Managing Volunteers

Katherine Egan Bennett
Managing Editor, *Practical Radiation Oncology*, *International Journal of Radiation Oncology, Biology, Physics*, and *Advances in Radiation Oncology*
ASTRO’s Journals

Red Journal – 15 times per year
• 71 editors
• 2000 yearly submissions
• 2600 individual reviewers

Practical Radiation Oncology – 6 issues
• 23 editors
• 500 yearly submissions
• 700 individual reviewers

Advances in Radiation Oncology – 4 issues
• 59 editors
• 140 yearly submissions (launched 2015)
• 250 individual reviewers
A Tale of Two Journals

- Red Journal is a good example of managing volunteers
- EIC makes all final decisions
- We have 10 editorial groups
- Each editorial group headed by Senior Editor
- Each Senior Editor has 4-8 Associate Editors
### Red Journal Org Chart

**Red Journal Editorial Board 2017 - 2018**

**Editor-in-Chief:** Anthony L. Zietman

**Deputy Editor:** Sue S. Yom

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<td>Ross Abrams</td>
<td>Senior Editor: Brian Marples</td>
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<td>Senior Editor: Stephanie Terezakis</td>
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<td>Stanley Llawu</td>
<td>Ananya Choudhury</td>
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<td>Nadia Laack</td>
<td>Shannon MacDonald</td>
<td>James Murphy</td>
<td>Paul Nguyen</td>
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Senior Editors

• Senior Editors report to EIC, receive yearly stipend, 3 year term
• Lead groups by disease site (breast, prostate, lung, etc)
• Hire AEs with approval of EIC
• SE charge of direction for the content of section; maintaining standards, commissioning papers, cultivating reviewers
• Quarterly conference calls to discuss papers, problems
• Mentor AEs with plan for one to eventually take over
• SE has final decision on all section papers, EIC final decision
Associate Editors

• Decide whether to desk reject or send out for review
• Work to cultivate reviewers by providing feedback, mentorship
• Use personal connections to get papers reviewed (ask friends, colleagues for favors and recruit new reviewers)
• Use personal connections to solicit appropriate papers
• Representative of journal – talk it up at conferences, recruit appropriate papers from presenters
• Work with assigned statisticians if papers need stats review
What works

• Authors select topic upon submission
What works

• Term limits: 5 years EIC, 3 year SE, 1 year renewable AE
• SEs manage their own groups, gives ownership, builds teams with regular conference calls, group e-mails
• Group allowed to allocate workflow according to what works best for them; i.e. e-mail to group, consensus, etc.
• With EIC, each group sets acceptance criteria as they review all papers on specific topics
• SEs responsible for their AEs, they can take over/replace if AE becomes unresponsive
• Good AEs groomed to be next SE; good reviewers AEs
What works

• Metrics reviewed during quarterly calls

• Editors are competitive; want to make sure they’re within range
Advances in Radiation Oncology

• New open access journal launched late 2015
• Started from scratch – had to convince skeptical population that OA is okay
• Initial editors chosen by rank, not work ethic in journals
What Isn’t Working

• Same basic format with EIC, SE, AE
• These SEs not empowered to select AEs, result is no cohesion between editors and topics
• Flat org chart – no accountability
• EIC may have hired everyone, but realistically can’t be responsible for everyone
• Editors come to staff for direction instead of editors; staff can’t answer scientific questions
Solutions

• 1 year terms will allow many unresponsive AEs to “rotate off” gracefully
• EIC will have conference calls with SEs to set overall priorities for the journal, vision
• EIC to empower SEs to help them create own teams
• Not same size as Red Journal so not as easy to divide content based on clinical subject; will find other ways
• Begin regular conference calls with teams
• Track metrics for teams to compare with other teams
Thank you!

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