

# From the Editor

## Welcome to the New Global

2020 has been a year of seismic shifts in our global perspective(s). It began with a world health crisis unseen in generations, as the coronavirus pandemic led to enormous economic, social, and political disruptions. The year continued with a long overdue reckoning with inequality and racial oppression. #BlackLivesMatter revealed the extent of systemic racism in our institutions and culture. If these signals weren't enough to remind us how fragile we are as a human community, storms, wildfires, rising sea levels, and other evidence of climate change have proceeded apace.

These tidal events are forcing us to think and act in different ways. They have already changed the ways we work, study, and travel. Some are calling this period the Great Adaptation and refer to the new normal. We're calling it the New Global.

But it's not all doom and gloom. While cultural norms are changing, the New Global has a silver lining. Alongside human tragedy we're seeing surprising innovation. Industries transform as people work and study from home. Less commuter traffic has led to significant improvements in air quality. The multi-pronged crises have exposed inequalities and racial injustice and revealed the flaws in our health care systems and other critical infrastructure. If we choose to see them, there are opportunities here to overcome these and related concerns like poverty and human rights abuses around the world. The global challenges we share help us see that we are all interconnected. Calling attention to every form of injustice and inequality can help us become wiser and more caring with respect to one another, and in relation to our earth and all its living beings and precious resources.

We have a rare opportunity this very moment to realign our priorities and examine where we are as individuals and in the life of our planet—and where we want to be. Like an enormous global reset, this is a time to reinvent and reimagine.

That's why this inaugural issue of *Global Insight* couldn't be timelier or better aligned with the new world we're facing.

The idea of a publication series for the Charles T. McDowell Center for Critical Languages and Area Studies was the ambition of the Center's first director, Dr. Mark Cichock. On behalf of the College of Liberal Arts at The University of Texas at Arlington, Dr. Cichock built the Center on the legacy of an extraordinary individual, Dr. Charles T. McDowell, whose vision

of global engagement was way before his time. Dr. McDowell founded the Center for Soviet and East European Studies in 1968 to provide resources for UTA students to study the region. For many years he led student groups to the USSR which, given that it was behind the Iron Curtain at the time, closed off to the West, was no easy feat. Today, the McDowell Center offers generous scholarships for students studying abroad in locations around the world, as well as grants supporting international faculty research. In Fall 2020 the Center was renamed the Charles T. McDowell Center for Global Studies and launched a Global Studies Minor and Certificate Program, the first of its kind at UTA. In each of these initiatives, we are extraordinarily privileged to carry on the work of a true pioneer. Read more about Dr. McDowell and the mission, programs, and activities of the Center here: <http://www.uta.edu/mcdowellcenter/>.

*Global Insight* is a landmark that has been years in the making. Its purpose is to amplify the McDowell Center's vision to provide meaningful opportunities for student advancement in global contexts. That is why we are extremely proud to showcase the work of the seven authors in this inaugural issue.

Our featured author, Elizabeth Oren, was the first UTA grad to earn the distinction of McDowell Scholar. Her article on the Islamic State's cyber warfare tactics is the result of extensive research and analysis, written while she worked for the NATO Center of Excellence-Defence Against Terrorism and NATO SCHOOL. We are honored to publish this work and to launch *Global Insight* with a Foreword by Ms. Oren.

Each of the remaining authors started their respective essays as UTA undergraduates in the 2019–2020 academic year before the COVID-19 pandemic changed everyone's lives. They completed and revised their work while quarantined at home as we all adapted to the change—when phrases like “flatten the curve” and “superspreader event” became part of our everyday lexicon—an experience which undoubtedly reinforced in their minds the meanings of the New Global.

Their work covers a spectrum that encompasses politics, society, and the arts. Topics range from international relations, to health and infrastructure, to literature and film, with approaches from gender and women's studies, disability studies, and nuanced philosophical and psychological perspectives.

I congratulate each of our authors on their outstanding work. With your insight and creativity, you have claimed your place in the global dialogue. As you continue to research, travel, write, and become leaders in your respective fields, let your work be a testament to the fact that when you discover your place in the global narrative, you increase your potential to impact communities across the world.

Finally, I would like to thank the extraordinary UTA faculty and staff whose great energy and enthusiasm were the driving force that made this publication possible:

Associate University Librarian for Scholarly Communications Kelly Visnak; Digital Publishing & Repository Librarian Yumi Ohira; Publishing Specialist Brittany Griffiths; Student Assistant Rachael Carver; Executive Editor Yubraj Aryal; Communications and Marketing Assistant Linsey Retcofsky; Copy Editor Josh Paul Mitchell; and the pool of peer reviewers, graduate students at UTA, who reviewed the authors' work and offered their valuable feedback.

Thank you, lastly, to our readers for giving us a reason to share this *Global Insight*.

— Lonny Harrison, Editor-in-Chief