Peter L. Dwyer and Paul Riss – joint editors-in-chief 2011–2016

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Received: 19 September 2016 / Accepted: 19 September 2016 / Published online: 13 October 2016
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At the end of 2016 we will step down as editors-in-chief of the *International Urogynecology Journal*. It has been a privilege and pleasure to guide the Journal during the past 6 years after the editorships of Oscar Contreras-Ortiz, Don Ostergard and Mickey Karraam. The founding fathers will hardly recognize the Journal as it presents itself in 2016: from an ambitious project by dedicated individuals, it has matured into the premier international journal of the subspecialty female pelvic

medicine and reconstructive pelvic surgery, or simply urogynecology. How were we able to contribute?

During our editorship we focused on three areas: article types and mix of articles, manuscript management, and downloads and citations. We introduced new categories of articles such as Video articles, the Urogynecology Digest, Mentors in Urogynecology, and Images in Urogynecology. The Images in Urogynecology replaced Case Reports. These additions were well accepted as could be seen by a steady stream of submissions. The Urogynecology Digest allows more involvement of fellows that includes improving their skill in assessing scientific articles and writing. Finally, we publish many more reviews. In 2015 a total of 34 systematic and narrative reviews were accepted for publication, and every issue of the Journal now contains two or three reviews.

Manuscript management is of the utmost importance for every journal. At our Journal we receive about 700 submissions per year. Practically all of them are assigned to one of the editors and sent out for peer review. The editor then makes the final editorial decision. We are very proud that the turnaround time for manuscripts has come down considerably. Authors can expect a first decision within 31 days on average, and the time from acceptance to electronic publication (with a digital object identifier, DOI) is 25 days. This has only become possible with the help of our excellent editorial assistant, Lindsay McMurray, and our editor at Springer, Sean Beppler, together with his team from production. The importance of an efficient, professional and timely review cannot be overemphasized.

The third area we focused on was downloads and citations. Downloads of articles have gone up every year and were at 202,607 in 2015. Total citations of articles from the Journal also went up every year and reached 4,423 in 2015. This means that every article in the journal receives 1.5 citations

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on average. Of course there are always articles that are never cited. These might still be of interest to our clinically oriented international readership, but there is a downside, because they negatively affect the impact factor. Without losing sight of the importance of the impact factor, we elected to offer our readers a broad range of articles. If we published fewer articles our impact factor, currently at 1.834, would be higher.

We tried to work hard with our team of editors, the editorial office and the people at Springer, our publisher. All the time we had the unconditional support of IUGA which owns the Journal and gave us complete editorial independence. However, when we reflect on the Journal we realize that ultimately it is the authors who submit manuscripts and the clinicians from all over the world who read, download and cite the articles who make the Journal. In a way, the role of the editors-in-chief is often

overrated. We saw ourselves as facilitators and mentors, inviting authors to submit, helping them to improve their manuscripts, supporting our editors and putting together an issue every month which would attract the interest of the readers.

For us, personally, being joint editors-in-chief has been a challenge and over the years a deeply satisfying experience. We started as academically oriented clinicians and we leave as personal friends – having bridged cultures and continents. As we say good-bye we want to offer our heartfelt thanks to our editors, our reviewers, the staff, and most of all to you, our readers, for your loyal support of our Journal. We confidently pass the baton on to Rebecca Rogers and Steven Swift who have been appointed as new joint editors-in-chief. We know the Journal will be in good hands and open to new developments.