Introducing an Opportunity for Undergraduates to Publish in a Peer Reviewed Journal: The Journal of Young Investigators

Veeraj Shah1, Weber Gaowen1, Maya Gostyla1, Nafisa M. Jadaoji1, Grace Niewjak1, Peter Mikhail1, Ashley Parrino1, Mark Permik1, Nicolette Sarmiento1, Adam Sychta1, Muhammad Hamza Waseem1

1Journal of Young Investigators Executive Board. 2Journal of Young Investigators Board of Directors

Introduction and Objectives

Introduction: The Journal of Young Investigators (JYI) was founded in 1997 by a group of undergraduate students in order to provide undergraduates with an opportunity to publish. It is an international web-based journal accepting undergraduate-authored original manuscripts and reviews from all STEM disciplines. The journal accepts works which are of high scientific quality, yet lack the volume of data collected over many years that would be required for publication in a professional journal. Additionally, JYI charges no publication fees and all papers are open access, enabling students without access to funding sources to publish with us and view all of our papers.

Finally, the journal’s staff consists entirely of undergraduate volunteers, enabling students to gain first-hand experience in the peer-review and publishing process. There are multiple ways in which professionals can contribute to JYI’s mission of expanding opportunities for undergraduate publishing, including mentoring current staff members, donating to the organization, and advertising JYI to others.

Objectives: Several barriers can prevent undergraduate students from publishing their research, including limited time for data collection and analysis, lack of funding for publishing fees, and poor understanding of the publishing process. The Journal of Young Investigators helps students to overcome these barriers by accepting manuscripts with smaller quantities of data, publishing open-access with no publication fees, and providing valuable exposure to the processes of peer review and scholarly publishing. Professionals in the publishing industry can help to promote the mission of the Journal of Young Investigators through mentoring our staff, sponsorship, and advertising on our website.

February 1997: Five undergraduate students from Stanford College, Duke University, and Brown University became the founding members of the Journal of Young Investigators (JYI). Later they become JYI’s first Board of Directors.

June 1997: The Board of Directors meets to form the journal’s Mission Statement.

August 1997: JYI receives funding from Duke University, Harvard College, and Glass Welcome, Inc.

October 1997: Science magazine commits to an advisory role in helping the newly-established JYI to get off the ground.


Fall 1998: The journal receives a grant from the National Science Foundation.

December 1998: The first issue of JYI is published.

February 2004: Move to WordPress site

April 2013: The first issue of JYI, our annual printed highlights edition, is published.

December 2017: New SquareSpace JYI website launched.

Journal Structure

Below is a diagram showing the structure of our journal from a departmental perspective.

Today, JYI executive board members and staff come from the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Pakistan, and more. We are keen to increase our international presence and give undergraduates around the world experience in a peer-review publication process.

Our Results

Publications:

As shown above, in 2017, JYI published 22 research articles and 21 news & careers articles.

JYI Website:

- From 2016 to 2017, the JYI website had 378,000 visits.
- On average, users visit approximately 2 website pages/session. In 2018, we have had 67,964 total page views.
- We update our website content on a monthly basis, loading new publications and other resources for undergraduates interested in research.

JYI Subscribers Lists:

- Our JYI subscriber lists are maintained with the University of Science and Technology.
- We maintain a list of alumni and interested undergraduates interested in JYI.
- In 2017, JYI had 9,000 unique members on our ListServ email service and 472 subscribers.
- We receive between 5-5 new subscribers to our service each day.

JYI Author and Staff Satisfaction

- (JYI) implements a series of author and staff member satisfaction ratings which measure their happiness with the JYI peer-review process and management.
- In 2017, authors rated an average of 4.2 satisfaction on a 5-point Likert scale.
- In 2017, JYI staff rated an average of 4.3 satisfaction on a 5-point Likert scale.

JYI Social Media

- We currently manage Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and Reddit accounts.
- Social media is used to promote new website content, increase the number of submissions, and advertise newly published manuscripts.
- We currently have 115,000 Facebook followers and 500 Twitter followers.

JYI Finances

- In 2017, JYI spent a total of $57,000 on operating and promotional costs.
- This includes advertisements, promotional materials, conference fees, and more.
- JYI aims to spend between $15,000 and $15,000 each year.

JYI Team Distribution

Research Papers Published

Websites – Google Analytics

JYI Website Visitor Age Distribution

New JYI Efforts and Future Goals

New JYI Efforts:

- JYI Blog: Publishes articles on a monthly basis about science news, the journey/experience of JYI members, and tips for undergraduates interested in academia.
- Facebook Ads/Banner Posts: Along with our presence on Facebook, JYI utilizes Facebook Ads to continue to grow our social media presence and promote JYI.
- JYI Newsletters: Each month, the Board of Directors write a newsletter to all JYI staff, executive board, and JYI members with advice on navigating their undergraduate degree and preparing for a career in academia.
- LinkedIn: All JYI manuscripts are currently indexed on EBSCO. We are currently working on being indexed in Google Scholar and Web of Science.

JYI Five Year Goals

- Increase the number of research articles and news & careers articles published annually to 50 and 70 respectively.
- Increase the number of website views to 800,000 per year.
- Increase the number of JYI subscribers to 1,500.
- Increase the satisfaction response rate to 75% and a score of 4.5 out of 5.

Ways to Promote and Benefit JYI

Donate to our organization. Our journal operates on a nonprofit basis and does not charge any fees to publish in our journal or access papers. As a result, we fund our entire operation through grants, donations, and sponsorships.

Advertise JYI to others. Many students and advisors are still unaware that JYI exists as a pathway to publication. Mentioning our journal helps to alert them to the benefits of publishing with us.

Contact

Veeraj Shah
Chief Communications Officer
coa@jyi.org

Peter Mikhail
Chief Executive Officer
ceo@jyi.org

JYI Website
www.jyi.org

JYI Blog
www.jyi.org/blog