Psi Chi Journal Editorial Transition
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Where We Have Been
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As I write these lines, Psi Chi Journal of Psychological Research has fully transitioned to the editorial stewardship of Dr. Debi Brannan. It is a bittersweet time; I treasured deeply the tasks of editing the Psi Chi Journal. For nearly 5 years, I benefitted from reading cutting-edge research in broad topics across psychology. I was inspired by the knowledge that most of the authors were up-and-coming researchers whose sense of efficacy could be nurtured through a positive publication experience. I reveled in the beauty of watching undergraduate and graduate researchers shine, faculty mentors nurture our next generation of researchers, and colleagues support Psi Chi Journal authors in putting forth the best possible work. I retain a sense of awe at watching a community of scholars seamlessly collaborate for the greater good of science and psychology. I step down with a sense of having gained much more than I contributed. This editorial summarizes the road we—the editorial team—traveled during my years as editor of this fine Journal. The Journal editorial team accomplishments since November of 2011 and until July of 2016 included advances in both structure and function of the Journal.

Psi Chi Journal’s notable changes in the 2011–16 period include a name change, expansion of author submissions, a shift from paper to online submissions, and indexing in EBSCO Academic Search Complete and PsycINFO. We also created a Google Scholar profile. These changes were intended to increase the visibility, and thus impact, of Psi Chi Journal in the field. Increasing author submissions would allow us to increase the selectivity of published works. Increased visibility through indexing increases the probability of citation. Google Scholar allowed us to track the impact of specific articles and to calculate an \( h \) index for the Journal. At the time of this printing, the \( h \) index for the Journal was 10, indicating that 10 manuscripts have been cited at least 10 times. In September 2014 when we first began to track our impact, the \( h \) index was 7. In the process of tracking our articles, we learned about the Psi Chi Journal publications that are most often cited, and from that information, we devised future editorials that would likely be of interest to our readers. Not surprisingly, our workload increased.

We welcomed the increased workload and worried about maintaining and improving the quality of our publication. To that end, we expanded our editorial team. The first, and critical addition, was the APA Style editor. Where the editor had previously been tasked with evaluating content and style, now a dedicated staff member reviewed every article, providing an important educational experience for all authors. We continued building a robust editorial team. When I took the reins of the Journal, the editorial team was formed by the communications director and the editor. By the end of my term, our team was comprised of the editor, a managing editor and an APA style editor at the Psi Chi Central Office, an assistant editor at my institution, five associate editors across the nation, and 12 advisory editorial board members. We also instituted plagiarism checks on every manuscript consistent with practices across journals in psychology.

Our expanded Journal editorial team provided many opportunities for growth and development of the Journal. We maximized the potential contributions of the team by establishing clear expectations for roles through the development of a Journal Operating Manual (created by me) and an Associate Editor’s Manual (created by Staci Taylor, Managing Editor). The APA Style editor, Bradley Cannon, developed a comprehensive APA Style Checklist to streamline our feedback. Staci, Bradley, and I had bimonthly calls to ensure the healthy daily functioning of the Journal. The larger editorial team (minus the advisory editorial board
members) held quarterly calls to check in on the content of the Journal including troubleshooting issues, developing new ideas, and strategizing for outreach activities.

These deep structural changes led to some exciting outcomes. Chief among them were increased submissions, on-time publication of our quarterly issues, and increase in published manuscripts per issue from five to seven empirical articles. The online submission system ensured more timely assignment of manuscripts to reviewers, systematic reminders of deadlines for authors, reviewers, and quicker turnaround times for final editorial letters. Time to publication was reduced dramatically. Our author and reviewer surveys showed satisfaction with the submission and review process. They also provided vital feedback for needed changes. Our acceptance rate by the end of my term was 9%. Although this number may horrify some, it represents the number of articles that were conditionally accepted at first submission. Most submissions were returned with much feedback, sometimes to the chagrin of authors, and an invitation to resubmit. An overwhelming majority of resubmissions (88%) were accepted after substantial changes were made. To me, this represented success in achieving a balance of high expectations and strong support for authors’ success. Most of our first authors continue to be undergraduate students (~84% at my last report).

