

Editorial

In Search of Impact: Starting as a New Editor

Norbert J. Pienta

Major events in a person's career happen only occasionally and should be accompanied by an appropriate amount of reflection. Perhaps a good introduction to my new mission comes from the welcoming statements of colleagues and well-wishers. Their questions are related, and generally fit this form: "What are you going to do?" In this question, the word "do" could be swapped with any number of related verbs: *change*, *fix*, *replace*, *delete*, *keep*, *enhance*, or *modify*. As the new Editor—the eighth in the line of succession—I inherit a vibrant forum for chemical education. The *Journal* comes with recognition as a premier publication that represents an international community of scholars and serves constituencies at all levels of chemical education. My predecessor, John W. Moore, has set a high editorial standard, one I intend to uphold. But publishing is in the midst of a revolution with substantial changes at the core of print journalism and the delivery of information. We must function—indeed, we must flourish—in this evolving environment. To meet these challenges, we at the *Journal* are implementing changes that fit within a few categories.

The first category concerns editorial decisions about this *Journal's* contents. We are assembling a team of associate editors to assign reviewers and make decisions about the acceptance of submissions. This group will have both the expertise and the experience to serve the *Journal's* many constituencies. The associate editors will form the core of an editorial board whose members will be announced over the next few months.

The second category centers on how the *Journal* gathers and disseminates information. One change, an electronic system for author and reviewer submissions, was advanced as part of the transition and is in the development stages. (The current submission system will stay in place until we make an official announcement this fall.) A reader survey—announced here previously and hosted online—will inform our decisions about the *Journal's* content, organization, and delivery of information. Your participation is critical to its success (<http://www.jce.divched.org/survey2009/>). The mechanics and tools that are part of Web delivery represent the other facet of subscriber access to the *Journal* and are an integral part of a new partnership.

The new partnership represents the third (and possibly the most significant) set of changes. The *Journal's* governing board and the Publication Division of the ACS have agreed to jointly publish the *Journal*. This is big news—to some it may be shocking—but be assured that this change is in fact a partnership and not a hostile takeover. Over the history of its publication, the *Journal* has participated in several business relationships and arrangements. In a similar fashion, the Publication Division of the ACS will provide us with integrated services and operations, including subscription fulfillment, marketing, advertising, and production. The editorial identity of the *Journal* remains with

the Division of Chemical Education, Inc., although our new partner is also dedicated to our success and to publishing the best in chemical education. The goals and standards of serving our constituencies will not change. Some things will remain comfortably familiar; in other cases, the details may be different but only after careful consideration by both sides of the partnership. For example, the *Journal's* Board of Publication and the Publication Division of the ACS are committed to publishing a print version for as long as doing so is economically reasonable, a determination to be made by balancing advertising and subscription revenues against printing and postage costs. An inexpensive online subscription for individuals guarantees access to all interested users. In addition to the business opportunities, the partnership gives the *Journal* unique access to the content and intellectual assets of the other ACS journals and provides us with new ways to integrate it for the benefit of chemical educators.

Being selected as the new editor of this *Journal* gave me both a duty and opportunity to serve the chemical education community. Enhancements to the various components of this forum will lead to a better and more responsive *Journal*. In turn, these enhancements provide the basis for a greater impact within our community. But the extent of this impact also depends on you. We cannot do this alone—and here I am using the word "do" in all of the ways described above. We want more authors and readers among teachers and students at all levels of education, as well as from industry and informal science education settings. We want to provide timely information about new content and pedagogies in the classroom, laboratory, or any other venues, including virtual ones. We want technology to serve our students and us. Research in chemical education or chemistry must report not just basic findings but also practical applications. We will expect each contribution to have novelty, utility, and at least a moderate level of assessment that identifies part of its value and defines the scholarship associated with teaching and learning. The *Journal* helps define us as teachers and scholars. It is both our legacy and our future. Help us make an impact through your interest and participation!

Supporting JCE Online Material

<http://www.jce.divched.org/Journal/Issues/2009/Nov/abs1259.html>

Full text (HTML and PDF)

Reader survey available at <http://www.jce.divched.org/survey2009/>

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