

APS Statements in Response to Concerns About Editorial Practices at *Perspectives on Psychological Science*

December 02, 2022

[About These Updates](#)

The following updates have been shared with APS Members and the wider psychological science community during the period beginning December 2, 2022, to inform them of concerns and actions regarding editorial practices at the APS journal *Perspectives on Psychological Science*. Further updates will be shared in new posts on this site, linked from this page for greater accessibility.

Sent to APS members April 23, 2024:

Thank you for your patience as the Association for Psychological Science (APS) has worked to resolve important editorial issues associated with *Perspectives on Psychological Science*.

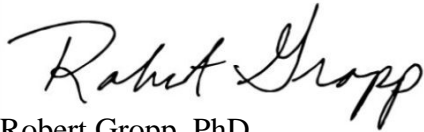
As the [editorial here](#) highlights, APS has worked diligently since December 2022 to investigate and remedy issues at *Perspectives on Psychological Science* under the last Editor-in-Chief. Please read the editorial for details about our efforts and next steps for *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, [which include a request for proposals for the next editorial structure and editor of the journal](#). Once the new editorial team is in place, *Perspectives on Psychological Science* will once again receive new submissions – likely in late 2024.

As described in the editorial, APS has decided to publish the manuscripts associated with the December 2022 vote of no confidence in the Editor-in-Chief in one collection in the May 2024 issue of *Perspectives on Psychological Science*. The editorial provides more information about this decision.

APS takes seriously its responsibility to investigate reports of editorial misconduct. During the past year, APS has reviewed and revised our [process for receiving](#) such reports. We will continue to review these policies and practices and make changes as appropriate. As is always the case, however, authors or editors are encouraged to report suspected misconduct.

We appreciate that many authors are eager to submit manuscripts to *Perspectives on Psychological Science*. We ask for your continued patience as we work efficiently to have the journal fully operational in the coming months.

Sincerely,



Robert Gropp, PhD
Chief Executive Officer

Sent to APS members January 26, 2023:

Dear APS Member,

In recent weeks, we heard concerns from many individuals about the editorial practices at *Perspectives on Psychological Science*. We learned about additional questionable editorial decisions and practices at the journal under the previous Editor-in-Chief (EIC). We also received questions about the process we used to review the EIC and that led to the Board of Directors' vote of no-confidence in the EIC. APS appreciates this input.

We [previously provided information about the editorial actions](#) that prompted APS's action. We state again that the EIC's editorial procedures were the basis for the Board of Directors' actions; the subject matter of the relevant articles was not. No assessment was made about the previous EIC's personal beliefs at any point, nor was a judgment on the EIC's character a factor in the Board's vote of no-confidence in his editorship.

This update is to further clarify the procedures we used to evaluate the editorial decisions and practices of the EIC. Some people are concerned that the actions APS took were too quick to have been made with adequate deliberation and consideration of evidence. Although quick, this action was not undertaken lightly.

After the initial complaint was brought to APS's attention, journal staff immediately gathered relevant materials for APS leadership to review. This review was conducted over the weekend following the complaint. Much of the evidence to consider was immediately available via the records kept in the journal's online submission portal. The staff and leadership also consulted with the Publications Committee and heard from some editors of other APS journals.

Before any action was taken, the EIC was contacted regarding the complaints and provided with a list of questions regarding his editorial actions. His response did not dispute the factual basis of any of the details included in the complaints.

A Board of Directors meeting had already been scheduled for that week, so it was possible to consult the full Board expeditiously. The Board reviewed the EIC's actions and concluded that the EIC demonstrated poor editorial judgment and bias.

APS is in the process of appointing an Interim EIC for *Perspectives on Psychological Science*.

Information about these efforts will be shared with APS members as we move forward.

Sincerely,



Robert Gropp, PhD
Chief Executive Officer

Sent to APS members December 15, 2022:

Dear APS Member,

Last week we alerted you to concerns that were raised and addressed regarding APS's *Perspectives on Psychological Science*. We also reported that the Editor-in-Chief (EIC) had resigned. In recent days we have received requests for additional details about the investigation and discussions that occurred between the initial reports and the EIC's resignation. Today, APS released the statement below to provide additional details about the nature of the concerns raised about the editorial process, the violations of proper editorial conduct and practice that were identified, and APS's fact-finding and decision-making processes. Our intention in providing these additional details is to clearly elaborate to our membership the shortcomings identified and the decision-making procedures undertaken.

We will continue to update APS members as we move forward with a search for a new EIC and review and update APS policies and procedures related to our journals and other programs.

Sincerely,



Robert Gropp, PhD
Chief Executive Officer

Supplemental Information for APS members Regarding Editorial Practices at *Perspectives on Psychological Science*

December 15, 2022

On December 2, 2022, the Association for Psychological Science (APS) was alerted to significant concerns about editorial practices and decisions of the previous Editor-in-Chief (EIC) of the journal *Perspectives on Psychological Science*.

The concerns involved questions of bias in the editorial process and the scientific integrity of a set of manuscripts accepted for publication by the EIC as part of what was initially a single critique of a paper (“original article”) that was previously published in *Perspectives on Psychological Science*. The accepted critique of the original article then evolved into a critical “discussion forum.”

The editorial actions that raised concerns include the EIC’s decisions to:

- accept an article criticizing the original article based on three reviews that were also critical of the original article and did not reflect a representative range of views on the topic of the original article;
- invite the three reviewers who reviewed the critique favorably to themselves submit commentaries on the critique;
- accept those commentaries without submitting them to peer review; and,
- inform the author of the original article that his invited reply would also not be sent out for peer review. The EIC then sent that reply to be reviewed by the author of the critical article to solicit further comments.

