Editorial and Policy Changes for 2015

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The Journal of Bacteriology was the first journal published by the ASM nearly 100 years ago. It remains the second most highly cited journal in the field of microbiology, despite the appearance of many new competitors. In order to stay ahead of the competition, the Editors and I have implemented a number of changes. Last June, we changed the Scope statement:

“The Journal of Bacteriology (JB) publishes research articles that probe fundamental processes in bacteria, archaea and their viruses, and the molecular mechanisms by which they interact with each other and with their hosts and their environments.”

The new statement more accurately and more concisely reflects the current state of the field and the areas of research reported in the journal.

In response to a survey conducted by the Journals Program, we also implemented a page charge holiday. It is hoped that this action will draw increased attention to the journal and to help our members in these times of fiscal constraint.

In 2015 we will implement changes to call attention to the excellent papers we publish and help explain the work reported to a broader audience. Articles that the Editors think merit special attention will be recognized by a short Spotlight, which will be written by the authors. We will also continue to publish Commentaries, which are written by experts in the field to provide greater insight into or a different perspective of the advances made in the highlighted paper.

Also, we will ask all authors to provide a structured summary with two sections: “Abstract” and “Importance.” The Abstract section should be 250 words or fewer concisely summarizing the basic content of the paper without extensive experimental details. The Importance section should be 120 words or fewer describing the significance of the work at a level understandable to microbiologists outside the specialty. These new summaries will begin to appear in the journal in early spring. Finally, as a step toward making the review process more transparent, the name of the Editor will appear on each newly accepted article.

As Editor in Chief, my most important job is to maintain the high standards of the journal, and the first step in this process is to recruit outstanding Editors who are top scientists in the field. Last year Charles Moran reached the end of this term and retired, and he was replaced by Tina Henkin. I’m extremely proud of this placement.

This year, 17 new scientists were appointed to the Editorial Board to replace retiring members.

Craig Ellermeier, University of Iowa
Mario Feldman, University of Alberta
Maria Hadjifrangiskou, Vanderbilt University School of Medicine

Patrick Hallenbeck, University of Montreal
Tâm Mignot, CNRS
Tohru Minamino, Osaka University
Andreas Peschel, University of Tubingen
Manjula Reddy, Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology
Anthony Richardson, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
David Rudner, Harvard Medical School
Natividad Ruiz, Ohio State University
Birgit Scharf, Virginia Tech
Feng Shao, National Institute of Biological Sciences
Aimee Shen, University of Vermont
Renée Tsolis, University of California, Davis
Chris Waters, Michigan State University
Thomas Zahrt, Medical College of Wisconsin

Each of them brings noted expertise to the journal, and speaking for all of the Editors, I welcome them.

Birgit E. Alber, Ohio State University

Dean C. Crick, Colorado State University
Sean Crosson, University of Chicago
Michael J. Federle, University of Illinois at Chicago
Mark Gomelsky, University of Wyoming
Susan Gottesman, National Cancer Institute, NIH
David R. Hendrixson, University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center
Daniel B. Kearns, Indiana University
Kenneth N. Kreuzer, Duke University Medical Center
Michiko M. Nakano, Oregon Health & Science University
David L. Popham, Virginia Tech
Stephen Spiro, University of Texas at Dallas
Jörg Stülke, University of Göttingen
Chris Whitfield, University of Guelph
Malcolm E. Winkler, Indiana University at Bloomington
Timothy L. Yahr, University of Iowa
Peter Zuber, Oregon Health & Science University

These Board members stood out based on two very important criteria. First, during the last 12 months, these scientists reviewed at least 9 manuscripts, and second, they did so with an average turnaround time of 16 days or less. Heartfelt thanks to all of you.

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