

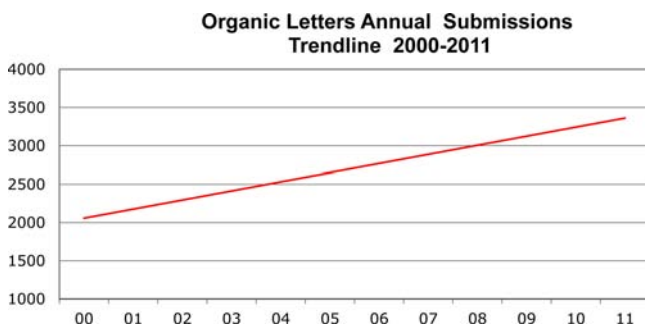
Editorial

Organic Letters: Celebrating 15 Years

With the arrival of 2013, we mark the fifteenth anniversary of the launch of *Organic Letters*. What a great trip it has been! I would like to take the opportunity, as I did on our tenth anniversary, to celebrate our success, to thank those who worked so hard to ensure that success, and to share with you our plans for the future.

When we began this journey, we still received some manuscripts via the mail and “tweeting” was still for the birds. It is a much different world today, and I am happy to say that, as the web environment has grown and dramatically changed the world of communication and specifically publication, *Organic Letters* has thrived, taking advantage of a multitude of electronic advances to facilitate our goal of providing you with an expedited path to publish your most important work. Today, the average time from submission to appearance on the web is 4.4 weeks, with submission to first decision often in less than two weeks!

I am also happy to say that *Organic Letters* continues to be embraced broadly by the organic community. *Organic Letters* has published over 18,000 Letters since our start in 1999, and these Letters have received over 385,000 citations (1999–2011). In 2011, the number of submissions to *Organic Letters* increased by almost 10% with 2012 seeing that growth sustained. I am happy to say that our trendline continues to show a positive slope.

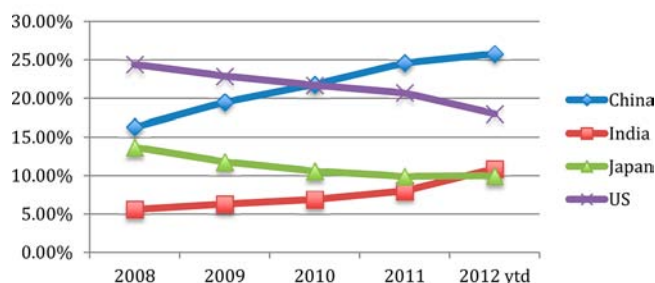


Our web views have increased 4% over 2011. This increase in submission and use is particularly gratifying considering the, now more than ever, competitive environment, with what appears to be an ever increasing number of journals vying to attract high quality research. It is also

gratifying that our high impact factor reveals that we do indeed attract high quality papers. Indeed, our impact factor of 5.86 now elevates *Organic Letters* to the highest ranked communications journal in the field of Organic Chemistry.

One of the most significant changes in the past few years has been the growth of science in East Asia. *Organic Letters*, along with the other ACS journals has seen a noticeable increase in submissions from that area.

% Submissions -Selected Countries 2008–Nov 2012



Given the increasing importance of this area of the world, last year I, along with thirteen other ACS Editors, traveled to both China and India as part of ACS initiatives to foster ties with chemists in those countries. These trips proved very productive. In fact, while I was in China, I began conversations which resulted in *Organic Letters* adding a second Editor from China, Professor Kuiling Ding, this year. We are indeed delighted that Professor Ding, a distinguished chemist and Director of Shanghai Institute of Organic Chemistry (SIOC), agreed to join our team. He will contribute his expertise in the development of novel chiral catalysts and new methods for asymmetric synthesis. Of equal importance, his great visibility in mainland China will help *Organic Letters* attract the very best papers from that country.

I also had many stimulating conversations and interactions with organic, organometallic, biological, and medicinal chemists in India during our October trip. To enhance further our ties with chemists in Asia, we have added two new members to the *Organic Letters* Editorial Advisory Board, Professor Kavirayani R. Prasad at the

Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore and Professor Cheon-Gyu Cho at the Hanyang University, Seoul Korea. In the future we plan additional appointments from Asia as vacancies arise.

When *Organic Letters* was launched in 1999, we benefited greatly from the support and cooperation of *The Journal of Organic Chemistry*, and in particular from Professor Clayton Heathcock. Pleasingly, this cooperation has not only continued but has expanded with several exciting new initiatives.

