So, you think you want to be an editor

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Have you ever considered becoming an editor of an analytical/bioanalytical chemistry journal? If the answer is yes, then the next question that logically follows is: How do I become an editor?

Most analytical/bioanalytical chemistry journals have an editorial structure consisting of either an editor-in-chief, who is supported by a group of associate/assistant editors, or a team of editors with a chair editor. Since its creation in 2002, Analytical and Bioanalytical Chemistry (ABC) has functioned with a team of editors (originally 6 founding editors and currently 11 editors), and in 2017, ABC designated a chair editor. In either case (editor-in-chief/associate editors or a team of editors), editors have a primary responsibility of handling manuscripts, i.e., assigning appropriate peer reviewers and deciding whether the manuscript should be published based on his/her opinion and/or the reviewers' comments. Other editor responsibilities include soliciting manuscript submissions and representing and promoting the journal. In all cases, the editors working together influence the "character" of the journal by determining the content based on their manuscript decisions.

Why does anyone want to become a scientific journal editor? Is the desire to become an editor due to the respect the position may bring, or is the motivation based on financial aspects of the position? I would agree that there is prestige associated with being an editor of a respected journal; however, I do not think that prestige is a major motivation for most journal editors since most potential editors already have achieved a level of respect among their scientific colleagues. In my opinion, most editors perform their duties based on a desire to serve the analytical and bioanalytical chemistry community. For most chemistry journals, the editor and associate editors receive some financial compensation for handling

manuscripts and for travel representing the journal; however, compensation is generally minimal relative to the time invested in performing their editor duties. I think most of my editor colleagues would agree that one of the benefits of being an editor is the opportunity to work closely with a great team of editors and editorial office staff to define and guide the journal. The ultimate motivation and reward for an editor are seeing the journal grow with increasing quality and impact within the scientific community.

What is a journal generally looking for in the selection of editors? From the perspective of ABC, the editors should have recognized scientific expertise and standing in the analytical and bioanalytical sciences. As an international journal, ABC wants editors who represent the geographical and institutional diversity of today's analytical and bioanalytical research activities.

How do I gain experience necessary to be an editor? Many analytical/bioanalytical chemistry journals have an advisory board of distinguished scientists who represent the various fields of analytical and bioanalytical research and provide guidance and input to the editors. The ABC International Advisory Board currently consists of 62 scientists representing 23 countries; each member is appointed to a three-year term, which is renewable depending on demonstrated contributions to the journal. Membership on the ABC International Advisory Board is **not** an honorary position. Members of the advisory board are expected to support the journal in various ways including submitting their own high-quality research manuscripts and encouraging colleagues to do likewise, serving as a reviewer (particularly as an adjudicating expert), and serving as a guest editor for a topical collection of papers. Advisory board members also provide valuable input to the editors regarding emerging areas of research, ideas for topical collections, and exceptional young analytical scientists who should be invited to contribute to the journal. Serving on the advisory board provides a valuable opportunity to interact with the team of editors, to learn more about the journal, and, more importantly, to demonstrate your desire and commitment in working to support and improve the journal. Many of the distinguished scientists on ABC's International

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Advisory Board also serve as members of advisory boards for other journals. This practice is acceptable, if there is no obvious conflict of interest, and provides valuable experience in scientific journal publishing.

What are the criteria for selection of an editor? A primary criterion in identifying an editor candidate is his/her demonstrated commitment through active participation with the journal, e.g., submitting high quality manuscripts, being an exceptional reviewer, and serving as an advisory board member. All the editors added to the founding team of editors for ABC were involved with ABC, and most were active participants on the ABC International Advisory Board before they became editors. At ABC the advisory board is considered an excellent source for future editors.

How are the editors selected? When ABC was established, as the merger of several existing analytical journals supported and owned by various European chemistry societies, the six founding ABC editors represented the major owner societies and the broader analytical/bioanalytical chemistry communities in Europe, Asia, and the United States. As other chemical societies joined the ABC supporting societies and as the geographical distribution of analytical and bioanalytical chemistry publications broadened, ABC's team of editors expanded to reflect these changes. Because of these changes and the retirement of several founding editors, ABC implemented a process for the addition of new editors to the team. The owners' societies and the editors recommend potential candidates for editor positions. From this pool, the editors identify a limited number of candidates for further consideration, who are then invited to apply for the position. The applicants respond with a letter of intent sharing their vision as an editor. From these applicants, the editors recommend to the journal owners the most appropriate candidate to strengthen and complement the current editors' areas of expertise and to provide appropriate diversity.

So, if you are interested in being an editor of ABC, or even another journal, what do you need to do? You should enjoy scientific publishing, have a strong commitment to consistent submission of high quality manuscripts, and actively participate on advisory boards to promote and improve the quality of scientific journals. Finally, in addition to the items mentioned above, you should get to know the journal editors and express an interest in supporting and promoting the journal in various ways, including serving on the advisory board and possibly as an editor. Analytical/bioanalytical chemistry journals, like ABC, are always looking for highly-qualified, enthusiastic, and committed editors to lead their journals.

Stephen A. Wise recently retired from the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) in Gaithersburg, Maryland, where he was involved in the development of analytical methods and Standard Reference Materials (SRMs) for the determination of trace organic constituents in environmental, clinical, food, and dietary supplement matrices. He is currently a Scientific Consultant for the Office of Dietary Supplements at the National Institutes of Health (NIH-ODS) in Bethesda, Maryland, where he supports the Analytical Methods and Reference Materials (AMRM) Program. He continues to have research

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