Introduction to Volume 1, Fall 2013

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Dear Reader,

Two years ago, a group of doctoral fellows were looking for a way to share their own work outside of a monthly seminar hosted by the Graham Sustainability Institute. That initial conversation led to the creation of this *Michigan Journal of Sustainability*—a forum that hosts easy to understand, peer-reviewed articles about a broad range of topics related to sustainability.

Establishing lines of communication among researchers, practitioners, and policymakers is a significant challenge. In addition, issues of sustainability are inherently interdisciplinary; they require innovations that integrate knowledge from a variety of fields. The purpose of the *Michigan Journal of Sustainability* is to translate and to integrate; the journal provides information in an easy to read, jargon-free format as the first step toward moving sustainability research into practice.

Three major issues were raised as we developed this first issue of this journal. First, we were reminded how broad the definition of “sustainability” really is. While some might see this as a weakness, or as a lack of focus, we see it as a positive attribute. By retaining a broad definition, we have more freedom to connect the research in this journal to the larger issues at work in our built and natural environments. It also allows us to explore the many paths one could take to improve the quality of life for all living organisms on Earth.

Second, it is extremely difficult to translate academic research for a broad audience. While we may have identified the need in our initial call for papers, we thank the authors and the reviewers for attempting to achieve a balance between writing for experts and writing for a general audience. We think that you will find that these articles provide new and interesting insights into the roles we have as individuals, educators, and citizens in our local and global communities. We also think the clarity of writing in these articles will encourage cross-disciplinary dialogue.

Third, we learned that it is impossible to predict the future for this journal. While we would have liked to map out every upcoming issue, what we have actually created is a lattice for sharing sustainability research that we hope will support pub-

lication of future work from the University of Michigan and beyond. We encourage future cohorts of editors to discuss, challenge, and modify our understanding of sustainability as they shape future volumes.

No journal would exist without authors. We are deeply indebted to the authors of the articles that follow this introduction. They were all willing to volunteer significant time to a new journal—a journal that had no impact factor, website, or even past issues to use as a precedent. The authors were willing to write and rewrite their pieces to make them clear to audiences outside their own fields, often times adding explanatory text to arguments that are taken as a given in their own disciplines. Their writing is the best compass for the future direction of this journal; they have set a course clearer than any author guidelines our editorial board could hope to write.

No peer-reviewed journal would exist without peers to review articles. The *Michigan Journal of Sustainability* introduced a unique peer-review format, with an in-field reviewer focusing on content and an out-of-field reviewer focusing on clarity. Although the reviewers remain anonymous, we thank them for their efforts to improve the quality of each piece and participate in this new review format. Their insight and feedback has done much to shape this first issue of the journal.

Finally, no journal would exist without moral and financial support. We would like to thank the staff of the Graham Sustainability Institute at the University of Michigan for their guidance throughout this project. From serving as a sounding board for our initial thoughts through reviewing multiple proposals, articles, and purchase orders—Mike Shriberg, Manja Holland, Andrew Horning, David Mudie, and Don Scavia all helped to make this journal actually happen.

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