. Our vision for the *UTMJ* 1999-2000:

In keeping with Johnstone's first objective, the *Journal* serves to provide students with a foray into the world of biomedical publishing; to provide a forum for original articles, review articles, case reports, and general interest articles about the science and humanities of medicine.

Create a living laboratory for medical scholarship in and around the *Journal*, to provide firsthand experience in all aspects of biomedical editing, review, and publishing that is managed and upheld completely by students in the Faculty of Medicine.

Develop a useful resource for teachers; to provide a forum in which teacher and student can present their ideas and, in doing so, promote a unique learning experience.

We, and our staff, strongly believe that no other medical journal can match this vision with the same standard of excellence that the *Journal* has consistently showcased for the past 76 years.

This 77th year of publication promises to build upon the *Journal's* legacy. Towards this end, we have assembled the largest staff in the *Journal's* history and have developed a number of new series, reflecting the interests of current medical students. Furthermore, in an attempt to increase our readership and make communication with the *Journal* easier, we have completely revamped our website at [www.utmj.org](http://www.utmj.org). Lastly, in order to encourage submissions, we have established the *UTMJ* Editors' \$1000 Award for the most deserving submission of the 77th volume.

Finally, after completing our tour of meetings this past summer, it became clear to us that a number of patrons subscribe to the *Journal* as a means of supporting their *alma mater*. While we are indebted to this support, we challenge you as a conscientious patron and educator to expand this degree of support. Become a loud supporter of the *UTMJ*; encourage your colleagues and peers to subscribe; encourage your students to submit; and be proud that you are supporting a unique vehicle - a distinguished University of Toronto tradition - that gives students the opportunity to synthesize and share their views with fellow students, colleagues, teachers, mentors, and clinicians.

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