Showcasing Undergraduate Student Research:
Introduction to Papers from the 6th Annual Undergraduate Philosophy Conference at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville

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In April of 2011 Bryan Lueck, Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE), approached me to investigate the possibility that Polymath might be a forum to feature products of the Annual Undergraduate Philosophy Conference at SIUE. In its sixth year, the conference is an entirely student run event hosted by the SIUE Department of Philosophy and the Illinois Pi Chapter of Phi Sigma Tau. Several factors had to be considered prior to publishing these student papers in Polymath. First and foremost we wanted to draw a clear distinction between the products of independent undergraduate research and peer-reviewed articles. Secondly, we wanted to limit the inclusion of only a selection of papers. The reasoning behind this was not only to establish a merit-based criterion, but also to make this enterprise a chance for students to go through a modified version of the review process. From conception, submission, review, to revision, we looked toward having a realistic progression of steps for them to experience. Each paper was considered for inclusion by two professors of Philosophy, and of the seventeen papers presented at the Conference on November 4th – 5th, 2011, nine were chosen for inclusion. Requests for revisions were made to the students and now we are happy to present these papers.

Although undergraduate education often does not include independent research, we would like to encourage more students to pursue it through this publication. The authors of these papers represent several institutions from around the country, namely: Webster University, Hiram College, Pepperdine University of Puget Sound, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Simpson College, Haverford College, and the University of Chicago. It is our pleasure to make their endeavors publicly accessible.