The missing “O” in DEI

Open Editorial Board: Being Open to Diversity

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American Society for Microbiology
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The American Society for Microbiology and ASM's Journals

• Member-driven organization with 30,000+ members worldwide
• We have several programs, from Advocacy to the American Academy for Microbiologists.
• Sixteen journals that collectively publish ~6000 articles a year.
• Titles span the breadth of microbiology, from basic and clinical to applied, industrial, and environmental microbiology.
• A combination of hybrid and fully open access titles.
**Microbiology Spectrum: Aims and Scope**

*Microbiology Spectrum* is a new open-access journal that publishes research across the entire range of basic, clinical and applied microbiology. Rather than making subjective evaluations of potential impact, *Spectrum* publishes research studies that are of high technical quality and are useful to the community.

*Microbiology Spectrum* will publish all types of reports that document rigorous work. These include replication studies that provide additional support for findings, as well as negative results that reject a study hypothesis.
Why 400 Editors?

- Microbiology Spectrum is a new & growing journal.
- April 2021: Relaunched as a broad scope, fully open access journal.
- It is a cascade journal and authors can transfer articles from 10 distinct ASM journals to Microbiology Spectrum: Our Board needs to be able to handle papers on a wide range of topics: clinical to environmental and food microbiology.
- 2022 is Spectrum’s first full year, and we expect to publish over 2000 articles.
Our Leadership Team comprised of 10 individuals is international and are based in 4 distinct countries.

Expertise across a wide range of topics:
- Diagnosis of infectious diseases
- Virology
- Bacteriology
- Mycology (Fungi)
- Antibiotic resistance
- Environmental microbiology
What Is an Open Editorial Board?

Traditional Board
- Candidates are nominated by journal leadership
- Usually nominees are within the existing networks
- Closed, potentially exclusive process
- Regional Bias

Open Board
- Anyone can self nominate
- People our leadership team know can apply
- Selection is based on merit and experience
- Open, naturally inclusive process
We have received almost 2000 applications from 89 distinct countries. **We do collect some demographic information:** gender identity, race/ethnicity, country.

**Evaluation Criteria:**
- Scientific expertise within microbial sciences
- Reasonable publication record (first and corresponding author papers)
- Prior experience as a reviewer and editor (latter is a plus)
- Commitment to the Journal’s mission: Spectrum is a sound science, open access journal.

**Evaluation Process:**
- Staff member shortlists applicants to the Board based on above criteria
- Editor-in-Chief reviews recommendations and in most cases, she moves forward.
Open Board at Microbiology Spectrum

Key Highlights:

- Near gender parity
- Over 50% of our Editors are based outside the US (we are an American Society).
- **US-based Editors: Less than 50% identify as White.** We have very good representation from historically underrepresented groups.
- Considerable representation from early career microbiologists.
Challenges:
Only 1 in 4 applicants identified as women

More than 50% of applicants are from only 2 countries

• Most visible challenge when reviewing applications in the lack of gender balance. Our Board is very close to gender parity.

• Despite the Board being Open, there is the question of reach: We are struggling to build representation in areas of Asia, Latin America and Africa due to lack of applicants.

• As we continue, we are much more focused in our approach to building diversity, equity and inclusion at Spectrum.

• One way of addressing this is our new Reviewing Editors Program.
Launching in April 2022 to help early career microbiologists a pathway to becoming Editors at Spectrum.

Candidates are chosen from the Open Board applicant pool.

Committed to peer reviewing ~2 papers per month, up to 24 per year.

Potential to advance to the Editor role within three years (based on performance)

Number of women exceeds the number of men.

87 Reviewing Editors from 28 countries. 57 of them are from outside of the US and include scientists from Ghana, Philippines, Peru, Costa Rica and Ecuador.

Reviewing Editors

- Bismark Dinko and Michael Owusu, Ghana
- Katharina Kujuula, Finland
- Katia Nunez, Costa Rica
- Miguel Garcia, Ecuador
- Felix Toka, St. Kitts and Nevis
- Pablo Tsukuyama, Peru
- Katharina Kujuala, Finland
- Charina Garica Banaay, Philippines
- Felix Toka, St. Kitts and Nevis
- Pablo Tsukuyama, Peru
- Katharina Kujuala, Finland
- Charina Garica Banaay, Philippines

Total Reviewing Editors: 87
Total non-US Reviewing Editors: 57

Total Countries: 28
Managing a Large, International Board

- Collectively, we now have 416 Editors and Reviewing Editors from 51 countries.
- 2022 is our first full year and we will publish over 2000 articles in 2022. Impossible without the support of our Editors, Reviewing Editors and our Peer Reviewers.
- We have several Editor-led working groups, including a DEI working group and a Data Policy Working Group.
- Higher volume = more problematic situations
- Messaging both ways is complicated. Spectrum is a cascade journal: Transfers can be complicated.
- Our lessons so far: (i) Robust onboarding (ii) Accessible Documentation (iii) Need to think globally (iv) Inclusive Messaging
Special thanks to ASM Staff who have helped make Spectrum a success!

- **Assistant Managing Editors**: Jessica Kanotz, Joseph Schwartz.
- **Production**: David Haber, Manuel Cavazos, Becky Zwadyk, Charles Brown
- **Editorial**: Melinda Liles, Laurie Webby
- **Website**: John Bell, Jay Brite, Amanda Donaldson, Deborah Plavin
- **Systems**: Rob Masson, Tasha Thomasian
- **Ethics**: Amy Kullas, Aashi Chaturvedi
- **IDEAA**: Shannon Vassell, Shaundra Holmes
Thank You!

Questions? Contact Us.

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