Overall, I am proud of our accomplishments during my time as editor. Conventional academic structures dictate that I author this editorial, however I write for the collective. The accomplishments during this time period were the result of deliberate, committed action by a team of talented professionals. Staci Taylor was an outstanding Managing Editor. Staci ensured that the online submissions system functioned properly, that author queries were attended to in a timely manner, and lent her talents to each issue by setting the Journal into layout. Bradley Cannon, our APA Style Editor extraordinaire, developed such an eagle-eye for APA style issues that even I was not immune to his notes on my editorials. His positive, supportive, specific feedback provided many authors, faculty mentors, and editorial team members with individualized tutorials on APA style. The team of Associate Editors gave generously of their time and talents by taking the lead on manuscript reviews and providing skillfully crafted editorial decision letters; Debi Brannan (1/13–6/16), Carlos Escoto (3/12–6/16), Jennifer Hughes (9/15–present), Shelia Kennison (2012–3/16), Eric Landrum (11/11–12/12), and Steve Rouse (8/14–present) served as Associate Editors at various points. Our Advisory Editorial Board members also gave generously of their time by agreeing to take on a heavy load of reviews. Jeisianne Rosario-Colón at Utah State University ensured that our Google Scholar account stayed up-to-date, our author and reviewer surveys went out and their reports prepared, occasionally checked layouts, and generally ensured that I was set up for success. At the end of my term, we had 150 reviewers providing key support for the Journal’s core activity. They are acknowledged in our Journal, please take a moment to look up their names and affiliations. Finally, the Journal could not have flourished without the support of the Psi Chi Board of Directors who entertained multiple requests for resources.

Our accomplishments belong to the editorial team. The Journal belongs to Psi Chi. I do believe that the Journal represents a significant membership benefit. All members have free access to the articles and can garner a sense of pride from being associated with an organization that engages in the highest levels of scientific activity. In Spring 2016, all articles became free to nonmembers as well to further extend the accessibility of our Journal across the psychological community. Authors receive guidance and mentorship in the process of publication, a friendly and supportive process which for many is an entrée into scientific publishing. For faculty, reviewing and editing provides an opportunity to engage service activities in the field in science and at the international level in a collaborative context. I look forward to continuing to see the Journal thrive, and I could not be more thrilled that the Journal passes on to the capable hands of Dr. Debi Brannan who is infinitely more timely and affable than I, and brings broader strengths across methodologies. I return to the ranks of reviewers with gratitude for the opportunity to have served and with the joy of knowing that I am finally able to submit my scholarly work to the Journal! After many years of wishing I could have my work published in Psi Chi Journal, a graduate student and I finally have a manuscript under review. There is no better way for me to leave you with the sense of my belief in the high quality of the review process and the Journal itself than to let you know that I anxiously await the editorial decision and feel giddy at the possibility of having my scholarship published here.
Where We Are Headed
Debi Brannan

It is an honor to take on the position of editor of the Psi Chi Journal of Psychological Research. For the past 3 years, I have had the privilege of working as an associate editor for the Journal and, to say the least, it has been an exciting journey. Watching the Journal evolve into what it is today has been amazing. With that said, I knew that, once I became the editor, one of the first questions that I would be asked would likely be “where do you see the Journal going in the next 3 years under your leadership?” What a great question! The exciting part of answering that question is that I believe that my vision for the future of the Journal is not only mine but also that of my entire editorial team. We all agree that we wish to continue on the successful path that Dr. Domenech Rodriguez, Editor Emeritus, has laid out. Additionally, I see the Journal continuing to grow in new and exciting ways. More specifically, implementing new opportunities for authors to submit replications studies and making Open Practices Badges available. I also want to continue the high-quality experience that many reviewers and authors have come to respect and appreciate.

