

# New *Psychological Science* Editor Plans to Further Expand the Journal's Reach

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*In January 2020, APS Fellow Patricia Bauer will begin a 4-year term as editor of Psychological Science. Bauer serves as Senior Associate Dean for Research at Emory University, where she is the Asa Griggs Candler Professor of Psychology. Her research focuses on the development of memory from infancy through childhood, with special emphasis on the determinants of remembering and forgetting. She also studies links between social, cognitive, and neural developments and age-related changes in autobiographical or personal memory. She is the author of the book Remembering the Times of Our Lives: Memory in Infancy and Beyond and has served as the editor of several journals, including the Journal of Cognition and Development and the Society for Research in Child Development Monographs. The Observer recently asked Bauer a few questions about her plans for the journal.*

**One of the hallmarks of *Psychological Science* is that it publishes empirical research across the full spectrum of areas within our field. How will you ensure that the journal continues to attract the best research from such a diverse range of disciplinary perspectives?**

Given that *Psychological Science* (PS) receives on the order of 2,000 new submissions per year, there is not an immediate issue with attracting manuscripts. Yet there is need for constant attention to ensure that submissions are of the highest quality and that they represent psychological science, writ large.

The most important ingredients for ensuring the highest quality submissions are maintenance and enhancement of the reputation of the journal. One way we can further both of these goals is by making the work published in *PS* even more visible to professionals and the public at large. To this end, I plan three simple steps to make the products of research more available to experts and nonexperts alike.

First, beginning in January 2020, submitting authors will be asked to provide a brief statement explaining the importance of their work, in lay language. These statements will be published along with the article, making the broader significance of the work more immediately accessible to readers.

Second, I intend to explore with APS mechanisms for transmitting these statements to science writers and public policy makers, as a “quick guide” to important articles in each issue of the journal. For people who translate science for other audiences, this will facilitate access to the important work published in *PS* and thereby broaden attention to it.

Third, in each issue of the journal, we will highlight an article or articles that authors and/or members of the editorial team expect to be of special relevance to the public, under a heading of “Psychological Science in the Public Eye” (or something along that line—suggestions are welcome!). This section will draw attention to the public good contributed by research in psychological science and related disciplines.

Together, by making the articles published in *PS* even more visible, these steps stand to increase the number of article citations and to bring *PS*-published material to a broader audience.

There also are a number of steps we can take to help ensure that submissions to *PS* represent psychological science, broadly. Whereas cognitive and social psychology have been the mainstay of *PS*, the submission guidelines make clear that the journal is interested in receiving more submissions from other areas including (but not limited to) neuroscience, health psychology, and developmental psychology.

This message can be further amplified and reinforced through proactive encouragement of submissions from scientists working in these and other currently underrepresented areas. These efforts can be advanced through activities such as “Meet the Editor” sessions at the annual APS meeting and networking sessions at other relevant meetings, for which the Editor is available for discussion.

Another clear signal that *PS* is open for business for the full range of psychological science is an editorial team that reflects the diversity of scientific inquiry in the field. This goal is very salient to me as I work to assemble the editorial slate.

**APS is at the forefront of promoting open practices as part of strengthening methods and findings in psychological science. As those practices take root, it is clear that one size does not fit all, and the practices will be adapted differently in different areas of the field. What impact do you think this will have on the journal?**

The evolving landscape of open science practices presents both a challenge and an opportunity. The challenge is apparent in the question — we need to work to ensure that we do not try to force round pegs into square holes. If we put in place a rigid set of requirements that submissions must meet to be eligible

for publication in *PS*, we risk losing the very diversity we hope to attract.

In instances in which preregistration is feasible, and in which immediate, open access to materials and data can be provided, we will continue to encourage authors to take these steps. Yet we must be fully cognizant that in some areas of the broad discipline of psychological science, these actions may not be possible or may be ill-advised. The question we need to ask is what is reasonable and appropriate for the genre of the work. The standards for evaluation of the merit of submissions to *PS* must be fair, but that does not mean that they must be the same in all instances.

In recognition of the diversity of approaches represented in psychological science, we should continue to use the strength of APS and the bully pulpit of *PS* to further education in open science principles and practices that can be followed regardless of genre. The APS website prominently displays the association's commitment to the integrity of the scientific process with resource links on the home page: *Open Science and Methodology*, *Research Transparency*, and *APS: Leading the Way in Replication and Open Science*.

Yet because authors may more typically access *PS* directly rather than through the APS website, it seems desirable to make *PS*'s commitment to open practices more salient, by gathering under one prominent heading the statements currently represented under separate subheadings (e.g., *Open Practices Statement*, under *Preparing your Manuscript*, under *Submission Guidelines*). I will look into possibilities as I transition into my new editorial role.

