

REPORT ON VISIT TO CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS UK

We flew into London Heathrow arriving Monday December 3, travelled by train to Cambridge, and spent 24 hours recovering from jet lag before a lengthy series of meetings through December 6 and 7 with Cambridge University Press staff at their University Printing House headquarters. Our visit was generously hosted by Catherine Hill, our UK-based Executive Publisher at CUP who oversees publication of the WSSA journals. We also had extended in-person discussions with:

Caroline Black, CUP Publishing Director for Science, Technology and Medicine journals

Jack Macdonald, CUP Director of Library Sales

Catherine Glover, CUP Digital Publishing Partnerships Manager

Emma Williams, Senior Marketing Executive for CUP Life Sciences journals

Andrew Varney, Senior Institutional Marketing Manager

Chris Bailey, CUP Collections Commissioning Editor

Matt Day, Head of Open Research Policy & Partnerships

Our New York-based CUP publisher, Gabrielle Bauman, joined our discussions via Zoom for part of the second day. Broader discussions covered topics such as transformative agreements and impacts of open access on various stakeholders including researchers, libraries, and professional societies; competition from publishers with marginal review standards; how journals evolve to reflect changes in research communities. Specific suggestions for WSSA journals that emerged from our discussions include:

More emphasis on publishing themed special collections of invited papers. This would attract new content, increase citations, enhance the reputations of WSSA journals as leaders in their fields, and attract more geographically diverse associated editors and authors working in emerging research areas. Chris Bailey at CUP can help us identify topics and provide logistical support.

Appointment of a review editor to commission and follow up on invited articles and themed collections. Given their existing workloads, WSSA journal Editors do not have sufficient time or resources to do this.

Consider appointing a social media editor for each WSSA journal to publicize newly published featured articles and special topics. This could provide a first step for early

career researchers to get involved with WSSA journals. CUP marketing staff are active on social media and can provide support.

Establish renewable term limits of 3-5 years for WSSA journal Editors. This would provide a regular opportunity to review workload and job satisfaction with each editor, and to develop succession plans when appropriate.

Provide introductory training and establish a mentoring system for new Associate Editors. This could also help recruitment to expand subject specialty and geographic diversity on journal editorial boards.

Identify further steps to improve author experience when submitting and revising manuscripts. CUP is currently testing the Paper Pal Preflight tool to automatically flag manuscript items needing author attention. We volunteered to trial this tool with WSSA journals.

Overall, the trip provided an invaluable opportunity for us to interact with experienced Cambridge University Press staff working in the fast-evolving landscape of academic publishing, and to establish personal connections that will facilitate future collaboration. We will now follow up on potential initiatives at the upcoming editorial board and WSSA Publications Board meetings.

Sarah Ward and Chris Willenborg
WSSA Co-Directors of Publications