



## INTRODUCTION

At the intersection of peace,  
conflict, and the scholarly  
community

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One of the great peacemakers of our time, Nelson Mandela, often reminded his followers that "after climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb." Therein lies a testament to the breadth of Peace and Conflict Studies: as progress is achieved, humankind realizes a want for further progress toward a world bereft of conflict, of hate, of injustice. Mandela and others stood at the forefront of a critical movement which has given rise to this fledgling discipline, and peace and conflict studies is efflorescing as an academic entity. This journal, the Undergraduate Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies (PACS), is therefore geared toward harnessing the talents of today's generation of peacemakers, such that their voices be heard and motives realized in the burgeoning dialogue around peace and conflict in the global arena.

Focusing its attention on undergraduates, PACS seeks to serve as a forum for young scholars to communicate, collaborate, and influence the growing body of intellectual work in this field. In this inaugural issue,

readers will find conversations steeped in inquiry and activism, spanning the discipline's most relevant topics including resource allocation, inter-ethnic tensions, food security, drug policy, and others. The issue doubles as a partial proceedings of the 2014 Peace and Conflict Studies Student Conference--an event held biennially on the campus of Grinnell College in Grinnell, Iowa, USA. Contributing authors represent 5 undergraduate institutions from across the United States. The issue features a special contribution by Kit Miller, the Director of the M.K. Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence in Rochester, New York. In the piece, Miller accentuates the integral role of young people in forwarding the discipline of Peace and Conflict Studies.

The content of the present issue as a whole gravitates toward a theme that is political in nature. The authors' works offer readers a dynamic and thought-provoking perspective on the many interactions between policy, the State, and conflict resolution. The issue begins with June Ban's fascinating comparison of development assistance policies in the US and UK. Next, Lisa Eshun-Wilson sheds light on school feeding initiatives as vital contributors to a food-secure childhood in the US. Shifting attention toward South America, Luke Albrecht presents an intriguing analysis of progressive drug reform policy in Uruguay, and its societal implications. Further, Patrick Kinley reconsiders ethnographic works in the Haitian context, presenting a new model for analyzing and addressing inequality and structural violence. Jillian Neuberger then reflects on the dynamic implications of memorial space and "dark tourism" in conflict resolution. In the next article, Lucy Marcus approaches a decidedly relevant component of contemporary social movement, namely social media, with an analysis of media coverage in Gaza. Further, Leslie Massicotte draws upon the case of Congolese rebel group emergence to underscore the necessity of good, careful policymaking in efforts to mitigate armed conflict. Next, Lydia Mills addresses natural resource management in Alaska with an analysis of interactions between the government and Alaskan natives. Andrea Semlow continues the discussion of natural resource management, with particular focus on Native Americans' legal claims to water resources. Lastly, the issue culminates with Kimberly Spasaro's stirring report on the utility of youth debate in the Rwandan context as an instrument for change and harbinger of good governance.

The Journal was conceived in late 2013, with the aspiration to contribute tangibly to the growing literature which encompasses peace and conflict studies. Its specific aim from the outset has been to find and underscore the voices of our youngest generation of concerned scholars. With that goal, the Peace and Conflict Studies Program at Grinnell College—whose own history of activism and critical thinking has similarly born the fruit of scholarly peacemaking—mobilized around the project. Now, just over a year since its germinal moment, the Undergraduate Journal of PACS is taking root. It is our sincerest hope that its contents be applicable, critical, and universally constructive, so as to situate the “hilltops” into a larger topography of progress and advancement.

We are reminded of Mandela's metaphor in publishing this first issue, and in establishing this uniquely undergraduate-focused, peer-reviewed, expert-guided journal with specific focus on the building of peace and resolution of conflict. The articles herein and the thoughts proliferating therefrom are stepping stones toward the hilltop, yet also reminders of the progress yet to be achieved. We stand now at the intersection of old and new, of peace as emotion and as an intellectual conception. Young scholars of peace and conflict studies bear the experiences and memories of many epochs of peacemaking across our complex global history, and thus bear a critical responsibility to learn and reflect, and to not be dismayed by the many distant hilltops in sight.