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Introduction Letter from Editor

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Dear *Conspectus Borealis* Reader,

Thank you for taking the time to read the 9th publication of *Conspectus Borealis*, Northern Michigan University (NMU) Honors-sponsored undergraduate journal. *Conspectus Borealis* accepts submissions from any Northern undergraduate student in all areas of study. The editorial board is made up of Honors Program students who dedicate their time to reviewing and editing all of the submitted works. Since *Conspectus Borealis* first began, there have been over 79,000 total downloads across 187 countries.

The 2024 issue features one creative short story and three scholarly works across a range of disciplines. First, Madison Hancock weaves history and fantasy in her short story titled *Fascination of Hourglasses*. She highlights the historical significance of hourglasses through the protagonist's exploration through time and places. The second piece is titled *Laughter in the Shadows: Navigating Comedy and Tragedy in Much Ado About Nothing* by Mary Kelly. In this piece, Mary discusses the balancing of comedic and tragic elements of *Much Ado About Nothing* in both the original Shakespeare work and the production at the 2023 Stratford Festival. Mary also wrote the piece *Shading the Future: A GIS-Based Approach to Optimal Tree Planting for Urban Heat Mitigation at Northern Michigan University*. In this piece, Mary offers recommendations for tree planting on NMU's campus using GIS and remote sensing techniques to map urban heat and tree canopy cover. The final work is by Victoria Mattson and Katherine Burgess titled *Effects of Positive Social Media Content on Emotion, Stress, and User Activity*. They researched whether exposure to positive content through a social media platform influenced participants' emotions and stress levels.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone who has made this publication possible. Foremost, I would like to thank our faculty advisor Dr. Anna Zimmer, and the Honors program

for all their advice and support. Thank you to Kevin McDonough, our website manager, and Ben Gaunt, our BePress consultant, for the help they have given us with maintaining our website and editing system. I would also like to thank all of the reviewers who took time out of their busy schedules to edit this volume's submissions. Thank you to all of the authors who submitted their work, without them this journal would not be possible. Once again, a big thank you to everyone who contributed to the publication of this journal; I was so honored to be the Editor-in-Chief this year.

Sincerely,

Lexi Laws

Chief Editor of *Conspectus Borealis* 2023-2024