Together these behaviors represent a violation of proper editorial conduct and practices, which APS is committed to upholding regardless of the topic of the research.

Based on the articles accepted for the discussion forum, the peer review practices regarding these articles, and the EIC’s responses to questions from the Chair of the APS Publications Committee, the Board of Directors determined that the EIC did not follow standard editorial practices and demonstrated bias and poor editorial judgment that could potentially weaken the scientific reputation of *Perspectives*, other APS journals, and APS.

The Board of Directors voted no-confidence in the EIC of *Perspectives on Psychological Science*. The result of this vote was communicated to the EIC, who then resigned. APS accepted the resignation of the EIC and is working to identify a new EIC and to implement new policies and practices to prevent these violations of proper editorial conduct and practices from happening in the future.

APS will continue to update APS members on our progress in addressing these important matters.

Sent to APS Members December 8, 2022:

As we previously shared with you, last Friday, December 2, 2022, APS was alerted by an author, Dr. Steven O. Roberts, to serious concerns with the editorial practices of the Editor-in-Chief, Dr. Klaus Fiedler, of the journal *Perspectives on Psychological Science*. As APS noted in an initial statement on Friday, we take these issues seriously. We acknowledge and regret the deep pain this situation has caused. We are working to identify structural changes to policies, practices, and procedures that will prevent these editorial conditions in the future.

Upon learning of the concerns, APS took steps to understand what happened.

Beginning on December 2, 2022, and continuing through the weekend, the APS Publications Committee on behalf of the Board of Directors began looking into editorial processes and decisions for *Perspectives on Psychological Science*. They began their work when the Chair of the Committee requested information from the Editor-in-Chief, who responded to the request for information over the weekend.

In addition, on Friday, the APS Diversity and Inclusion Committee began looking into what happened and started gathering information to help inform future actions that will prevent these issues from occurring again. A goal is to strengthen the scientific integrity of our editorial processes and to review additional APS policies, practices, and procedures to illuminate weak points, ensure alignment with organizational values, and produce transparent and equitable outcomes. This work continues and will include opportunities for APS Members to share thoughts and suggestions.

Over the weekend, the APS Board of Directors began reviewing information in preparation for a meeting on Monday, December 5, 2022. During this meeting, the Board of Directors considered the editorial decisions and practices that led to the concerns. The Board of Directors determined that it lacked confidence in the Editor-in-Chief. The Editor-in-Chief resigned on Tuesday, December 6, 2022.

The work is not done.

This week, the Publications Committee and Diversity and Inclusion Committee met. APS journal Editors-in-Chief met with the Publications Committee and representatives of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee. In addition, representatives of the APS Student Caucus Board participated in meetings of the Board of Directors and Diversity and Inclusion Committee. Students will continue to participate and represent student concerns via the APS Student Caucus Board.

These meetings have been focused on identifying immediate, short-, and long- term actions. Short-term issues include the need to identify an appropriate Interim Editor-In-Chief of *Perspectives on Psychological Science* and determine how to manage articles currently submitted to the journal. We are looking at the processes and procedures that will be used to identify a new Editor-in-Chief. We will also be identifying a process for auditing editorial decisions at the journal during the former Editor-in-Chief's tenure. We are working to review, clarify, and communicate the procedures by which an author, editor, or reviewer can report concerns that might arise during the manuscript review and publication process.

I have spoken directly with Dr. Roberts. I apologized on behalf of APS for the treatment he experienced at *Perspectives on Psychological Science*. APS takes responsibility for this mistreatment, and we will work to improve our policies, practices, and procedures to prevent issues like these from happening in the future.

This is neither a final nor an exhaustive list of actions. We will continue to provide updates and information to APS Members and to request your assistance and feedback.

Sincerely,

Robert Gropp, PhD
Chief Executive Officer

Posted December 6, 2022: [APS Board of Directors Accepts Resignation of Perspectives on Psychological Science Editor-in-Chief](#)

Sent to APS Members December 5, 2022:

On Friday, December 2, an author posted a [pre-print manuscript](#) detailing his concerns about and personal experience with racist and biased editorial practices at the APS journal *Perspectives on Psychological Science*. We take these concerns and the pain this has caused seriously.

That same day, APS published the statement below outlining our commitment to address these concerns. We began investigating immediately and have spent the days since listening to feedback from APS Members and others within the psychological science community and convening APS leaders. The meetings have been productive. We will share more updates and plans for short- and long-term actions with you very soon.

We understand that this update may fall short of the details many of you seek, and we assure you that we are working as quickly as possible. In the meantime, we are deeply grateful for your recommendations and welcome your comments at APS@psychologicalscience.org.

Sincerely,
Robert E. Gropp, PhD
Chief Executive Officer

Original post, December 2, 2022:

APS is aware of the [significant concerns](#) shared by Steven O. Roberts about racist and biased editorial practices at *Perspectives on Psychological Science*. We take these concerns seriously. We support editorial independence but also editorial integrity. Our goal is to publish and widely disseminate the best quality psychological science research. This is only possible if we work aggressively to ensure our publications use best editorial practices. We are working to build an equitable organization that promotes the development and application of high-quality science that informs solutions to the complex and persistent problems of racism, intolerance, discrimination, and bias. In the coming days and weeks, we will make every effort to address the concerns raised by Dr. Roberts and others, engaging with our journal editors, our Publications Committee, our Diversity and Inclusion Committee, our Board, and our Members to make appropriate changes to our policies and practices.

We value the input of the psychological science community. Please email us at aps@psychologicalscience.org. Thank you.