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Message from the president

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From the President

I am pleased to introduce the second issue of *Reason & Respect: A Journal of Civil Discourse at Roger Williams University*.

While many universities publish scholarly journals at the graduate level, few do so as a means of engaging undergraduate students in intellectual inquiry. *Reason & Respect* is designed with our students in mind—both as readers and as writers. Its purpose is to offset more popular forms of discourse, where too often volume has replaced substance and reason. It provides a venue for all members of our community to respond critically, but respectfully, to diverse ideas and perspectives.

Able edited by Professors Kate Mele, Robert Engvall, and Roxanne O'Connell, the journal reinforces a number of core values important to our university: a love of learning for its own sake; faculty-student scholarly efforts; commitment to service; a global perspective and mutual respect. Those values form the foundation of our university and are represented by *Reason & Respect*.

As an institution committed to civil interchange about the important issues of our time, we believe that discourse, no matter how passionate, can and must be conducted with reason and respect because we also celebrate those values as inherently important to our community.

The journal is linked closely to the Civil Discourse Lecture Series, which for this academic year is themed "The Great Divide." Working from that theme, this issue focuses on tolerance by making explicit and implicit connections between tolerance and faith, free speech, and justice. While some contributors explore what it means for individuals to engage in civil discourse on these topics, others reflect on the remarks made by our recent guest lecturers.

During spring 2005, we welcomed a stellar roster of speakers, including author Salman Rushdie, who spoke eloquently about the struggle between art and politics, and former Presidential candidate Gary Bauer, who offered his perspective on topics concerning religious and cultural conservatives. Rounding out the spring semester was Khaled Hosseini, author of *The Kite Runner*, who related his semi-autobiographical take on the struggles of Afghanistan.

I look forward to once again learning from our guest speakers and reading the various thoughtful perspectives of our students and others in the pages of this important publication.

Sincerely,
Roy J. Nirschel, Ph.D.
President, Roger Williams University