This year, *The Journal of Organic Chemistry* and *Organic Letters*, in collaboration with the *Journal of the American Chemical Society*, began publishing what holds the promise of an exciting new venue to bring together emerging areas of chemistry through joint virtual issues, collecting papers of topical interest from both journals, as well as from the *Journal of the American Chemical Society*. Two virtual issues were published in 2012. These were Cross-Coupling, with leadership from *The Journal of Organic Chemistry* Associate Editor Carsten Bolm, and Peptide Chemistry, with *Organic Letters* Associate Editor William Lubell acting as Guest Editor. Each issue has had close to 10,000 views to date, giving added visibility to these *JOC*, *OL*, and *JACS* articles.

In another joint initiative, *The Journal of Organic Chemistry* and *Organic Letters*, in partnership with the American Chemical Society, Division of Organic Chemistry, will inaugurate annual Lectureships, based on nominations received for an outstanding Letter or Article, arising from the previous year's publications in each journal. The Lectureship recipients will be honored each year by a Joint Symposium at the Fall ACS meeting. A call for nominations for Lectureships for both *Organic Letters* and *The Journal of Organic Chemistry* was recently released.

We are also planning a series of *Organic Letters*/*The Journal of Organic Chemistry* sponsored Mini-Symposia in China, the first in conjunction with the Shanghai Institute of Organic Chemistry, to strengthen the ties established during our recent trips to China.

In addition to these external efforts, internally we continue to evaluate our procedures and standards to ensure that *Organic Letters* continues to publish the highest quality papers broadly based in organic chemistry. To this end, this year we have added the position of Data Analyst to the staff in the Editor-in-Chief's office to ensure that the experimental procedures and data we publish in the Supporting Information of *Organic Letters* are of the highest possible quality: that it is complete, consistent, and supports the claims made by the authors. We anticipate that this support will not only increase the reliability of the Supporting Information we publish, but also aid the reviewers, to say nothing of the future readers' use of the published procedures and spectral data.

In addition to ensuring that we publish good quality data, we also continue to monitor submissions to ensure that the text is original and, in particular, that large sections of text are not taken from previously published

work. As I mentioned in my last Editorial, using identical or nearly identical sentences from one's own publications, or that from other authors, is plagiarism. This is both an ethical and legal violation. There appears to be some misunderstanding as to what constitutes plagiarism or self-plagiarism. For example, simply citing a work does not allow an author to use sentences/phrases from the earlier work unless enclosed with quotation marks. Frequently, introductory sentences in a set of related papers are reused by a research group. Although this text does not comprise the new science reported in a Letter, it is still plagiarism and will not be tolerated.

We follow carefully the now well-established ACS Ethical Guidelines and apply a "reasonable person" standard when deciding whether text in a submission constitutes self-plagiarism/duplicate publication. However, if we do identify a problem, penalties may be applied and future submissions from the offending author will be examined carefully. I strongly recommend that all Research Advisors familiarize their students with the ACS Ethical Guidelines, especially the sections on plagiarism and self-plagiarism.

As technology and social media develop, we continue to investigate and experiment with how best to present the new information we publish. The virtual issues described above are one example of this. In addition, *Organic Letters*, along with the other ACS journals, currently offers a range of electronic options on our home page including an RSS feed of titles and abstract graphics of ACS journal papers, twitter, email alerts, and podcasts. The ACS mobile app is a particularly wonderful tool to browse the ASAP Letters on smartphones and tablets.

We are also always interested in experimenting with how best to use these options and are open to considering your ideas. We clearly want to put our efforts where they will have the most impact. Are there features you have seen in another publishing venue that you think would improve the access, presentation, and utility of *Organic Letters*? Let us hear from you. Of course, our primary effort will continue to be to attract, evaluate, and publish high-quality Letters.

My deepest thanks go to all who contributed to the success of *Organic Letters*. I am particularly grateful to our Associate Editors, past and present, for their support, to the authors who continue to trust us with their best work, and to our unsung heroes, the reviewers, who share their valuable time and expertise to evaluate the *Organic Letters* received from the community. Also, although not often recognized, the American Chemical Society Publications Division has provided unfailing herculean help, in conjunction with their outstanding infrastructure, to support the evaluation and publication of *Organic Letters*. "Clearly *Organic Letters* is exactly where [you the authors and readers] want to be."

Amos B. Smith III
Editor-in-Chief

Views expressed in this editorial are those of the author and not necessarily the views of the ACS.