THE JOURNAL OF CELL BIOLOGY

Doing what we do best, only better

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As current editor-in-chief and executive editor for the *Journal of Cell Biology*, we are writing to describe our shared vision for the journal: To enable the swift and painless publication of advances and thought-provoking ideas in a range of fields that inform cell biology, and to promote this high-quality work as broadly as possible in our community.

Throughout 2015, we celebrated the 60th anniversary of the *JCB* by looking back on sixty years of ground-breaking cell biology. Now, we look forward to describe our vision for the *JCB* and share some of the initiatives we have put into effect and those we hope to implement in the future.

One of the greatest strengths of the *JCB* is its engaged editorial board. As active, prominent scientists, our board members are committed to making the publishing process as painless as possible for our authors with the ultimate goal of optimizing the quality and impact of our publications. Our board members, together with our outstanding professional in-house scientific editors, work to identify the most impactful experiments to address reviewers' comments and ensure consistent standards across all of our decisions. We know that authors want to share their work with the community quickly; therefore, if our editors feel a paper needs more than three months worth of work for the *JCB*, we will reject the paper and urge the authors to submit elsewhere.

In many respects, a journal is only as good as the scientists who review its manuscripts. To capture the broad scope of cell biology, in 2015 we made significant changes to the editorial board. Twenty-eight new members were recruited from diverse fields, including metabolism, stem cell biology, immunology, and developmental biology. This represents the largest change to the editorial board since the journal's inception in 1955. As of today, nearly 30% of the *JCB* board is composed of new members. Eighteen countries are represented and roughly one third of our board members are women. We think that the infusion of new voices and diverse perspectives is vital to the health and success of the journal, and we intend to continue welcoming new members and increasing the diversity of the board in the coming years.

All of our decisions—including editorial board make-up—are ultimately focused on one key goal: To serve our authors and the greater scientific community the best that we can. The *JCB* has a long history of author service, from our peer review process that acts promptly and with acuity, accuracy, and impartiality, to our commitment to reproducibility and technical rigor. We have a long-standing policy that if authors submit an invited revision, we do not reassess novelty or priority, even if competing work has been published in the interim. We also support prepublication submission to preprint servers such as bioRxiv. We offer these protections so that authors will continue to submit their very best work to the *JCB*.

We are committed to innovating to serve our authors better. In the interest of improving our peer review process even further, we recently began allowing reviewers to read each other's comments after all reviews are submitted and respond by making changes to their own comments. This process at the *JCB* is rapid and is not intended to necessarily achieve a consensus between the reviewers on the fate of the paper. Rather, it enables our editors to develop a deeper understanding of a paper's strengths and weaknesses and consequently our editorial decisions have greater clarity. We intend to continue to experiment with ways to improve the peer review process in a manner that is informed by the community on what works and what doesn't.

"I did then what I knew how to do. Now that I know better, I do better."
–Maya Angelou

Another major focus in our first few months has been increasing the speed of publication. The *JCB* already limits re-review whenever possible. We take advantage of our board members' expertise and role as active researchers to assess author revisions without further reviewer input, so that upon resubmission our editors are urged to make a decision on the paper themselves. Once a manuscript is accepted, our goal is to get the paper published and in the hands of readers quickly. By streamlining our editorial processes we have already reduced the time from acceptance to publication by over two weeks. In the near future, we will publish new manuscripts online daily, which will further accelerate publication. We are committed to reducing this time even further and ensuring that the post-acceptance process at the *JCB* is thorough, yet streamlined and painless.

We are excited about these changes, and it is only the beginning. We look forward to continuing to build on the already strong foundation of the *JCB* and to nurture and develop the journal in its mission to disseminate high quality research to the cell biology community. We are grateful to our authors for bringing us their best work, our peer reviewers and editorial board members for volunteering their time in service to the community, and our excellent in-house editorial staff. We hope that you are as excited as we are about the future of the *JCB* and invite you to get in touch with any feedback.

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