COMMENTARY

American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education 2020: It Is All About People

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On January 2, 2020 our *Journal* greeted its readers on a new website platform. After a thorough examination of alternative hosts for the *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education (AJPE)*, the editorial team selected Highwire to provide our members and other readers an enhanced publication experience. Improvements will enhance submissions, reviews and consumption of the remarkable contents that are shared with readers around the world!

As I reflect on the changes in the new and improved *AJPE*, I find myself thinking about the last 20 years. Of course, the *Journal* has served AACP and our members far longer than the last two decades. Journal publishing has been central to our work from very early in our history but, like so many aspects of our work, the digital era dawned for *AJPE* early in the 21st century. This expanded the reach of the scholarly work of our authors to advance pharmacy and health professions education more broadly.

As powerful as the move to online publishing was and continues to be, it is important to focus on what truly makes *AJPE* one of the most significant components of the work of the Association: it is the people engaged in the publication that make the difference. George Cocolas served as Editor of *AJPE* for 22 years! With the help of many reviewers and a small portion of a secretary's time, George faithfully ensured that four quarterly issues of the *Journal* would be produced each year. It must have been a relief to George and his teammate when manuscripts no longer had to be received, distributed to reviewers and exchanged as final galley proofs all by what we now call "snail mail"! Email made each of those steps more efficient and less costly. Subscriptions were fulfilled through the mail for AACP members and other institutional subscribers.

Joseph DiPiro assumed the role of Editor as George transitioned to retirement after such a significant period of faithful service in late 2002. In expressing interest in the editorial role, for which Joe was highly qualified, he made it clear to AACP that it was time to transition from print and mail to an online journal format. His vision included increasing the number of issues of the publication and expanding readership

through an open access journal policy. To accomplish this vision, the *Journal* would need more people power.

Editor DiPiro requested the resources to add more staff capacity to manage the flow of manuscripts and execute the publishing function on *AJPE*'s original digital platform. In addition, he suggested that it was time to deputize additional editorial talent in the form of associate editors. Karen Shipp became his righthand staff person and Gayle Brazeau and Jack Fincham assumed the first Associate Editor positions in 2004. To cultivate more international submission, Claire Anderson was named the first International Associate Editor in 2008.

This dynamic era for AACP's flagship journal drew upon more than just this superb cadre of dedicated editors. A journal is only as good as the material it publishes. *AJPE* has consistently attracted the highest quality submissions from a growing number of authors. This allowed the *Journal* to grow from 4 to 6 and then 10 annual issues between 2002 and 2019. With the decision to move to the new website, AACP's Board of Directors approved the further expansion to 12 issues annually beginning this year. An increasing number of themed issues are also in the process of publication.

Talented authors, an expanded staff, dedicated editors now numbering six individuals are all ingredients of the success of *AJPE*. However, there is more to the story of what makes a digital journal the very best that it can be. The *AJPE* Editorial Advisory Board has consistently helped guide new policies and best practices for the publication. An increasing number of manuscripts demands a growing number of reviewers who are willing to respond to requests for reviews in a timely fashion to help the editors meet expectations for an appropriate length of time to publication. The editors are continuously seeking more volunteers for this journal-critical service.

Celebrating the significant changes in *AJPE* over the decades is timely and appropriate. And while papers are central to the quality of the publication, it is the people that actually keep *AJPE* the outstanding contribution to the Academy that is has always been and will continue to be in the future. To all of you who have done your part, I extend a sincere word of gratitude. Individually and collectively you are making a difference in health professions education and, in turn, to the quality of education and patient care.

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