

BIOCHEMISTRY

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EDITORIAL

This is a year of change for the journal *Biochemistry*. After twelve years of exemplary service as Editor of *Biochemistry*, Gordon Hammes decided to simplify his life and devote more of his time to doing science. Gordon's impact on the journal has been profoundly positive, and we are all in his debt. Under his guidance, the journal made the complex transition to the era of electronic manuscript processing and publishing. The annual number of pages published increased by more than 30% in the past decade. And, most importantly, the quality of the biochemical science published in *Biochemistry* is better than ever. It is arguably the premier journal in the world for publishing articles that integrate the chemical, physical, structural, and mechanistic aspects of the discipline. Gordon nurtured a rigorous, fair, and expeditious review process that has enhanced the reputation of *Biochemistry* for publishing only the best. On behalf of the authors, readers, reviewers, editors, members of the Advisory Board, and the American Chemical Society (ACS) staff, I would like to thank Gordon for his splendid job moving the journal forward into a new era.

I would also like to thank Earl Davie who decided to step down as an Associate Editor after serving the journal since 1981. Earl is the last of the Associate Editors who bridged the tenures of Hans Neurath and Gordon Hammes, and his contributions will be greatly missed. On the other hand, we are very fortunate that Chuck Sanders has agreed to join the journal as an Associate Editor.

Biochemistry is a unique journal that plays a leading role in the dissemination of original research at the frontiers of the interface between chemistry and biology. Thanks to Gordon Hammes and the founding editor, Hans Neurath, *Biochemistry* has an established, loyal, and enthusiastic constituency of authors and readers. The two principal challenges facing the journal are the fierce competition for that constituency and the relentless change that is the engine of scientific investigation. The most effective way to meet these challenges, serve the readers, and enhance the educational function of *Biochemistry* is to open the scientific aperture and broaden the horizon of the journal to provide exposure to emerging and tangential areas of research that have the potential for significant impact on mechanistic biochemistry. There are many such disciplines that can be

identified right now. Chemical biology is providing powerful tools for revealing new pathways and defining novel molecular targets and mechanisms for drugs. Computational chemistry is underrepresented in *Biochemistry* even though it is likely to emerge as the single most powerful tool for evaluating molecular structure, function, and dynamics in complex systems. Informatics, proteomics, genomics, and similar exploratory research tools already have had a profound impact on unraveling the molecular mechanisms by which biochemical processes take place. Too few of these papers find their way into the journal. Micro- and nanofluidic devices are going to revolutionize the way we do biochemical experiments. This technology quickly will be turned to significant biochemical problems, and *Biochemistry* should be there first. If the right papers in these emerging disciplines can be captured, then *Biochemistry* will enhance what it already does well and will continue to be successful.

The journal will experience some changes in editorial policy and look in 2004. Electronic submission of manuscripts is now mandatory except with prior permission of the editor. The process of electronic submission is now quite easy using the ACS Paragon System (<https://paragon.acs.org/paragon/index.jsp>). This policy will simplify and accelerate the processing and review of all manuscripts. The journal now requires complete titles for all references, a tangible benefit for the reader. You will note the cover has changed. The cover graphic will continue to change quarterly, but graphics other than macromolecular structures now will be considered. Over the next few months, we will add table-of-contents color graphics for all articles. These author-provided graphics are meant to capture the attention of the reader and convey, along with the title, the essence of each article. They also will be considered, along with graphics in articles, as possible cover art.

One thing that will not change is the rigorous review process of *Biochemistry*. We are very aware that all authors desire and are entitled to an expeditious and fair review of their manuscripts. If we identify problems in the review process, rest assured that we will address those problems and solve them. Peer review is a community activity that is dependent on all its members for success. If you publish in

Biochemistry and want to have your papers reviewed in a few days, we hope you will review for *Biochemistry* with the same alacrity.

I want to draw the attention of readers and authors to another issue that has an impact on the journal. The ascension of *Biochemistry* to a premier scientific journal was only possible because of the support of the largest and most active scientific society in the world, the American Chemical Society. However, one issue is having a negative impact on *Biochemistry* in particular and ACS publications in general. While the ACS was an industry leader in developing electronic archives for its journals, it has yet to implement what the majority of scientists agree is in the best interest of science: a free, publicly accessible electronic archives policy. This has been embraced by competing publications of other scientific societies, particularly those in the realm of biology. I know that some potential authors and reviewers refuse to publish in or review for ACS journals because of this policy. This is obviously not good, as it will ultimately

erode the impact of ACS journals. The archives policy is, as it should be, in the hands of ACS governance. ACS governance is ultimately in the hands of the membership. If you believe, as I do, that this is an important issue, become part of the solution and make your thoughts known to the ACS Publications Division, the Publications Committee, and Board.

I want to thank in advance all the people who make *Biochemistry* such a great journal. The journal relies on authors, reviewers, and Advisory Board members for the high-quality materials necessary to publish excellent science. Of course we also all are indebted to the dedicated staff at ACS Publications for the polished and professional final product.

Richard N. Armstrong
Editor-in-chief

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