From Staff to Contract to Staff

Editor-in-Chief Transitions at AWWA
Overview

- AWWA background
- Journal AWWA
- EIC timelines
- Staff vs contract
- Finding the right candidate
- Transition and training
- One year later
American Water Works Association

• Engineering association with a specific focus on water sourcing, treatment, and distribution
• Core focus: Water utilities
• Broad audience (researchers are a small percentage)

Publishing Program
1 peer-reviewed journal
1 magazine
175+ standards
50+ manuals
Plus handbooks, distributed titles, videos, newsletters, conference proceedings
Journal AWWA

- Monthly, peer-reviewed publication
- Member benefit
- Advertising revenue
- Hybrid content model
EIC Timeline

Lacey
- Staff
- 2000–2014

McGuire
- Contract
- 2014–2016

Mercer
- Staff
- 2016–present
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<th>Staff</th>
<th>Contract</th>
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| **Pros** | • Proximity  
          • Integration  
          • Continuity  
          • Content development | • Given timeline  
                          • More editorial autonomy  
                          • Expertise from the field  
                          • More connected to research and trends |
| **Cons** | • Less advanced notice  
              • Less editorial independence  
              • Affected by operational considerations  
              • Disconnected from the field | • Harder to reach  
                                      • Distracted by a full-time job  
                                      • Less time and integration with the editorial office |
Finding the Right Candidate

• ~8 months notice to June 2016
• International search
  – Posted listings
  – Advertising
  – Technical and publishing sites
• ~45 resumes received
Finding the Right Candidate

• Initial screening for fit
  – Technical knowledge
  – Knowledge of association
  – Publishing record
  – Experience and knowledge of scholarly publishing

• After telephone interviews, 4 candidates came for in-person interviews

• Final selection: Ken Mercer, PhD
Transition and Training

• Overlap between outgoing & incoming EIC
  – Start with phone calls to explain issue planning strategy and peer review process
  – Introduction to the Journal Editorial Board, advertisers, and other key people at the annual conference

• Graduated transition of content oversight
Transition and Training

• Publishing context
  – Market and industry
  – Trends (e.g., open access)
  – Content planning
    • Manuscript solicitation
    • In-person conferences
  – Sales support

• Training opportunity: CSE Editors Roundtable was especially helpful
Transition and Training

• Publishing context
  – Driving content from print to online
Transition and Training

- Editorial operations
  - Peer-review system and process
  - Publishing ethics
  - Author management
  - Issue planning
Transition and Training

- Tools to support communication, training, and collaboration
- Support opportunity: Reaching out to a similar organization to seek an EIC mentor
One Year Later

• Challenges
  – Steep learning curve into scholarly publishing
  – Comparatively few contacts vs previous EIC
  – Slight dip in content submissions

• Successes
  – Young, enthusiastic EIC with good technical knowledge
  – Great rapport with the team and close proximity
  – Fresh perspective on younger researchers
  – Deep knowledge of AWWA and the water industry
  – Good connections into volunteer groups
  – Open to change and eager to learn
Thank you!

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