

Opening Editorial 2016: Changes in Scope and Structure

This issue of *American Psychologist* (*AP*) marks historic changes in the editorial structure and leadership of *AP* and related shifts in the refinement of the mission of *AP* and the types of papers *AP* will publish. *AP* has an outstanding reputation as a primary means by which the contributions of psychologists are communicated to psychologists, to other professionals, and to the public. As the new editor-in-chief (EIC) of *AP*, I am enthusiastic about psychology and the many ways that psychological knowledge can improve our lives and the societies in which we live. *AP* will continue to reflect the whole of psychology and welcomes the input and involvement of individuals from all areas of the field. In this editorial, I offer readers a brief overview of current journal activities and procedures for the flagship journal of the American Psychological Association (APA).

Of significance, this is the first time in the 70-year history of *AP* that the EIC is distinct from the chief executive officer of the APA. The APA Board of Directors voted in December 2014 to make this change in order to align with current editorial practices for similar organizations and journals and to provide separation of the peer review and editorial decision-making processes from the administrative leadership of the sponsoring organization. I am honored to have been selected for this position as a result of an editor search conducted by the Publications and Communications Board this past spring. It is a major responsibility to build on the many strengths of *AP* and to assure the continued stature that our previous editors have established and nurtured so well. Norman B. Anderson, as immediate past EIC, and Gary R. VandenBos, as managing editor, have been extraordinarily helpful in assuring a smooth transition in leadership, and I appreciate their wise and generous insights into the intricacies of running this major journal.

Structure and Editorial Procedures

AP is now structured in a manner consistent with other journals published by APA. We will have a team of associate editors who will, in addition to me, serve as action editors on papers submitted to the journal. I am delighted that Mark Appelbaum, Jennifer Crocker, Jacquelynne Eccles, Elizabeth Klonoff, Arthur Nezu, and Stephen Rao will serve as associate editors. After my initial review, papers will be assigned to an action editor who will handle the peer review process and editorial decisions.

The peer review process will be facilitated by a newly appointed board of consulting editors. I am grateful that this outstanding group of psychologists has agreed to serve in this important capacity. This board includes many psychol-



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ogists who themselves have served as editors or associate editors of prominent psychology journals. In addition to obtaining reviews from the board, we will utilize a broad group of ad hoc reviewers. I expect that we will expand the board as necessary to assure coverage of topics represented in our submissions. My expectation is that each paper will receive two or more thoughtful and constructive peer reviews and that the *AP*'s editorial lag will be timely and in line with that of other APA journals.

To round out the *AP* team, John D. Hogan has agreed to continue as special editor for history and obituaries, and Tim Smith will complete the forthcoming special issues on health in his role as a special associate editor. Susan J. Harris will serve as managing editor starting in 2016, and Sandra M. Fowler and Kate F. Hays will continue as art coeditors.

Types of Articles

A major change in focus is that we will publish major empirical papers with broad implications for the field. In the tradition of other leading journals that represent professional societies (e.g., *Journal of the American Medical Association*, *Pediatrics*, *American Journal of Public Health*), we will publish current and timely high-impact papers. Such papers may include findings from large-scale trials of psychological treatment models or meta-analyses of

large and influential bodies of literature. This is a major way that *AP* can reflect the scholarly and scientific contributions of psychologists to contemporary issues. Please help spread awareness of this change and consider sending your relevant work to *AP*. In doing so, please refer to the revised instructions to authors on the journal website (www.apa.org/pubs/journals/amp). While similar to those posted previously, some changes have been introduced and must be incorporated in all new submissions.

Consistent with prior editorial policy, we will continue to publish special sections and special issues on current topics. Proposals for special sections or special issues should follow a prescribed format (see instructions to authors) that includes a rationale and description of scope and a brief description of likely papers and authors. In 2016, we expect to publish special issues on *Undergraduate Education in Psychology* and *Diabetes and Psychology*. The content of special issues/sections spans a very broad array of topics and we welcome early discussions about the development of these features.

As the official journal of the APA, reports of major policy statements and practice guidelines will be published, and proceedings and reports of organizational activities will continue. Articles related to major awards given by APA are similarly interesting and important and will be retained. It

will also be important to assure a balance of published papers that represent psychology as a research field, attend to the importance of clinical practice, and advance psychology education and training, as well as policy. Beginning with this issue, the interior style of the journal is reformatted for consistency with other APA journals. This redesign reflects the journal's more mainstream mission, encompassing high-impact empirical, theoretical, and review manuscripts. At the same time, we will retain author photographs, and the cover artwork will continue to celebrate *AP*'s creativity and distinctiveness.

Next Steps

As with all changes, the process of transition takes time. I look forward to assuring that *AP* reflects all facets of psychology and a balance of papers across science, practice, training, and policy. I hope that you will participate in *AP* by sending us relevant papers. We also encourage your involvement as reviewers and look forward to your ideas for special issues and related ideas about the journal. I can be reached at Editor-AP@apa.org.

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