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Letter From the Editor

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Letter from the Editor

Meredith Bennett

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On Monday, September 23rd, Greta Thunberg, the 16-year old climate activist from Sweden, addressed world leaders at the [UN Climate Action Summit](#) in New York. The speech was alarming; filled with facts that make it clear how urgent the climate crisis really is. The science behind climate change is, quite simply, terrifying. Miss Thunberg's address, however, was more than a speech advocating for climate action. As I watched her speak, moved by the raw emotion in her voice, I recognized the frustration that we experience when we face barriers to communication, particularly concerning the climate and larger environmental crisis.

I am reminded of the fact that science cannot speak for itself. As scientists, it is not enough to practice science. It is our obligation to share scientific discoveries with each other and to make those discoveries accessible to the general public. This responsibility holds tremendous weight in society, especially today. Communicating science to the public, especially when it relates to topics like climate change, requires an understanding of the science itself, along with an ability to present information in a way that is accessible to those without a science background. The members of [The D.U. Quark](#), Duquesne's student-run scientific journal, take on the responsibility of providing scientific information to the faculty and students of the Duquesne community.

The D.U. Quark's name comes from the [definition of quarks](#) in Physics. Quarks can be defined as the fundamental particles of nature. They combine to form protons and neutrons, which organize themselves into the nuclei of atoms. Interestingly, quarks come in different flavors, based on their properties and characteristics. Like quarks, the members of *The D.U. Quark* are diverse and bring wonderfully unique perspectives to the journal. Students across all disciplines of science at Duquesne have submitted articles to the journal. Articles range from a description of [radiation shielding](#) which protects astronauts on Mars to a compelling argument for [sustainable pharmacy](#).

Members of *The D.U. Quark* contribute to the journal in a wide variety of ways. A group of about eight students act as reviewers in the journal's double-blind peer review process. Both the author and reviewers of an article are always anonymous to one another. This ensures the quality of peer review at the journal and allows students to experience an authentic process within scientific publication. In addition to formal scientific papers submitted by Duquesne students, *The D.U. Quark* publishes articles by staff writers, covering topics that range from the interplay between [art and science](#) to the [signalling pathways](#) that convey bladder pain to the

brain. *The D.U. Quark* also features interviews of student researchers, providing an opportunity to explore the fascinating science happening at Duquesne.

As the editor of *The D.U. Quark*, I have been able to observe firsthand how interdisciplinary collaboration can enhance science communication. Some of the journal's most enthusiastic and engaged members are not from the STEM field. Effective science communication is made possible by the interactions between students with different talents. Claire Neiberg, a sophomore English Major, joined *The D.U. Quark* as a freshman, and is currently the Promotions Officer. She states, "I have always been fascinated by science and the way the world works, and I thought this would be a perfect way to become involved with it as a liberal arts major whose passion and purpose is to write". In this way, *The D.U. Quark* has encouraged students to add their voices to conversations about science, even if they are not science majors.

The D.U. Quark is also a unique learning experience for students in scientific fields. Today, almost all students complete some form of undergraduate research, and it has become an unwritten rule that research is part of a complete scientific education. Actively developing scientific communication skills is not as common, even though scientific writing is intrinsic to the research process. Alex Plyler, a Junior studying Forensic Science, is the Section Editor of *The D.U. Quark* for staff articles. She explains that learning about the peer review and science publication process has "taught me crucial skills that will definitely come in handy when I begin contributing to a wider scientific audience". Peer review is an especially valuable skill, especially for students pursuing research. *The D.U. Quark* offers the unique opportunity for students at Duquesne to learn about the scientific publication process through firsthand experience.

In this time when communication has never been more crucial within the scientific community, *The D.U. Quark* endeavors to be a source of quality scientific information for the Duquesne community. We also hope to provide students with unique opportunities to develop skills that will contribute to their professional development, whether they intend to pursue research, a job in an industry, or even a career teaching english. The final mission of *The D.U. Quark* is to foster a greater appreciation for the importance of science communication to the general public. As Alex Plyler explains, "When it comes to improving scientific communication with the public, keeping the balance between accuracy and accessibility is key". We must foster a culture of communication and collaboration both within the scientific community and between scientists and the wider world.

The D.U. Quark is an open access scientific journal published right here at Duquesne! We publish articles on a rolling basis at our website, www.duquark.com. Be sure to check out the website and follow us on social media @theduquark.