The Year Ahead

The past year marked the Centennial of the American Association for Cancer Research. During much of its 100-year history, AACR has published Cancer Research or its predecessors, so it is fitting that we mark the anniversary with a few retrospective and prospective thoughts. In 2007, this journal received a record number of submissions: over 5,000. Whereas this is good news for the field and reflects the rapidly growing body of research, it forces a journal to make some changes and decisions. Do we simply continue to grow in size, publish more and more articles? We asked you, a sample of our readers, this question in 2006, and you answered us clearly. You want the Journal to become more selective and thus get thinner. However, to accept fewer articles is often a more difficult task than accepting many and requires increased attention to strict priority scores and more editors to oversee the process.

In addition, the whole field of cancer research is expanding so rapidly that we must constantly look at our mix of content to ensure that we have it right. This requires adding new sections, new topic areas, and new content. Thus, for 2008 we have the following changes planned.

Deputy Editors

I am pleased to announce that several world-renowned authorities in the field of cancer research have agreed to serve as Deputy Editors for Cancer Research. These distinguished experts, who include several scientists who previously served as Senior or Associate Editors for the journal, are Mariano Barbacid, Lisa M. Coussens, Richard B. Gaynor, Peter A. Jones, Yusuke Nakamura, George C. Prendergast, and Giorgio Trinchieri. This diverse group of experts will be invaluable in contributing to the strategic journal vision, providing international representation, and identifying and soliciting content such as commentaries and perspectives from the research community.

Reviews Section

As you know, in March 2005, Cancer Research launched a section devoted entirely to Review articles. Thanks to the efforts of the outstanding team of Review Editors, George C. Prendergast, Martine F. Roussel, Eric K. Rowinsky, and Danny R. Welch, this feature has quickly become one of the most frequently read sections of the journal and publishes an average of two thought-provoking brief Reviews in each issue.

In 2008, the journal will expand the content of this popular feature by publishing longer, more comprehensive Reviews of approximately 6,000 words on a quarterly basis. Readers with ideas for potential Review articles or authors of potential Review articles are encouraged to send their suggestions to cancerres@aacr.org. Authors of potential Review articles should include an abstract or a detailed outline of their work so that the Editors can determine the suitability of the subject matter.

New Journal Sections

Two new journal sections have been added in order to serve two rapidly evolving areas in the field of cancer research: Tumor Microenvironment, and Systems Biology and Emerging Technologies.

The Tumor Microenvironment section, led by Senior Editors Lisa M. Coussens and Kornelia Polyak, was created to provide a more specific arena for papers in areas such as angiogenesis and microcirculation, endothelial cell function and heterogeneity, inflammation and tumor development, and tumor invasion and metastasis.

The Systems Biology and Emerging Technologies section, headed by Senior Editors Martin W. Brechbiel, Joe W. Gray, and David W. Speicher, was created to provide a venue for papers pertaining to the fields of technology, computation, and biology as they relate to the field of cancer research; specifically in the areas of imaging, proteomics, and genomics.

Minimum Criteria for Acceptance

The steady increase in the number of submissions indicates a continued desire by the cancer research community to publish their findings in Cancer Research, which remains the most frequently cited cancer journal in the world. To ensure that the journal continues to publish only those studies judged to be of the highest impact, authors are reminded that the journal can accept only papers judged to be in the top 15% with regard to novelty, significance, and priority. Our Deputy and Senior Editors will be preparing minimum acceptance criteria, on a section-by-section basis. Before these criteria are implemented, information will be provided in an Editorial and will be posted on the journal’s website so that authors have a clear picture of why their papers may or may not be accepted. We have set a target of dramatically reducing the size of the journal by applying these criteria in 2008.

Cancer Research has long been known as the journal that encourages authors to provide as much of their data as they think necessary to make their report comprehensive. With the capabilities now available online, however, we will increasingly be asking that you make your articles more concise by adhering to guidelines on numbers of figures and tables and that you post supplementary data online only. Our goal is to continue to be comprehensive but to move to more content online and less in print.

The Deputy and Senior Editors and our Board of Associate Editors join me in hoping that these changes will improve the energy balance of Cancer Research. We look forward to hearing from you as we move to implement these changes in 2008.

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Editor-in-Chief, Cancer Research

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