

JOURNALS UPDATE

Editor's Report on the *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*

by Paul A. Mongeau, Editor

The 2006 calendar year was another strong one for JSPR. We received in the neighborhood of 200 new manuscripts (it is rather difficult, for a number of reasons, to generate an exact number). This is in line with the historical peak in submissions we received in 2004 and stronger than the number of submissions received in 2005.

In my last report, I indicated that we had just gone online with *SageTrack* (Sage's branding of the *Manuscript Central* system for the submission and evaluation of manuscripts) on 1 September 2006. As I compose this report we've been working with *SageTrack* for over seven months and, overall, things are working quite smoothly. As with any technological system there is always the occasional problem (e.g., we had quite a few password issues early on), but working with Sage, we have been able to reduce their number and impact. Though we are still learning what can, and what cannot, be changed, it is an interesting and helpful system to work with.

In the 7 months since we rolled out *SageTrack*, we have received around 120 new manuscripts from 18 countries (from Australia to Zimbabwe) on five continents. Word from the Associate Editors (and from my own experience) suggests that *SageTrack* is a real time saver. Many of the tedious chores (e.g., receipt of a manuscript; soliciting reviews, etc.) are now automated. This saves a great deal of time and energy. I am also finding that it is much easier to keep track of

which reviewer is behind or what manuscript needs immediate attention.

If my own experience is any indicator, the turnaround time between submission and decision has decreased dramatically. I have not performed the journal analyses (e.g., turnaround time, acceptance rate) comparing pre- and post-*SageTrack* eras, but at this point, it seems as though many of the changes have been positive. It appears to me that reviews are coming in, and decisions are going out, more quickly. Part of the reason for this is that the tasks that we need to perform and the information necessary to perform them are, in most cases, readily available. This makes our job much easier. Therefore, looking for a scholar who focuses on dating relationships from an evolutionary perspective (for example) is a simple task.

I almost hate to say this (because the last time I said it, several changes happened all at once), but the editorial team is stable. I am pleased to announce that Sandra Metts (Communication, Illinois State University, USA) has agreed to step in as a new Associate Editor. We are still looking for scholars from Psychology and Family Studies and have received feedback on what look to be several excellent candidates.

Editor's Report on *Personal Relationships*

by Rebecca G. Adams,
Editor

As incredible as it seems, at least to me, I have completed more than half of my active term as Editor of *Personal Relationships (PR)* and my team's first issue has still not been published! By the time you receive this newsletter, you will have surely received *PR* Volume 14, Issue 1. Sometime in June, you will receive Volume 14, Issue 2. The tables of contents for both of these issues are printed at the end of this article. I am very pleased with their content and the diversity

of countries and disciplines the authors represent. Note that in my editor's prefaces to these issues, I discuss how we are working to achieve my editorial team's goal for *PR* to become more international and interdisciplinary and the importance of placing personal relationships in structural and cultural context. I would urge potential authors to read these prefaces, because they provide insight into the types of issues that might be raised as a manuscript is reviewed.

I want to thank the authors who contributed to my team's first two volumes for bearing with me while I was learning the intricacies of APA style and how to prepare and submit an issue. Without exception, the authors were very understanding about modifying their manuscripts to bring them into line with my team's editorial philosophy, making sure their work is readable and understandable by members of a variety of disciplines, stating their underlying cultural and structural assumptions explicitly, avoiding ethnocentric language, describing the characteristics of the populations and contexts from which data were collected, discussing how their results might have been different in another context, and outlining any practical implications of their findings.

So, how can you help us realize our vision? Submit your best work to *Personal Relationships*, especially if it is the result of interdisciplinary collaboration or compares findings in more than one context. Like all editorial teams, we can always use more reviewers, both new scholars and more established ones. We are especially in need of reviewers who are from outside the United States or non-Psychologists so we can continue to enforce our two-country, two-discipline rule for manuscript reviewers. At present we are planning to recruit one more Associate Editor. Although we may have filled that position by the time you receive this newsletter, it never hurts to express interest. My associate editors and I are working with Blackwell to do some outreach targeted to scholars outside the United States and in the disciplines of communication studies, family studies, and sociology, but we would appreciate any help IARR members can give us

in this regard. If you hear a good paper about personal relationships at a conference, especially by a scholar from outside the United States or from an under-represented discipline, please suggest he or she submit the paper to *PR*.

Prospective authors are likely to ask about turnaround time and acceptance rates. Our turn around time from submission to first decision is quite good, about 115 days ($SD=27$ days) for the submissions we received between June 1, 2005, and May 31, 2006, and about 113 days ($SD=42$ days) for the submissions we received during the six months following this period. During this first year of my team's term, we received 175 submissions, 70% of which we rejected during the first round of reviews. Of the 52 authors of manuscripts who received an invitation to revise and resubmit, thus far 18 have received acceptances of the revised manuscripts, 14 have submitted revised manuscripts that are still under review, and 9 have not yet resubmitted their manuscripts. Seven first authors withdrew their submissions instead of revising them and we rejected another 4 manuscripts after they had been revised. So, for the first year's submissions our acceptance rate will end up being between 10.3% (18/175) and 23.4% ((18+14+9)/175). I recently completed a survey of journal editors being conducted by the University of Aberdeen, Scotland. When I receive the results of this survey I will have a better idea of how our performance compares to that of other journals.

My associate editors and I would like to thank Sue Sprecher, past-Editor, for her amazing service to *PR*. Her last issue was published in December, but she has continued to host our website. She and I will soon be working with Ben Le to move it from the Illinois State website to the IARR website. I also want to thank Sandra Petronio (IARR President) and Michael Cunningham (IARR Treasurer) for their behind the scenes work supporting the journal and making sure we have funds necessary for operation.