

Message from the *Journal of Extension* Editorial Committee

Abstract

This editorial addresses upcoming changes to the *Journal of Extension*. These changes are intended to facilitate more efficient editorial processes and continued enhancement of the scholarly and editorial strengths of the journal. The new editorial model will involve associate editors who will be an integral part of the manuscript review process. In addition, a new publishing arrangement with Clemson University Press will be effective January 1, 2021. The commitment to publishing a high-quality journal and supporting author development remains a priority.

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The publication of the December 2020 issue marks the completion of the 58th volume of the *Journal of Extension (JOE)*. As we turn the page to 2021, some changes are in store. These changes are intended to facilitate more efficient editorial processes and continued enhancement of the scholarly and editorial strengths of the journal.

In 2019, the Extension Journal, Inc. board of directors undertook a strategic planning process and enacted a new strategic plan that reinforced the focus on delivering a high-quality journal while also supporting author development. Embedded in the strategic plan is a new editorial model for *JOE*. The editorial committee started the process of fleshing out the model details in September 2019 immediately following our fall board meeting. Now, just over a year later, our efforts are coming to fruition. With this new editorial model, our goal is to address two major issues (that could be competing issues if we are not careful): maintaining high quality and reducing time to publication.

This new model involves associate editors who will be an integral part of the manuscript review process. These positions are crucial to continuing the high standards of quality that we have put in place in recent years. Although the new model is a big change for *JOE*, it is typical of academic journals. By engaging those who have experience as authors and reviewers, we can ensure that high editorial standards are maintained, while having multiple associate editors will allow for sharing the editorial workload.

In addition to a new editorial model, we are pleased to announce a new publishing arrangement with Clemson

University Press that will be effective January 1, 2021. Both the editorial and technical aspects of publishing the journal will now be consolidated under one organization. *JOE* will benefit by being part of an established university press. As well, there are other aspects of the press (e.g., marketing) that we will now be able to take advantage of. Housed at a land-grant institution, the press already partners with Clemson Cooperative Extension to share research-based knowledge. Clemson has been working behind the scenes to facilitate the transition, and a new production editor will be on board shortly.

What this change also means is that we are saying goodbye to some valued partners. For many years, *JOE* has been just a click away. *JOE* was an early adopter in online publishing, published solely online since 1994 (Summers & Ritter, 1993). The Ohio State University has managed the technical aspects of publication since 1998 (Calvert, 1998). We thank Eric Owens and Jerry Thomas in their roles as web developer and site institution representative, respectively, for their dedication to maintaining the journal's web presence.

Our editor Debbie Allen has expertly guided the journal for the past 5 years. Her detailed reviews and feedback to authors have improved the quality of articles published in *JOE*. Under her leadership, the journal is now indexed in Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI). Coverage in ESCI signifies that *JOE* meets various criteria applicable only to journals demonstrating a certain level of importance and increases the visibility of *JOE*'s content and authors. This designation is necessary for meeting and maintaining the criteria for obtaining an impact factor for the journal. Debbie has spent many hours crafting the new editorial model, which will ensure that the scholarship of Extension continues to inform our practice into the future. Please join us in thanking Debbie for her service as the *JOE* editor.

At times like these, it can help to reflect on where we started. What was Extension like in 1963 when *JOE*'s first issue was published? Interestingly, one of the articles in that issue is about the diffusion of innovation—in other words, the process of change (Rogers, 1963). The year 2020 has shown us that change is constant, but the adage "the more things change, the more they stay the same" applies as well.

We are excited about the coming changes, but one thing that will not change is our commitment to publishing a high-quality journal and supporting author development. Even though times have changed, we remain true to the original purpose of a journal in which the "'special knowledge' [that constitutes Extension] can be shared with all members of the profession" (York, 1963, p. 7). There will be some additional changes forthcoming in the near future, and all involved are working to make these changes as seamless as possible. We appreciate your patience as we strive to enhance the experience for *JOE* authors and readers.

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