Roles and Rewards in Editorial Board Service

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Innovative Higher Education launched in 1976, and this year we celebrate its 44th year of scholarly publishing. Across this almost half-century, tens of faculty members, administrators, and other professionals have given countless numbers of hours in service as members of the Editorial Board for the journal. At the beginning of this new calendar year, 2019, I want to give a tip of the hat to the current board. These outstanding 30 members serve as volunteers, and across many years they have reviewed submissions and given in-depth evaluations and feedback to the editorial office and authors in a timely manner.

The goals of *Innovative Higher Education* are (1) to publish manuscripts on current innovations and provocative ideas in higher education, (2) to focus on the effects of innovative practices on teaching and learning, (3) to be open to diverse forms of scholarship and research, and (4) to strike a balance between practice and theory by presenting articles in a readable and scholarly manner for a general readership. These broad goals require reviewers with expertise across many topics important to higher education and backgrounds situated in scholarship, research, and/or application.

Innovative Higher Education benefits tremendously from a cadre of long-time Editorial Board members with national and international reputations. Five reviewers—Roger Baldwin, Paul Diehl, Peter Hoff, Virginia Lee, and Peter Ling—each have served for more than 20 years. Another 12 of the approximately 30 reviewers have served 10–19 years, including Ann Austin, Phyllis Blumberg, Robert Fitzpatrick, Lion Gardiner, Francine Glazer, Katrina Meyer, Catherine Millett, Edward Neal, Edward Nuhfer, Charles Spuches, Randy Swing, and Catherine Wehlburg. In total, well over 50% of the Editorial Board has been invited and accepted multiple 3-year terms as reviewers.

Some might ask why anyone would want to be a board member for an academic journal. Manuscripts can be long, not all are interesting or easily navigated, and the review is always time sensitive! What do the reviewers gain from involvement? Well, I did not survey our wonderful board members, but perhaps I should! Here are my observations. First, an invitation to serve on the board of a peer-reviewed journal represents a high level of respect by colleagues and reflects the reviewer's established or emerging reputation in the field. Dedicated reviewers care deeply about the scholarship in their areas of practice and research and

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find value in the “dialogue” between manuscripts and their expertise. Experienced reviewers know that manuscript review and feedback are a two-way street: the reviewer is on the front-end of reading about emerging issues, new approaches to research, and challenges to established content and practice. In return, through written comments and advice, reviewers mentor unnamed authors and influence the development of fields, one manuscript at a time, through the blind review process. One might say that manuscript review is like teaching when the students are at a distance and their names are unknown; nevertheless, there is the responsibility to conduct rigorous analysis and enact the scholarly process. I am sure there are other benefits, but those will suffice for now!

What do we as a journal receive? Everything! Our board members graciously read four to six manuscripts per year. They do so in a timely manner (no more than six weeks!), and they may at times suggest guest reviewers when they are facing a time-crunch or feel the manuscript is too far away from their expertise. Our board is intentionally broad in expertise and background. Some are distinguished faculty members, others accomplished administrators including presidents and deans, while others occupy positions in agencies, professional associations, and consulting groups. Post-secondary education is broad, so must be the editorial board members. The best board members are steeped in one or two significant areas of postsecondary education and through experience and skill can “read” in other areas. A good reviewer is golden, and you can tell by the number on our board who have served multiple three-year terms that we have the *crème de la crème* of reviewers.

And, I must add that beyond every good board is a stellar leader and editor. For *Innovative Higher Education* that is associate editor Dr. Kay Gillespie. She is perceptive, consistent, and has high standards for manuscripts and reviews. She makes the train run on time. She values open communication and promptness (don’t let that review linger too long without getting back in touch!), and she has a wonderful sense of humor.

When I was emailing with Kay Gillespie, the Associate Editor, about this editorial she wrote back, “The commitment of our Editorial Board members is to be commended – it reflects a dedication to scholarship and to dissemination of responsible research for the good of all involved in higher education. Moreover, it is not something for which one receives much recognition.” I wholeheartedly agree. So, a sincere thank you to our experienced and long-serving reviewers and to our newer members of the board. We are indebted to you for your service!

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