

Committee on Scientific Publications: Annual Report 2019

The APS Committee on Scientific Publications (CSP) had two in person meetings this year: April 4, 2019 in Ridge NY, and Dec. 4, 2018 in College Park, MD. In addition, the committee met seven times via video conference (Jan. 22, Mar. 1, May 23, June 21, Aug. 22, Sept. 23 and Nov. 5). The CSP advises and assists the Editor-in-Chief and Publisher, and makes recommendations to the Board and Council regarding the operating philosophy, editorial policies and general strategy of the scientific publications of the Society. In what follows, we provide a brief synopsis of the main issues discussed by the CSP during the last year. Note that by its nature, many of the issues considered by the CSP are confidential, hence this report does not cover the full set of topics discussed.

New Journals. A key component of the new APS strategic plan involves the expansion of APS publishing activities to better serve the diverse needs of our membership. As such, the CSP devoted considerable time to the discussion of plans and general strategy for how to approach the launch of potential new journals. The Committee would like to thank the APS editorial staff for their diligence in studying and clearly articulating the case for potential new journals under consideration, and their willingness to work with the CSP in discussing all relevant issues. Through many discussions, a general strategy of focusing on high-quality selective new journals in targeted areas has emerged. The CSP embraces this general direction. Many members stressed the importance of pacing the launch of new journals so that the impact and success of each new launch could be assessed, and so that each new launch could be fully informed by the experience of previous launches. A key related topic of discussion was that of resources: new resources need to be made available to APS publishing to maintain sustained excellence while engaging in expansion.

Open Access. The move towards mandates for publishing in open access journals, and how this might impact the APS, was a key topic of discussion during the year. A variety of scenarios and strategies were discussed, including the potential launch of new open access journals. The input from librarian members of the CSP was particularly valuable during these discussions.

Refereeing. The success of peer-reviewed journals relies critically on having adequate numbers of high-quality referees. While this is already challenging, it becomes an even greater issue with the potential creation of new journals. The CSP discussed strategies for growing the base of qualified referees and for recognizing excellence in refereeing.