From the Editor-in-Chief: Changes to Enhance the Author Experience

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As I transition into the Editor-in-Chief position, I would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of all the volunteers who have made the Journal of Microbiology & Biology Education (JMBE) what it is today. Volunteer support is the backbone of every JMBE issue and the journal would not thrive without its myriad reviewers, section editors, and editors, who donate their time to make JMBE a premiere journal in biology education.

In particular, I would like to thank Chris Woolverton and the other previous members of the Editorial Board (Jean Cardinale, Kathy Takayama, and Ruth Gyure), who have been critical in positioning JMBE as an online, open-access journal which is now indexed in PubMed Central. Over the past six years, Chris and his team have created a solid foundation for JMBE, which allowed for a smooth transition for myself and the current Editorial Board. Of course, none of us would be able to function without the incredible ASM Education staff: Amy Chang, Kelly Gull, and Kari Wester, as well as the wisdom of Education Board chair, Neil Baker. Thank you all for “teaching me the ropes” during the past few months of my transition.

The JMBE Editorial Board met in Washington, DC, this March to reaffirm our mission, scope, and develop a vision for JMBE’s future. Although this was the first time many of us met face-to-face, we quickly developed camaraderie and a consensus vision for the next five years. In particular, the Editorial Board affirmed that:

- Our strength lies in providing extensive feedback, guidance, and support to authors throughout the publication process. Because many educators learn to navigate the biology education field “on the job” rather than with traditional academic training, JMBE will match authors of promising manuscripts with mentors to provide guidance during the submission and revision process.
- We are committed to the ideals of accessibility and practical use. JMBE provides a wide range of articles that allow readers to keep up with current topics in biology education research, and also find quality, peer-reviewed resources that can be utilized in the classroom immediately.
- While the journal is rooted in the biological sciences, modern biologists must increasingly negotiate an interdisciplinary working environment. Therefore, we have expanded our scope to include articles addressing the teaching of other disciplines to biology students.
- Teaching and learning occurs in many environments. While JMBE submissions typically focus on undergraduate biology education, the Editorial Board reaffirmed our interest in promoting scholarly teaching in related arenas as well: graduate and professional education, K–12 outreach, and informal education. We especially encourage those in clinical settings to share their work in educating future allied health professionals.
- Biology education research has moved beyond assessing pedagogy in a single classroom. The Editorial Board reaffirmed JMBE’s scope expansion to include studies addressing not only good pedagogy and design, but also student interest and motivation, recruitment and retention, citizen science, and institutional transformation.

The Editorial Board has been hard at work updating our guidelines and rubrics for each section to reflect these changes in our scope, and to help authors successfully publish in JMBE. On our website, users will find:

- A self-assessment checklist to determine whether your manuscript is ready for publication in JMBE.
- Video tutorials for all sections to guide authors in preparing their submission.
- Updated information on the types of assessments suitable for the various sections of JMBE.
- Guidelines on how to develop a manuscript title that will be searchable by a global audience.
- A new Letters to the Editor section, which will allow individuals to respond to articles, or bring up other issues of interest to our readers. Full details for this section are available in the JMBE Author Guidelines.
We are also planning exciting future developments for *JMBE*, including:

- A thematic issue about teaching scientific ethics, which will debut as a nested module in our December 2014 publication. If you would like to be included in this themed issue, check out the Announcements page on the *JMBE* website for our Call for Papers.
- Opportunities at the ASM Conference for Undergraduate Educators (ASMCUE) to talk directly with the Editors and determine ways to take your work from “Presentation to Publication.”
- Future migration to the ASM Science platform, which will allow a more dynamic way for the user to interface with *JMBE* content.

I am deeply honored to serve as *JMBE* Editor-in-Chief and am very excited to be a part of this next chapter. I encourage our readers to contact me regarding feedback on the journal or ideas for possible content. We look forward to working with you as an author in the future!