

Update From the Editor

Martha Tacker, Editor
CBE Views

Since May 1995, *CBE Views* has seen changes that result normally from a change in editorship—some new contributors and topics, new sections and columns, a somewhat new look. We are also facing more momentous changes, as are many of you, with the opportunities for electronic publication now at hand. To help *CBE* develop *CBE Views* so it meets the needs of its readers, we needed basic information about our readers and what they think about *CBE Views*. We also needed their suggestions and ideas. Hence, the survey.

Although the survey results cannot in any way be taken to represent the entire *CBE* membership, they give us a helpful glimpse of a part of the readership and many useful ideas. My thanks go to all who responded. (By the way, the respondents were either less compulsive or more compassionate than I expected. No one deleted the extra period I left in item 10 as a little test!) To those who haven't responded, but who have ideas and opinions to share, it is never too late to send them to the me.

Content and Format

Guided by the response, we will continue the mix of content and the format pretty much as they have been. We are gratified to know that many find articles in *CBE Views* worth saving and passing along to colleagues. We, like you, have been disconcerted by how long it has taken to publish reports of annual meeting sessions. This year, through great effort by Annual Meeting Editors Blaire Mossman and Norman Grossblatt, we were able to publish all the reports by the January-February 1997 issue. For now, time and money—actually the lack of them—likely will dictate our continuing to publish groups of reports in each of several issues following the annual meeting rather than in 1 separate publication. The back-page feature "Looking Back" has been discontinued in part because of low usefulness and interest scores.

Substantive Articles

The editors share the readers' desire for substantive articles. All manuscripts submitted for the "Articles" and the "Dialogue" sections now are peer-reviewed to help us ensure their depth, relevance, and clarity. (Authors of articles and Dialogue pieces published in *CBE Views* can take satisfaction in knowing their work has passed muster with what is probably the most experienced and helpful group of reviewers in the business.) Whether *CBE Views* will ever become a journal mainly of peer-reviewed articles remains to be seen. Meanwhile, we welcome manuscripts and essays for our 2 peer-reviewed sections, the "Articles" and "Dialogue" sections. If you have an idea to develop into a manuscript, call me to talk it over.

Whether there will ever be sufficient research on editorial topics to support a journal devoted to its publication also remains to be seen. The research now being published seems to be scattered throughout the scientific literature. We encourage you to conduct editorial research—identify an important question, set up a plan to answer it, gather and analyze the data, and then follow Tom Lang's lead by submitting your report of it to *CBE Views*.

Layout and Mailing

Shortly after I became the editor, I learned how much the look of a publication depends on the layout and production editors. Since January 1996 our management company, The Sherwood Group, has provided those services. Without funds for a major redesign, we have worked together to try to make *CBE Views* easier and more interesting to read. For both of us—the Sherwood people and me—it has been a learning experience: They've learned about peer-reviewed journals and *Scientific Style and Format* style, and I've learned about layout and production. We both thank you for your patience with us about this and welcome your suggestions.

I also quickly learned how difficult it is to get a publication out on time. Accomplishing this has been frustrated by my move to

Redmond and turnover in production editors. Our goal for 1996 was to have it in your hands within the 2-month publication date; I believe we met it for most issues. With the January 1997 issue, we moved our publication date ahead 1 month, to begin the year with a January-February issue rather than a February-March issue. Our goal for 1997, which we reached with the March-April issue, is to mail the issue by the 10th of the 1st publication month. For example, the March-April issue was mailed by 10 March.

New Challenges

We are beginning to feel as if we finally have a stable routine, and we would like to enjoy it. But our respite likely will be short-lived. Now that *CBE* has a Website, there will be decisions about what *CBE Views* material should be put on the Web and what procedures and protocols will lead to a useful and reliable product. But whether making decisions about topics, commas, or HTML coding, we always will be guided by our goal to make *CBE Views* the forum of choice for the discussion of issues in the scholarly communication of science and to help maintain *CBE* as a critical resource for those who communicate science. ☺

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