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*From the Board of Directors of the Center for Lao Studies:*

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am pleased to see the end result of years of dreaming and work represented in this first issue of the Journal of Lao Studies. I am grateful to all of those whose efforts resulted in a quality academic journal specifically for the field of Lao Studies. I appreciate the time taken by the authors, editors, reviewers and others who worked behind the scenes to produce this publication. It is an honor to now send this scholarship out to the world as an open access journal with hopes that it will spark a greater interest in Lao Studies by being as freely available as possible. Our mission at the Center for Lao Studies is to advance knowledge and engagement in the field of Lao Studies through research, education and information sharing. The JLS moves us a giant step forward towards fulfilling that mission. Please take time to enjoy the journal. Your thoughts, comments and submissions for future issues are always welcome.

Gregory Green, Chair, CLS Board of Directors

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*From the Executive Director of the Center for Lao Studies:*

On behalf of the Center for Lao Studies, I am pleased to introduce the first issue of the Journal of Lao Studies. CLS is proud to establish what is currently the only peer-reviewed academic journal solely devoted to Lao Studies. The journal not only covers articles on all ethnic groups from Laos, but also includes the Lao diaspora, the Lao Isan and other ethnic Lao groups residing in neighboring countries. CLS also provides other opportunities for Lao Studies specialists to promote their work, such as through our triennial International Conference on Lao Studies and through CLS sponsored panels at various conferences. Much gratitude goes out to our dedicated editors, board members, volunteers, and the contributors who have spent many hours to make JLS a reality. We hope you will enjoy reading many of the wonderful articles in this issue and many more issues to come.

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Vinya Sysamouth, CLS Executive Director