

ICSP-Publications Committee Meeting - 17th May 2021

Minute 1. Call to order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9.00 a.m. UK time.

Minute 2. Record of attendance

The following members of the Publications Committee participated: E.R.B. Moore (Chair Publications Committee, Vice-Chair ICSP), D.R. Arahal (Chair JC), R. Rosselló-Móra (Vice-Chair JC), I.C. Sutcliffe (Chair ICSP), A. Oren (Executive Secretary ICSP and EiC ICNP), S.L.W. On (Secretary Subcommittees), and M.E. Trujillo (EiC IJSEM).

Minute 3. Minutes of the 14th March 2021 meeting of the Publications Committee

The draft minutes of the 14th April meeting were approved with one minor correction. The updated and corrected version of the minutes of the 15th March meeting were also approved.

Minute 4. Renewal of the publishing agreement with the Microbiology Society

E.R.B. Moore, I.C. Sutcliffe and M.E. Trujillo reported about the meeting held with Gaynor Revers-Mutton and Alexander Mulhern of the Microbiology Society, held on 10th May. There is generally good agreement on the seven sections in the draft Memo of Understanding (MoU). Of note is the issue addressing the 'Plan S' initiative and the possibility of the Microbiology Society taking a stake in the journal. The Microbiology Society understands the need to keep IJSEM a 'hybrid' journal rather than full open-access, until a later, unspecified, date, at which time it is envisioned that all MS journals would be managed more or less the same. No clear statements were made at that meeting about the proposed stake of the Microbiology Society in the journal, which can be taken forward for discussion with IUMS.

The next stage will be a three-way meeting of the ICSP (represented by E.R.B. Moore, I.C. Sutcliffe and M.E. Trujillo), the Microbiology Society (Gaynor Revers-Mutton, Alexander Mulhern) and IUMS (Rob Samson and others). E.R.B. Moore proposed that one more meeting with the representatives of the Microbiology Society will be necessary before the three-way meeting to clarify the minimum stake that the Society wishes to have in the journal. All members of the committee agreed.

Minute 5. Recommendations how to improve the impact factor and status of the IJSEM.

The discussions started at the previous meeting were continued. Topics discussed included the importance of review articles, the problems associated with single-strain species description papers, the poor quality of many descriptions published, and the publication of many new taxa that lack interest and lack proper explanations why the authors performed the study. 'Salami slicing' also remains a major problem.

We may inquire with the Microbiology Society whether review papers can be published open-access free of charge to the authors. Free publication may be an incentive for authors to contribute review articles.

The issue of the Impact Factor (IF) was raised again and the relevance of IJSEM being classified as, at least, Q2 journal. R. Rosselló Móra suggested that significant changes require changes in the editorial policy of the journal and greater rejections of papers, to reduce the number of publications. M.E. Trujillo stated that changes must come from the authors.

The ICSP membership is ultimately responsible for the publication policy but it was discussed that it has not been easy in past efforts to get the ICSP members involved, as shown by the low response (four responses) to the letter sent to all ICSP members on 26th February.

It was decided to follow up the discussions on the issues of improving IJSEM and involvement of the ICSP in July-August, i.e., after finalization of the publication agreement with the Microbiology Society and IUMS and after the 2020 impact factor of the journal is released.

M.E. Trujillo will contact Alexander Mulhern of the Microbiology Society (Note: Martha has had a response from A. Mulhern on May 18) to explore whether Clarivate could include the IJSEM also in the category 'Evolution', and not only in the category 'Microbiology', as this may upgrade its status to a Q2 journal. No further information was yet received.

Minute 6. Date of next meeting

No date was set for the next meeting of the Publications Committee. This will be decided after E.R.B. Moore, I.C. Sutcliffe and M.E. Trujillo have again met with Gaynor Revers-Mutton and progress has been made with the renewal of the publication agreement.

Minute 7. AOB

There was no other business.

Minute 8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11.25.

Minutes prepared by A. Oren – 19 May 2021