

ACS - EDITORIAL POLICY COORDINATION COMMITTEE (ACS321)

2014 Annual Report

The ACS321 Editorial Affairs Committee met at the Annual ASA-CSSA-SSSA Meeting in Long Beach, CA on Tuesday, November 4th at 9:30 am in the Corsican Room, Renaissance-Long Beach Hotel. After introductions, the following items were discussed and information presented:

I. Communications Editor – Headquarter have had a six-month pilot “Communications Editor” program for three of our journals (*Soil Science Society of America Journal*, *Journal of Environmental Quality*, and *Vadose Zone Journal*) with a goal of improving the visibility of our sciences and communicating their importance to larger audiences. The general consensus was that this program has been very successful in helping us identify key science and that the process has worked well so far. Editors of the three Society Journals having a Communications Editor believe this position will help highlight key papers to a broader audience and will ultimately have a beneficial effect on outreach and Journal Impact Factor (IF). Highlighted articles are Open Access for 30 days.

Other Society Journals, including *Agronomy Journal*, *Crop Science*, and *Plant Genomics* were interested in looking into the possibility of have a Communications Editor. Because of the success of this position, Headquarters will look into extending these positions beyond the initial 6-month trial. ACS321 discussed the mechanics of this position and recommend that there be feedback and dialogue among the Communications Editor, Journal Editor, Technical and Associate Editors on both which papers to highlight and outlets for the highlighted papers, which would be somewhat dependent on subject matter. Feedback among Editors and Headquarters will guarantee the continued success of this position. Finally, the Committee recommended that the Communications Editor be a three-year appointment.

II. Open Access of Journal Papers – The Committee had a “healthy” discussion of Open Access concerns for papers in most of our Journals. The general feeling of the Editors was that Open Access for all papers would increase that Journal’s IF. However, it was pointed out that this would have a significant and negative impact on the Societies financial budget and that this action could also limit the salability of the Digital Library, if the majority of our papers were

freely available. Despite this, serious consideration must be given to the Open Access questions and debate, as it remains a hurdle to our competitiveness with other publishers. Bill Cook, Director of Publications at Headquarters agreed to develop several models that would evaluate the financial impact of Open Access using various cost scenarios.

III. Agricultural Letters – A proposal was prepared by Jerry Hatfield, outlining the needs and scope of such a new journal. While the title of the proposed new Journal is still debated, *Agricultural Letters* is an Open Access journal that publishes high-impact, broad-reaching, exceptional interesting, and timely research on major scientific advances in the entire range of the agricultural sciences. Papers would be communications-length (three to five published pages, generally less than 2,500 words) articles. They would have broad and immediate implications in their discipline and/or across agricultural science and elicit discussion within the agricultural community and provide information to policymakers and users on different topics. *Agricultural Letters* would be continually published online. As a new article is made available it would be posted to the *Journal's* website and an alert sent to the readers who have registered for e-alerts.

IV. Data Papers – Ed Gregorich, Editor of JEQ is developing a model for papers based on data sets not currently available or housed in any central location, which would be available to a wide range of potential users. Headquarters in Madison, WI would house the data for these papers. There are other Journals that have Supplemental Information sections and our *Journal* would publish papers that adequately describe the methods for data collection and analysis. Papers would also give site descriptions such that users could use the data in model development and verification for example and be able to cite the sources of the data used. This *Journal* effort is still in the early stages of development and more discussion and input is needed on how the papers would be reviewed. At the moment, Ed Gregorich (*JEQ* Editor) is handling the submissions but in the long-term and Editorial team would need to be developed. Finally, Headquarters is working on how the data sets will be housed and formatted; but did note that each paper would have a unique “doi” assigned to it.

V. Soil Science Society of America Journal – The *Soil Science Society of America*

Journal indicated that publication of data set papers is something that the *Journal* may want to consider in the future and would look to the *Journal of Environmental Quality* for initial guidance and suggestions. Several Symposiums are in the works and the *Journal* Editors are actively looking at encouraging more Symposia in the future. The question was raised as to whether Special Issues papers could / should be Open Access by default? Again, Headquarters will need to conduct an economic assessment of this on Society finances and Digital Library options.

VI. Journal of Environmental Quality – The IF of the journal in 2013 was ranked 76 out of 215. The IF ranking of the *Journal* fell slightly, as did the actual IF of 2.345 from a value of 2.353 in 2012. As with the other three main *Journals*, it is still difficult to discern any consistent trend positive or negative on the *Journals*. Submissions have increased while the acceptance rate has changed little. The *Journal* continues to actively solicit new symposia for special issues, with four published in 2014, seven expected in 2015, and 2 for 2016.

VII. Vadose Zone Journal – Getting “Web of Science” to regularly and promptly list papers published in *Vadose Zone Journal* is still an ongoing challenge and there is little consistency. This is of obvious concern to *Journal* Editors who realize this can negatively impact the *Journal's* IF and widening readership. Headquarters staff will work with “Web of Science” to bring this to their attention via various existing contacts. It was hoped that a multi-pronged communication with “Web of Science” will pay dividends. The journal continues to do well. The 2013 IF increased to 2.412 from 2.200, and the 5-year IF increased to 2.799 from 2.672. These IFs are the high than any year since 2008, and the journal rankings place *Vadose Zone Journal* 7th of all Soil Science journals worldwide and 17th for Water Resources. The *Vadose Zone Journal* has implemented a “Rapid Communication” option, which is intended to highlight time-sensitive new research results that have far-reaching impacts across the vadose zone community. These papers receive extra oversight, through the entire review and revision process, with a goal of publishing manuscripts in just over 1 month from submission. *Vadose Zone Journal* has, received 4 such articles, and one has been published to date.