Promoting PCJPR

By being a member of Psi Chi, individuals are able to publish in a peer-reviewed, scientifically based Journal. One of my first goals as editor is promoting the Journal so that all our members know about the Journal and understand that this is an avenue whereby anyone who is a Psi Chi member can submit manuscripts (do not forget—once you become a member, you are one for life). The Journal is a way to foster and reward the scholarly efforts of all Psi Chi members. This is a message that I want to make sure that all Psi Chi members and prospective members understand.

Psi Chi’s mission statement is “recognizing and promoting excellence in the science and application of psychology.” Part of supporting this mission is the Journal. It exists in order to cultivate, support, and promote professional development for our members and their collaborators. Moreover, the Journal is a way for our members to disseminate their work to the greater field.

To further promote the Journal, I will continue to look for databases where it is appropriate for the Journal to be indexed. In 2014, we were indexed in PsycINFO. This is exciting for our Honor Society, our Journal, and authors because being indexed in these databases will allow the high-quality work being published in our Journal to be available to other researchers.

Implementation of Open Practices Badges

Transparency in research is critical, and as a result, many in the field have argued for open practices. With many researchers and granting agencies arguing for a method by which data and materials could be shared and examined by others in the field, the Open Science Badges were created to address these issues. More specifically, in 2014, Psychological Science offered authors the chance to post their data and materials in an open access forum in order to be transparent in their methods and with their data within the Open Science Framework. Since this time, many authors have participated in offering their data, materials or preregistering (Authors Leading the Way in Open Science, 2016). This is a completely volunteer process that allows researchers to demonstrate the quality and integrity of their projects. The Journal supports this mission and will be implementing this program soon. As editor, I would like to offer all authors—undergraduates, graduate students, or faculty—the opportunity to participate and obtain Open Practices Badges. This will not be a requirement for publication but rather another benefit that the Journal will offer interested authors.

Maintaining the High Level of Reviewer Feedback

One clear advantage to submitting a manuscript into the Journal is that each paper is reviewed by one associate editor, three reviewers, and an APA style reviewer. Five people work together to support authors and make the publication experience one of growth, learning, and support. This member benefit is one that is unique to our Journal. We understand that many of our authors have never had the experience of going through the publication process; consequently, we want the entire experience to be one that is both rigorous and supportive. For our authors who have gone through the publication process before, we still offer constructive, beneficial feedback. In sum, we want all our authors to have a positive, educational experience.

Replication Studies Are Welcome

Psychological studies have traditionally focused on examining various issues in new and novel ways, but that is changing. In an article in Science...
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(2015), Nosek and the Open Science Collaboration conducted a series of replications of 100 various studies. The results were not positive with only 36% of the replications being consistent with the initial work. This has prompted many researchers to reexamine their work and the work of others. We know that many undergraduates are replicating studies in their research methods classes, and we expect more graduate students and faculty to replicate work as well. The \textit{Journal} is a great place to submit these manuscripts. We support replication students and eventually hope to devote an entire issue to these types of studies; but for now, we welcome them and hope to see more replication studies.

Conclusion
I have been part of the \textit{Journal}'s editorial team for a number of years, and I am excited to lead this \textit{Journal} into the future. I am committed to seeing the \textit{Journal} continue to expand and evolve in ways that support our Psi Chi members. This position affords me the opportunity to work with authors, faculty advisors, and an amazing editorial team. My position is made even better because of the amazing associate editors: Mary Beth Ahlum, Jennifer Hughes, Steven Kohn, and Steven Rouse. Without them, my job would be much more difficult and a lot less fun. I am also grateful to work closely with my hardworking student assistants Rebecca Stempel and Emily Denning. I also must thank our Managing Editor, Bradley Cannon and our Director of Communications, Susan Iles, for all their support and assistance during this transition. Additionally, I would like to thank Dr. Melanie Domenech Rodriguez, Editor Emeritus, for all the hard work that she has put into the \textit{Journal}. The entire team is grateful for her support and guidance over the past 5 years; thank you Melanie. In sum, these people make working for the \textit{Journal} an amazing place to be, and with their assistance, I know that the future is bright.

References