For the moment, I emphasize that *PS* is and will continue to be welcoming of a wide range of submissions relevant to psychological science. This includes meritorious submissions that fully embrace specific open science practices associated with award of badges, and those that uphold the same high standards of scientific integrity, but for which the specific actions recognized by badges are not feasible and may not even be appropriate. Our science benefits from diversity, and that is no less true with regard to specific open science practices than to any other aspect of the scientific process.

**Enlisting reviewers is a challenge for virtually all editors of scientific journals, particularly reviewers who are considered midcareer. If you could make an appeal directly to scientists at that juncture in their careers, what would you say to them about the value of serving as a reviewer for *Psychological Science*?**

I appreciate the opportunity to address this issue, not only for colleagues who are midcareer but for those at every stage of their careers. My appeal is three-pronged. First, I appeal to scientists' role as citizens. We are a self-governing and self-righting discipline. That means that we must shoulder the responsibility for evaluation of the merit of the contributions to our journals, including the flagship journal of APS. If we opt out of that process, we should not be surprised to find that the products fail to satisfy. To put it another way, just as "Every country has the government it deserves" (Joseph de Maistre, 1851: *Lettres et Opuscules Inédits*, Vol. 1, Letter 53), if we abdicate the responsibility to contribute to peer review, we run the very real risk of ending up with a literature that is not very deserving.

Second, I appeal to scientists' role as educators. When we write a review of a submission, we have an opportunity to educate its authors (not to mention the editors). We also have the opportunity to educate junior colleagues by involving them in the review process (a perfectly acceptable practice as long as

standards of scientific integrity and expectations of confidentiality are maintained, and the shared responsibility for the review is acknowledged). This helps socialize the next generation and also furthers the goals of open science, by involving more people in its practice. We also educate ourselves by learning about great new ideas and findings. And since *PS* submissions that undergo extended review have already had an initial review, there is a high likelihood that the ideas and findings will indeed be great.

Third and finally, I appeal to fairness — for every manuscript you submit for review, you should review two to three submissions by others: that is the effort required to keep the process of peer review working. If you must say “no” to a review, please say it to a different journal! And if you must say “no” to *PS*, please aid the editorial team by suggesting alternative reviewers. I hope that will not be necessary and instead, you will embrace the bumper-sticker motto of “Say ‘yes’ to *PS*!”

**You’ve said that one of your goals is to encourage submissions of studies involving diverse populations? Do you have specific ideas for achieving that?**

This is a very challenging issue for our field. We all recognize the threats to validity posed by nonrepresentative samples. Yet we all conduct our research within a specific resource envelope and on timelines that often are rather unforgiving (or at least are perceived to be). One result is that we often conduct our research on samples of convenience, and those samples are unlikely to be representative of the world’s population (though more diverse in some ways, even Amazon’s Mechanical Turk (MTurk) represents a particular population).

This issue was brought to the fore for me as I was preparing my vision statement for the *PS* editor search committee. Given the demographics of the APS membership, and under the assumption that APS members are a major source of submissions, I estimated that upwards of 95% of submissions to *PS* and other APS journals probably are from the US, Canada, Europe, and Australia/New Zealand. If that is at all accurate, it means that almost all of our results are from a very restricted — even WEIRD (Western, educated, industrialized, rich, democratic) — population.

This is a systemic problem that will not be solved by the actions of a single journal or editorial team. (And interestingly, focusing efforts on attempts to replicate findings from this reified population — as opposed to testing the limits of their generalizability — stands to exacerbate the problem.) What we at *PS* can do, however, is to encourage submissions to the journal that feature non-WEIRD populations and to make that policy known. We as individual scientists also can channel some of our creativity toward diversifying our samples and explicitly evaluating the limits of generalizability of our findings.

**Recognizing that you will be outlining your plans for *Psychological Science* in greater detail in your upcoming editorial, is there anything else you’d like to say to our readers at this point, other than “stay tuned”?**

I take this moment to convey my respect and gratitude to Stephen Lindsay and his editorial team for their strong commitments to *Psychological Science*. They have served the journal and the discipline exceptionally well. On behalf of the field, thank you! My intention is to continue the best traditions established in the journal by Steve and his team, and those who served before him, while also allowing policies and practices to develop with our changing field.

My overall vision for *Psychological Science* is that it continue to serve its function as the flagship journal of the Association for Psychological Science, publishing empirical research that is of the highest quality and greatest significance. I also see room for *PS* to increase efforts for outreach to the wider public, thereby increasing appreciation of the contributions of science and scientific literacy broadly. These goals are well aligned with maintaining *PS*'s leadership in the reproducibility and open science efforts.

I welcome your ideas for how best to accomplish these important goals ([pjbauer@emory.edu](mailto:pjbauer@emory.edu)).