Journal Authorship and Professional Affiliation

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The editorial policy of the Journal of Refractive Surgery is to receive articles from authors, have them peer reviewed, and accept for publication those that are deemed appropriate by their content. This process occurs independent of the academic, political, or professional status of the authors, and is also independent of the authors’ age, gender, race, religion, and sexual orientation. The Journal is dedicated to publishing the highest quality scientific information in its original articles, reviews, and reports, and the most insightful opinions in its letters and editorials—indeed of the authors’ affiliations.

The question of professional affiliation has arisen since the American Academy of Ophthalmology stopped permitting attendance or participation by optometrists at any educational activity at its annual meeting. Since the Journal of Refractive Surgery is the official journal of the International Society of Refractive Surgery of the American Academy of Ophthalmology (ISRS/AAO), the question has arisen whether authorship by optometrists is affected by this ruling. It is not. The Journal is owned by SLACK Incorporated and its Editorial Board is selected independent of input from ISRS/AAO. The Journal welcomes contributions from all sources and seeks to avoid the inevitable political, economic, and ethical conflicts that arise from different groups involved in similar endeavors.

Of course, the peer-review process at the Journal is not without its built-in biases. Reviewers, knowing the names and affiliations of the authors, could apply personal and political bias for or against an article regardless of its actual content. This problem has plagued the peer-review process for decades and is a matter of frequent discussion at meetings of journal editors. One solution proposed in the past was to eliminate all reference to the authors and their affiliations in the papers that are sent out for review, but this was abandoned in the face of the reality that a reviewer knowledgeable enough to give a critical assessment of a given paper can usually figure out who the authors are—even in the face of printed anonymity. The Journal of Refractive Surgery solicits three reviewers for each article, and insists on at least two substantial reviews, in addition to that of the Associate Editors and the Editor-in-Chief. Thus, there is a series of checks and balances built into this that diminishes the impact of the bias of a single reviewer. The editorial board of the Journal, although predominately composed of ophthalmologists, carries optometrists and doctors of philosophy as well.

Indeed, the Journal seeks to emulate the professional cooperation masterfully manifest at the annual International Congress of Wavefront Sensing and Optimized Refractive Corrections, the proceedings of which have been published in the Journal for the past 5 years. At this Congress, there is a confluence of ideas and presentations by ophthalmologists, optometrists, vision researchers, optical scientists, engineers, business persons, and medical students. This confluence was manifest in February 2005 at the sixth meeting of the Congress in Athens, Greece. Unlike any other eye-care meeting, this Congress creates an intense interdisciplinary interaction that benefits not only those who attend the meeting but also those who read the proceedings. This is particularly true, because during the meeting there are no competing venues or topics—everyone is in one room at one time, seeking to understand and integrate the input from these highly varied sources. The Congress is guided expertly by Raymond A. Applegate, OD, PhD, and Ronald R. Krueger, MD, MSE, and has spawned a first and second edition of a textbook on wavefront customized visual correction, coauthored by Scott M. MacRae, MD, the contributing authors representing some ten different disciplines. If the political world could find this level of cooperation, just think where humankind could go!

Our message to all authors: send us your finest work—whichever you are—and we will review it critically and publish it rapidly.

REFERENCES
