Farewell Message from the Editor-in-Chief

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It seems only yesterday that I took over the Editor-in-Chief (EiC) position from Vincent Lee. Eleven and a half years and nearly 10,000 (!) manuscripts later, it is with mixed emotions that I step down as EiC of *Pharmaceutical Research*. On the one hand, I am excited by the thought of new leadership with a fresh vision to navigate the journal through the ever-changing landscape of pharmaceutical sciences. On the other hand, I will miss interacting with the many people who made this job so enjoyable, including authors, editors and publishing staff at Springer-Nature and AAPS. I have deeply appreciated this position, and the opportunity it afforded me to help grow the journal and contribute to the outstanding research environment of the pharmaceutical sciences. I have had the pleasure and fortune to publish first-time and early-career authors whose work now inform and enrich our field, and new writing by more seasoned researchers. This position helped me grow as a scientist by evaluating cutting edge research and develop an appreciation for the breadth of scientific disciplines encompassing our field of pharmaceutical sciences.

When I accepted this position, the motto of the journal was to publish only the highest quality ‘hypothesis driven, mechanism-based’ research and I believe that I have kept that motto in mind every time I evaluated a new manuscript before triaging it or assigning it to an editor. As a result, I believe that we have maintained publishing quality and innovative research that is on par with other journals in our field. Although most journals pay the utmost attention to their impact factor, we have never played the “impact factor game” by asking authors to cite the journal, or only publishing review articles (which are more highly cited) in January to drive up citations. Nor have we gamed the system by obfuscating our source

denominator as is common for Nature Review journals. Furthermore, the lack of transparency in how impact factors are calculated is an ongoing debate that –in my opinion– decreases the reliability of the yearly “Journal Oscars.” But I digress. *Pharmaceutical Research* has remained a premier pharmaceutical sciences journal that authors in academia and industry rely on for the latest developments in their field. I am proud to say that our journal has consistently ranked as having one of the highest downloads per article numbers in the health sciences portfolio of Nature-Springer journals.

The job has not always been easy. As I have written in a previous editorial, with the advent of sophisticated software to cross-check manuscripts against published literature, we have had a challenging time setting the parameters of what constituted plagiarism and what didn’t. In the end, it ended up being a gray area that can lead to heated arguments (I have had a few) and ultimately resides with the experience and insight of our seasoned editors to determine what similarity with existing literature can be considered appropriate. Another challenge has been scientific misconduct which can pollute the scientific literature with research that has taken shortcuts or has been fabricated altogether. In this era of ‘fake news’ we, as scientists, need to be extra vigilant to eradicate bad behavior by a few that may impact trustworthiness in us all by the public. In the end, I believe that we must educate scientists to teach ethical standards and imbue professional behavior to avoid and detect unethical behavior. Whereas many institutions have appointed research integrity officers and anonymous tip lines, we all have a role to play in educating our peers and the public on scientific legitimacy. For my part, I have truly enjoyed giving seminars on publication ethics at national and international meetings.

EiCs are unusual because they rely on a whole host of other people to do the work. At the end of my term, it is a sincere pleasure to acknowledge and thank all people who have been key to *Pharmaceutical Research*’s continuing success. First and foremost, the people at Springer-Nature have been delightful

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to work with, particularly Elizabeth Yopez, Kate Davis, Carolyn Honour, Christina Dzikowski, Kathy Lyons, Marie Veth Chua, and Bob Darnowski. Also, the publication staff at AAPS have been extremely supportive and inclusive with regard to their portfolio of journals. Thanks to Catherine Abbott, Matt Baughman, Todd Reitzel and many others at AAPS who I have worked with to continue the success of our journal. I am deeply indebted to the advice and guidance from previous editors, including Wolfgang Sadée, Daan Crommelin, Vince Lee, David Smith, Christine Vauthier, Ram Mahato, Tony Kong, Kinam Park, and Margareta Hammarland-Uedenas. Of course, my job would have been impossible without the current editors, who I will not all list by name here. They all have my utmost gratitude. Special thanks to Sean Ekins and Joe Nicolazzo, whose enthusiasm for creative and innovative publication ideas was most helpful. Special features and theme issues have been a great service to authors

by bundling thematic content and, especially, by attracting new authors to the journal.

I am excited to announce that *Pharmaceutical Research* will be in excellent hands. Tonglei Li is stepping into the role of Editor-in-Chief as of July 1, 2020, and I am as impressed by the energy and vision he is already bringing to his upcoming position as I have been by his talented leadership as Associate Editor of the journal. We are very fortunate to have him at the helm.

The opportunity to serve AAPS and its members has been an honor and privilege I will never forget. I wish my successor, Tonglei Li, the best of luck and wish *Pharmaceutical Research* continuing excellence in its mission as a premier choice journal in the pharmaceutical sciences and a flagship journal of AAPS. With warm regards and appreciation to our readers for your continued support,