Presubmission Reviews and June JOE Highlights

Abstract
In the “Presubmission Reviews” section of this Editor’s Page, I pass along and elaborate on scholarly publishing words of wisdom shared with me by a previous JOE editor. In “June JOE Highlights,” I call attention to articles that directly address or indirectly provide inspiration for actions Extension professionals should or can take amid the new normal of living in a time of pandemic. I also place emphasis on three articles that address issues of equity and inclusivity.

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Presubmission Reviews
A while back I was thrilled to have an unexpected encounter with Dr. Joan Thomson, who served as JOE editor in the early 1980s. Dr. Thomson has published in JOE numerous times and even in retirement keeps tabs on the journal. Naturally, our conversation centered on advice to give authors to help them present their work most effectively. Three times during our brief exchange, Dr. Thomson emphasized that scholarly authors must have multiple people read their manuscripts before submitting them for publication. I could not agree more, which is why one of the 10 strategies I identify in the Getting Published in JOE—Strategies for Success is to have at least one colleague critically review your manuscript.

The guidance I provide in that document addresses how to choose appropriate colleagues for the task, what to ask of these colleagues, and what to do once you have gathered their input. I note that you should choose readers who are familiar with JOE and have robust publishing records but are unfamiliar with the work that is the topic of your manuscript. You should ask these readers to review the manuscript for everything from scientific rigor and appropriateness of article categorization to attention to editorial style and identification of errors of carelessness. Upon receiving their critiques, you need to be open-minded and conscientious when considering and applying their feedback. Remember, you ask colleagues to read a manuscript because they will have perspectives and notice issues that you cannot due to your proximity to your work. For more about how to use presubmission reviews to increase your chances of achieving publication, see Strategy 7 in Getting Published in JOE—Strategies for Success.

June JOE Highlights
This issue of JOE begins with the Commentary “A Time Like No Other: 4-H Youth Development and COVID-19,” in which two Extension thought leaders address the negative impacts of COVID-19 on the nation’s
young people and propose four research-based strategies Extension should employ in response. Echoing the theme of one of those strategies, the authors of the Research in Brief “Sense of Belonging as Perceived by Youths Who Continue Participation in 4-H” confirm through their quantitative research findings the essentialness of positive youth–adult relationships in persuading youths to stay in, and thus reap the full benefits of, the 4-H program.

As we all continue to operate in the new reality of an ongoing global pandemic, new processes, foci, and philosophies are needed. Before anyone had heard the term COVID-19, though, Extension professionals were in the habit of applying such adaptability in their work. Consequently, even though many programs, projects, and other endeavors reported in this issue were instigated prior to the first known novel coronavirus case, they are more pertinent than ever now that cases are in the millions nationally, let alone worldwide, and ways of life have changed for the foreseeable future. Articles that describe such innovations exist across the five sections of the journal and address, among other things, the importance of cultivating a cocreative mind-set, new ways to integrate virtual options into Extension work, a unique (not to mention stylish) type of Extension product, a vehicle for improving awareness of crucial current research and its applicability within Extension, and a method for establishing stable funding for all-important health education programming. They include the Features “Preparing to Cocreate: Using Learning Circles to Ready Extension Professionals for Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement” and “Forest Health Diagnostics Facebook Page: Impact and Natural Resources Programming Implications”; the Ideas at Work entries “Know the Land, Save the Land: Apparel Design for Extension Education,” “Publishing an Online Research Review: Engaging University and Community Authors in Communication About Research,” and “Virtual Plant Clinics Cultivate Collaborations and Transfer Knowledge in Extension”; and the Tools of the Trade offerings “Sharing Feedback, Sharing Screens: Videoconferencing as a Tool for Stakeholder-Driven Web Design” and “Approach to Establishing an Infrastructure for Delivering Third-Party-Reimbursable Community-Based Health Education.”

Other contributions address matters of equity and inclusivity both within Extension and related to the work performed by Extension professionals. These are the Research in Brief “Impacts of Changes to County Educator Position Descriptions on Gender and Educational Diversity” and the Tools of the Trade articles “Developmental Disabilities Training Series” and “Best Practices for Engaging Communities of Color in Opioid Prevention Programs.” Additionally, the issue addresses several other topics relevant to Extension as a whole and those working in specific program areas.