

Message from the *Journal of Extension* Editorial Committee

Abstract

We make the following key points about the direction of the journal:

1. The future is bright for the *Journal of Extension*.
2. Two of our greatest priorities are publishing quality content and helping emerging scholars develop their publication skills.
3. Transition takes time—we are confident that we are on the right path and ask for patience.
4. If you have questions or concerns, we want to hear from you.

Eli Sagor

Cochair, *Journal of Extension* Editorial Committee
Associate Extension Professor
Cloquet Forestry Center
University of Minnesota
Cloquet, Minnesota
esagor@umn.edu

Mary Emery

Cochair, *Journal of Extension* Editorial Committee
Department Head/Professor
Department of Sociology and Rural Studies
South Dakota State University
Brookings, South Dakota
mary.emery@sdstate.edu

In January 2016, we on the Extension Journal Inc. board of directors welcomed our first new *Journal of Extension* (*JOE*) editor in years. We remain grateful to our former editor, Laura Hoelscher, for her dedicated service to *JOE*, which routinely exceeded not only her effort commitment but also our performance expectations. Laura maintained both a high standard and a commitment to helping prospective authors reach it.

Laura's retirement, as with many personnel changes, has brought new people and ideas to our work, and we have been thrilled to welcome our current editor, Debbie Allen. Debbie shares our board's deep commitment through *JOE* to both publish quality content and help emerging scholars develop their publication skills.

As expected, since January some in the *JOE* community have raised questions about changes at the journal. We take this opportunity to give you an update on what is changing, how, and why. Change is not always easy to manage. As we work through this transition time, we ask for your patience and encourage your feedback. Letting

us know what is working and what is not working so well is a great help.

One of the concerns that has been raised relates to turnaround time on initial submissions. (This is a perennial concern not just for *JOE* but for many academic periodicals.) Indeed, since the start of the year, we have been taking longer to review your submissions. We take this task seriously and appreciate your patience with the process.

The increased review time is the result of two important changes implemented by our new editor. First, Debbie has implemented a new [manuscript submission checklist](#). Like most journals, *JOE* submissions undergo first a review by the editor and then, for certain article types, a blind peer review. It is common for the editorial review to lead to a request for revisions before the peer review process begins. The checklist will streamline the editorial and peer review processes. However, when first implemented, the checklist did create extra work for some authors whose submissions were awaiting initial editorial review. This compounded the increased review time expected from any editorial transition.

Second, Debbie is intentionally investing additional time in editorial reviews. This is consistent with our mission not only to publish quality articles but also to offer professional development and learning opportunities for prospective authors. Further, this investment has already begun to pay off through reduced review times later in the process.

Now that these changes are implemented, the time frame for the editorial review of submissions is evening out to around 4 months. This time frame is still longer than it used to be, but is in keeping with time frames in similar journals. And we have a more rigorous process in place, leading to a better *JOE*.

We also heard about confusion over new standards and styles and, in some cases, broken links. Thanks to your feedback, we have fixed the links, and Debbie has updated one document and created two others to help you submit the best manuscripts possible. The updated [JOE submission guidelines](#) provide detailed information on what we expect from our authors. The [checklist](#) gives you a tool to make sure your submission will not be sent back for revision over issues that can easily be addressed before you submit. The third document, on [common errors](#), gives you a chance to recheck your common writing practice against expectations, again with the hope that this information will enable you to avoid a long and complicated revision process. We want to help you share your work, and we want to do so in keeping with the highest standards.

Transitions in organizational leadership take time. We are confident that *JOE's* future is brighter than ever. The *JOE* community is strong, and our new editor is already reporting reductions in review times and increases in efficiency. We are proud of the progress the journal is making as a widely recognized resource for Extension educators and our colleagues working in other institutions and agencies and around the world.

Again we thank those of you who have contacted us with questions and comments about *JOE*, and we ask that you continue to reach out with your thoughts. *JOE* is truly a product of our entire Extension community, and we welcome your input and advice to ensure its continued improvement.

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