

Publications Oversight Committee (POC)

Annual Report -- 2001

The Publications Oversight Committee met three times in 2001: 22 January at the American Center for Physics (ACP), 3-4 May at the APS Editorial office, and 27 November at the ACP. A meeting schedule for 17 September at the ACP was cancelled due to prospective travel difficulties following the attacks, but a conference call was held that day instead. The two day meeting in May at the Editorial Office was a notable success and is likely to be repeated in 2002. In addition the POC Chair attended the meeting of Editors at Ridge in October. He also gave presentations and/or submitted reports to the APS Executive Committee meetings in February, June and September.

Some of the major issues discussed and reported on in the course of the year are summarized below:

Report from Task Force on Electronic Information Systems, a.k.a. the Loken Group: In January, POC heard an interim report from Stewart Loken on deliberations and conclusions from his Task Force.

New Workflow and System for an Electronic Office: Throughout the year, POC heard periodic updates on planning and progress towards an all electronic Editorial Office.

PRB Review Report: POC heard from Dan Hone, chair of the PRB Review Committee several times in the course of the year, and accepted the final version of the report at the November meeting.

Physical Review Letters: POC has given high priority to PRL in recent years. Among the issues discussed this year were raising standards, speeding up publication, new cover design and color images thereon, and staffing. As a consequence of these discussions a PRL general Review Committee chaired by Martin Goldman (University of Colorado) has been formed.

Review of Erick Weinberg (PRD): The Editor-in-Chief reported on the positive review of Erick Weinberg that took place in spring of 2001.

Shortening Cycle Time: At the May meeting, POC heard a report from the Editorial Office Directors concerning efforts to shorten cycle time, particularly the amount of time a manuscript spends in the office before it goes out to the first referee.

Tour of Ridge office: The May meeting included a tour of the Ridge office and detailed discussions with local editors and staff.

Long Term Planning: The May meeting also included several sessions, including the Ridge Editors, on long term planning. The sessions included projections for the future.

Database Subscription Model: A common focus during each POC meeting has been pricing

issues. In an attempt to maintain subscription income in Japan, the higher tier subscribers have been moved into a database subscription model, replacing the traditional journal-at-a-time model. The POC congratulates the Treasurer and his staff on this initiative and supports extending the model to the rest of the world.

PR Focus: POC heard a report on an internal review that PR Focus had undergone. Editor David Ehrenstein reported at the November meeting.

Staffing: In light of the continued growth in submissions and the sustained quality of the journals, POC had concerns about staffing levels and work loads for Editorial Office Employees. The Committee expressed its support of the steps taken by the Editor in Chief to increase staffing levels and to facilitate recruitment and improve retention by means of judicious salary increases.

Completion of PROLA & Cornell Archive: POC joined in the pleasure and pride at the completion of the Physical Review On-line Archive and the establishment of a mirror of APS publications, including PROLA and current content at Cornell.

2001 POC Members

David Aspnes, NC State
Beverley Berger, Oakland
Paul Ginsparg, LANL
Chris Quigg, Fermilab
Katepalli Sreenivasan, Yale
Ron Walsworth, Harvard-Smithsonian
Willes Weber, Ford Motor Co.
Mark Riley, Florida State (Chair)
Martin Blume, APS
Judy Franz, APS
Tom McIlrath, APS

Diane Fortner, UC Berkeley (librarian consultant)