VIII. Soil Horizons – Given that 2015 is the “International Year of Soils,” *Soil Horizons* are preparing monthly feature stories to coincide with this. Issues will focus on “Soil: what’s it all about,” “Soil support agriculture,” “Soils clean and capture water,” “Soil support buildings,” “Soils support recreation,” “Soils are living,” “Soils support health,” “Soil protect the environment,” “Soils and products we use,” “Soil and climate,” and “Soils, culture, and people.”

IX. Agronomy Journal - Agronomy Journal published several papers this past year that have already been heavily cited. This includes a paper “Understanding Global and Historical Nutrient Use Efficiencies for Closing Maize Yield Gaps coming from Ignacio Ciampitti and a Statistics Symposium that Barry Glaz coordinated and that incorporated 9 manuscripts from highly reputable authors including Dr. Kathleen Yeater, and Kenneth Moore.

X. Crop Science – Crop Science published slightly more papers than in 2013, rising to 275 total articles. The majority of papers (68%) were international submissions, include more supplemental data (25% of papers in 2014), and reflected a drop in the number of published papers where an author was a member of CSSA. The impact factor decreased slightly to 1.478.

XI. Plant Genome – Most notably, the impact factor for TPG increased drastically from 2.463 in 2013 to 4.659 in 2014. The number of submissions is on track to double over 2013. The journal is currently surpassing its projected revenue for 2014 by almost 300%.

XII. Forage and Grazinglands - In 2015, Forage & Grazinglands, Applied Turfgrass Science, and Crop Management will combine to form a new journal – Crop, Forage & Turfgrass Management.

XIII. Applied Turfgrass Science – In calendar year 2014, there have been 37 submissions to Applied Turfgrass Science (ATS), 23 research articles and 14 briefs, up to October 31st, 2014. The number of brief submissions has doubled over last year because ATS accepts not only reports on environmental and/or “one time” events for briefs, but also narrowly focused and straightforward research reports as briefs. These “briefs” are still repeated over time/space and meet all technical aspects of research reports, but are short (800 words and 1 table/graph). Our current acceptance of “briefs” may be revisited as ATS combines in Crop, Forage, and Turf

Management. Applied Turfgrass Science also adopted a policy on reports including experimental compounds or plant material, which reads; “Applied Turfgrass Science is focused on research immediately applicable to the practitioner and those working with practitioners. Therefore, research articles should focus primarily on products and plant material currently available to practitioners in the US or internationally. However, research focused primarily on products or plant material with high likelihood of commercial availability and/or used to test hypotheses will be accepted based on the opinion of the chief editor(s).”

XIV. Journal of Plant Registrations – The Journal of Plant Registrations published 66 registrations in 2014, comparable to the 67 registrations published in 2013.

XV. Natural Sciences Education - We had 28 submissions for 2014 with 41 days from submission to first decision. Our acceptance rate was 73%. We instituted a Facebook page and a Twitter feed. We also experienced greater interaction with our cooperating societies such as the American Society of Animal Sciences.

XIV. Book Publishing – The *Book Publishing Committee* continues to be very active and aggressively pursuing book opportunities, meeting by conference call every 6 weeks. The Committee’s activities benefited from valuable discussions about the ACSESS Digital Library, outreach and promotion of our published books, the most effective way of handling a backlog of book proposals (introduction of the dual review process), transition away from conventional sales of print copies of our books to a print-on-demand model, and the idea of a continuous publishing model. Since the 2013 ASA Meetings in Tampa, the Committee has reviewed 14 new book proposals. Eleven of these proposals were accepted based on initial review; three were recommended for revision, and all three were subsequently revised, resubmitted, and accepted. A number of book projects will continue to move forward in 2015; those we anticipate transitioning into formal book proposals in the first half of the year include: Soils in Wine Grape Vineyards, Digital Tools for Water-Soil Flow, and Integrated Crop and Livestock Systems for the Future. Book ideas we are currently pursuing as new titles include Cover Crops, Antibiotic Resistance, Gypsum, Urban Agriculture/Biosolids, Innovative Crop and Water Management Strategies, and Organic Food Systems.

XVII. Other - Amazingly, the meeting was adjourned at 11:00 am as scheduled.

Items Requiring Board Attention:

None.

Members of the Committee:

Andrew Sharpley (SSSA Editor-in-Chief)

E. Charles Brummer (CSSA Editor-in-Chief)

Warren Dick (ASA Editor-in-Chief)

Ken Barbarick (ASA Editor - Natural Sciences Education)

Sabine Goldberg (SSSA Editor – Soil Science Society of America Journal)

Edward Gregorich (ASA Editor – Journal of Environmental Quality)

Shawn Kaeppler (CSSA Editor – Crop Science)

Samantha Langley-Turnbaugh (SSSA Editor – Soil Horizons)

William Raun (ASA Editor – Agronomy Journal)

Daren Redfearn (CSSA Editor - Forage and Grazinglands)

Zachary Reicher (CSSA Editor - Applied Turfgrass Science)

Wayne Smith (CSSA Editor – Journal of Plant Registrations)

David Somers (CSSA Editor – The Plant Genome)

Daniel Sweeney (CSSA Editor – Crop Management)

Michael Young (SSSA Editor – Vadose Zone Journal)

Nicole Sandler (ASA Editor – Book Acquisitions)

April Ulery (Member)

William Cook (Member, Ex Officio)

Prepared By:

ACS321 Annual Report for 2014

Andrew Sharpley (Chair)