The Parmley Prize and Other Early Initiatives

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As was indicated in my initial Editor’s Page, the state of health of JACC is excellent as the new Editors assume responsibility for the Journal. Judged by any criteria, the Journal is extremely successful and plays a central role in the professional life of most cardiovascular specialists. Given this status, it follows that any changes to the Journal should be implemented carefully and only after due consideration. In the process of transition of the Editorial Office, however, a number of new initiatives were considered that clearly seemed to warrant early implementation. This Editor’s Page will be devoted to describing these early initiatives.

THE PARMLEY PRIZE

In recognition of the outstanding contributions that my predecessor, Bill Parmley, made to JACC, Elsevier Science Inc. has generously established an award that we have designated “The Parmley Prize.” Although not all of the details have been finalized, it is important that authors, potential authors, and Program Directors be aware of this award. The Parmley Prize is intended to recognize two outstanding papers published in JACC by primary authors who are young investigators. The award is meant to honor not only the young investigator but also the program in which he or she is working. The award itself will consist of certificates for both the awardees and their Program Directors, as well as grants to cover the expenses for awardees to attend the Annual Scientific Sessions or an educational program of the American College of Cardiology (ACC). The presentation of the Parmley Prize will take place at the annual meeting of the JACC Editorial Board at the Scientific Sessions.

Currently, plans call for the Editor and Associate Editors to select the manuscript published by a young investigator in any given year which best fulfills the standard criteria for acceptance for publication. These criteria include originality, methodology, presentation, and importance. The definition of “young investigator” is, of course, subject to considerable individual interpretation. For the purpose of this award, a “young investigator” will be designated as one who is within five years of having completed the training requirements for specialty Board Certification or PhD degree. We plan to introduce an inquiry space into the submission form in order to identify candidates from among the authors submitting manuscripts. However, it will be important for Program Directors and colleagues to nominate and identify individuals who are eligible for the award. They can do so by writing, faxing, or e-mailing me at the JACC Editorial Office in San Diego. Because the announcement of the award is coming in mid-year, we have declared all papers published since January of 2002 eligible for consideration.

As evidenced by the well established Young Investigator Awards program, the ACC has long recognized the importance of fostering junior researchers. Publication in a competitive peer review scientific journal represents the culmination of a successful research project. By acknowledging the excellence of the research performed, we at the ACC and at JACC hope that this award will further support young investigators and the programs that nurture them. Any additional positive impact on the Journal will, of course, also be warmly welcomed.

It was the intention of the ACC and Elsevier that the Parmley Prize pay homage to the efforts and accomplishments of Bill Parmley as Editor of JACC. By lending his name to this effort, Bill bestows a special honor on the award and provides an exceptional role model for young scientists both as investigators and human beings. We anticipate that the Parmley Prize will become a widely sought-after and acknowledged award—one for which potential candidates are aggressively identified and encouraged by their superiors and peers.

Express Pubs and Expedited Reviews

The recent extraordinary advances in communications have markedly accelerated the transmission of new knowledge and information. In the field of medical journals, rapid transmission has taken the form of expedited on-line electronic processing of submitted manuscripts, and it is also being accomplished by the institution of protocols for accelerated review and publication. Although special protocols have probably been implemented by editors and authors on a case-by-case basis for some time, we are now formalizing these pathways and inviting submissions to them when appropriate. Specifically, JACC has now established two alternate pathways of manuscript submission: Express Pubs and Expedited Reviews.

Express Pubs represent manuscripts that contain highly original information of immediate and significant importance to clinical care or research endeavors. Many aspects of these new observations may not be fully defined, such as underlying mechanisms or actual clinical significance; how-
ever, the observations themselves are of sufficient impact to warrant accelerated publication. Since these papers will typically not represent a complete exposition of the subject, it is anticipated that they will be readily accommodated by the reduced 2,500-word limitation we have established for this category. For Express Pubs, the Editors will commit to an initial decision within 14 days of receiving a manuscript, online publication in *JACC* within 10 days, and publication in the printed *Journal* within six weeks.

The category of publication designated as Expedited Reviews includes those full-length manuscripts that share with Express Pubs the timeliness and importance to either clinical care or research. These manuscripts will contain information that should immediately influence patient management or the direction of investigational efforts. It is anticipated that only select manuscripts will fulfill these requirements. Therefore, the Editors commit to a decision within five days of receiving the paper as to whether a manuscript submitted in this category warrants such processing and, if selected, commit to an initial decision within 14 days. Manuscripts accepted by this pathway will be published online in *JACC* within 10 days and in print in the *Journal* within six weeks.

Express Pubs and Expedited Reviews provide a mechanism for *JACC* to provide new data to the cardiovascular community as quickly as possible. They represent our attempt to deal with the competing priorities of rapid transmission of information and complete delineation of methods and results in such a manner that the data can be appropriately evaluated and adopted by the readers. We recognize that either a delay in publication of important new data or a transmission of incomplete or inadequately described data has equal limitations. The existing review and publication process has worked very well to achieve completeness for many years. It is hoped that these new approaches will address the problem of delayed publication of important findings.

*Viewpoints*

Papers not dealing with original research findings have typically appeared in *JACC* either as state-of-the-art reviews or as editorial comments related to specific manuscripts. Similarly, standard protocol at medical meetings has called for presentations to consist of either the description of new research findings or a review of existing information. Recently, several meetings have instituted sessions inviting presentations of strongly held opinions, even when they are not based on specific research findings. These talks have typically dealt with subjects that the presenter felt passionately about, have usually engendered considerable discussion, and have become among the most highly attended venues of the meetings.

We believe that the considered and strongly held opinions of thoughtful individuals could make a significant contribution to *JACC*. We anticipate that these pieces will often be provocative and, hopefully, will stimulate considerable thought and interchange. Such papers may raise questions rather than provide answers, but they are also likely to stimulate the pursuit of resolution.

We have elected to use the term “Viewpoints” for this category of manuscript submission. Papers submitted to Viewpoints may deal with any aspect relevant to cardiovascular medicine and must be limited to 1,000 words. In general, these papers should deal with broad-based issues; opinion pieces directed toward highly focused topics may be more appropriate for a point-counterpoint type of presentation. As with all other manuscripts submitted to *JACC*, Viewpoints will be judged on their originality, presentation, and relevance, as well as on the conviction with which they are presented.

The Parmley Prize, Express Pubs and Expedited Reviews, and Viewpoints are initiatives that should enhance the strength and impact of *JACC*. They have been structured to extend the excellence of the original clinical and experimental research manuscripts, editorials, and reviews that constitute the core of the *Journal*. In addition to honoring Dr. Parmley, it is our hope that these early initiatives will provide benefits to both authors and readers.

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