

CHAIR'S MESSAGE

I am excited to introduce the 2024 issue of the UVic History Department's undergraduate journal, *The Ascendant Historian*. This volume features cutting-edge research completed by History students at the University of Victoria. With the post-pandemic reopening of the world (including for archival research and fieldwork), the talented authors of these articles have been able to ask questions, explore arguments, and access evidence to the full measure of their abilities. The work they have produced here should hearten us all in difficult times.

Over the past year, many of us have reflected on the shifting role of history in high education and society. As the world faces a range of upheavals—among them climate change, food insecurity, and assaults on democracy—many observers assume that the most important solutions will be technological and will emerge from the STEM disciplines. Yet the most pressing problems facing us today are driven by humans, and we must have humanists at the centre of those discussions. Moreover, whether we realize it or not, virtually every debate on the range of policies, issues, and crises in the public sphere is framed historically. In other words, the world needs historians now more than ever, and it needs them to engage publicly with their perspective and knowledge. If the pieces collectively herein are any measure, the historians of the future will be well prepared to fill that role.

As in previous volumes of *The Ascendant Historian*, the articles in this issue showcase the striking innovation and tenacity that UVic History students bring to their work. My colleagues and I applaud the authors for their work as well as the editors and peer reviewers who made this exemplary edition of *The Ascendant Historian* possible.

Jason Colby, Department Chair, August 2023