VIEWPOINT

From the Editor

Authorship is the keystone of scholarly scientific publishing. Without authors preparing and taking responsibility for their reports of scientific studies, journals would have no primary reports to publish and readers would have no studies on which to build further research. Whatever we can do to retain the integrity of the keystone will strengthen the arch from research to application.

Today, however, the arch and particularly the keystone are subject to pressures old and new. In this issue of CBE Views we focus on an aspect of authorship that is under pressure—the criteria for authorship of scientific research papers. What are the criteria? How do they differ among various scientific disciplines? Has the business of scientific research changed sufficiently in recent years that the criteria—understood or written down—no longer apply? Are there core values to be retained no matter the scientific discipline or the dramatic changes in how science is conducted and reported?

The “Dialogue” section sets the stage with the question, Should the criteria for authorship as defined by the “Uniform Requirements” be changed? Richard Smith says yes; Roy Pitkin and Robert Utiger say no. In the “Articles” section, Ed Huth gives us some background about the “Uniform Requirements” criteria and criteria set by others. Mary Scheetz describes some of the thorny questions about authorship that come to the Office of Research Integrity. An exciting new aspect to the authorship question is in the article by Bryan Vernon and colleagues, who describe the critical aspects of conducting research on scientific authorship. To add to the discussion from the author's point of view, the “Features” section contains responses to the “Dialogue” question by authors from several scientific disciplines.

Pitkin and Utiger call authorship the “coin of the realm”. It is in everybody’s interest to stabilize that currency and maintain its integrity. The meaning of having one’s name at the top of a research report must be clear to those whose names are there and to readers. Authorship, and in particular the criteria for authorship, is a topic worthy of our attention and energy. The breadth of science represented within CBE gives us the forum for defining the core values of authorship, identifying the necessary and accepted variations in criteria among the various disciplines, and developing ways to educate scientists about the criteria. We offer this issue of CBE Views as a catalyst for further research and discussion aimed at strengthening scientific authorship.

Martha Tacker

CBE VIEWS
JULY-AUGUST 1997 * VOLUME 20 * NUMBER 4

EDITOR
Martha M Tacker
CBE Reviews Editor
Walter Pagel

THE LIGHTER VIEW EDITOR
Barbara Cox

SOLUTION CORNER EDITOR
Della Mundy

THE WORDWATCHER
Lorraine W Loviglio

CBE INTERVIEWS EDITOR
Domenic A Fuccillo

ANNUAL MEETING EDITORS
Blaire V Mossman
Norman Grossblatt

EDITORIAL BOARD
Addeane Caelleigh
Kathleen Case
Chris Fell
Thomas B Ferguson
Shirley Peterson
Roxanne K Young

PRODUCTION EDITOR
Kirsten Lambert
Rose Ellen Basil

DESIGNER
Barbara Meyers
Patricia Huston
Susan Eastwood
Annette Flanagan
Michael J Held
Lee N Miller
Tad Parker
Robert D Utiger

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
President
Executive Director
Alison C Brown

CBE Views (ISSN 0164-5609) is published bimonthly by the Council of Biology Editors, Inc., 60 Revere Drive, Suite 500, Northbrook, IL 60062. It serves as a forum for the exchange of information and ideas among professionals concerned with publishing in the sciences. Articles, letters to the editor, news about CBE members, and other items of special interest to our readers are encouraged. For more details about submission, see "Information for CBE Views Contributors".

Copyright © 1997 by the Council of Biology Editors, Inc. Bulk mail postage paid at Dover, New Hampshire. For information about CBE, including membership and publications, call Administrative Director Rachel Arith at 847-480-9080. Membership dues, including subscription to CBE Views, are US $65 per year (Can $92). Nonmember subscriptions, US $38 per year (Can $53); overseas $45: single issues, US $8 (Can $11); overseas $9.

Opinions expressed by authors contributing to this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of the Council of Biology Editors, Inc., or the Editorial Board of CBE Views.

Send ADDRESS CHANGES to CBE, 60 Revere Drive, Suite 500, Northbrook, IL 60062. Fax 847-480-9282. E-mail cbehqts@aol.com

118 * CBE Views * Vol. 20, No 4, 1997