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Issue Introduction

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Introduction

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This is the inaugural issue of a new undergraduate philosophy journal, *Res Cogitans*. Whatever else we might be, we are – as Descartes declared – thinking things. As the papers included in this issue attest, some of us are very good at being thinking things!

The papers included here were all presented in April 2010 at the 14th annual Pacific University Undergraduate Conference. (For the full conference program, see http://www.pacificu.edu/as/philosophy/conference/archives_09-12.cfm.) Over the years the conference has hosted almost 1000 students, coming from almost 250 different schools, representing forty-five U.S. states and several other countries. Of the nearly one hundred presentations at the 2010 conference, the papers below, because of their impressive quality, were selected for publication in this issue. They demonstrate the remarkably fine scholarship of the best of those students whose papers were accepted for presentation.

This conference is a general one every year, meaning that papers in all areas of philosophy are presented. This particular batch of papers reflects the general tenor of this year's conference, in which a large number of papers were on topics within metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of mind, ethics, and philosophy of art. Among the papers in this issue, half focus on topics within ontology (papers by Mike Anthony, Chad McIntosh, Eli Cohn, Kristin Thornburg, Peter Tan, Sam Hopkins, Alex Haitos, Davida Grimes, Anthony Schlimgen, and Noah Sharpsteen). The remainder spread over epistemology (Tim Graf), philosophy of mind (Joanna Klimaski, Jack Coughlin, and Brian Ray), ethics (Kiran Bhardwaj, L. Pippa Callanan, and Hannah Levinson), human agency and art (Robert J. Muckle, Jake Whipple, and Natalie Rich). Given the strengths of all of these papers (as well as others that were presented at the conference), it was truly a difficult task to identify a "Best Paper." Nonetheless, such a paper was identified: Mike Anthony's paper ("Improper Parts, Restricted Existence, and Use: Three Arguments against Ted Sider's Four-Dimensionalism"), along with two that were selected as Honorable Mention Papers, Tim Graf's ("Restrictions on Warrant Properties") and Chad McIntosh's ("S5, God, and Numbers").
