



## Thank you to the International Urogynecology Journal for allowing us the opportunity to serve as Editors-in-Chief

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It is with a bittersweet sigh of relief that our time as Editors-in-Chief has drawn to a close. We have completed our 6-year run and will formally hand over the reins of the journal to Drs. Kaven Baessler and Maria Bortolini on January 1, 2023. As this time approaches, we can't help but reminisce about the past 6 years, and thought that an editorial was a good way to say thank you to all who have supported our work with the IUJ.

We were given a very strong journal by our predecessors Peter Dwyer and Paul Riss, with our early thought being “don't screw it up”. Fortunately, Peter and Paul had been very inclusive in their leadership style, which provided us with institutional knowledge and insight into how the journal worked. We felt prepared. From the first we worked to promote two main themes: 1) improve the academic standing of the journal, and 2) to remain true to our international audience. These can often conflict if you only focus on one or two outcomes. Impact factor is an obvious central theme to academic standing, but that tends to focus publication efforts on high-resource countries with high-impact studies. This can conflict with being a true international journal with publications representative of all the IUGA membership and therefore our readership. We elected to try other more subtle measures without skewing the publications toward a narrow group of countries.

To improve the academic standing of the journal, we instituted a print-publication policy of clustering highly citable articles at the time of year where they would have the biggest influence on the impact factor. We also changed from case reports to “Images in Urogynecology” to reduce our citable manuscripts. We encouraged review articles and

clustered similar themed manuscripts into the same published edition. These and other subtle strategies paid off until the last year when our increased number of online first published articles moved into the calculation of the impact factor, which produced some unintended consequences for the journal. However, as with all things our dip in Impact Factor will pass.

To remain true to our international audience we have actively solicited manuscripts from around the world and worked to ensure that participation in our editorial membership reflected our geographically diverse audience. This was particularly effective with our Asian audience, as this year we had an all-time high number of manuscripts submitted from Asian countries. We continue to solicit editorials from a geographically diverse group to allow all voices a place in our journal. We have also sought out our younger membership to become more engaged with the journal.

We have also sought out diversity by engaging our younger membership. Our predecessors instituted a fellows editor position, which we have grown, and are now on our second fellows editor having graduated our first one to the editorial board. We have shifted our editorial board to younger members earlier in their careers to help with their academic portfolios, and in engaging them earlier in their careers hopefully promote loyalty to the IUJ. Another major effort in the journal has been to institute term limits for not only the Editors-in-Chief, but also the Editors and the Editorial Board. This ensures that there are places for our youngest and brightest members to move into. Finally, we instituted report cards for both editors and members of the editorial board, with expectations regarding performance.

We are excited about handing over the journal to a pair of very capable individuals; Kaven and Maria. They have both done an excellent job as editors and bring the necessary skills to continue to grow the IUJ. We wish them well and would like them to know that they always have our complete support.

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