

Editorial

BBA in the year 2007

Sixty years ago the first issue of BBA was published when the journal was founded by Hendrik Westenbrink (The Netherlands), with the assistance on the Editorial Board of Carl Cori (USA), Kaj Linderstrøm-Lang (Denmark), Claude Fromageot (France) and others. From the composition of the Editorial Board it was abundantly clear that BBA was intended to be an international journal. The tradition continues in 2007 as reflected by the Editor-in-Chief, the Executive Editors and the members of the Editorial Board, who come from countries encompassing the entire world. The initial objective of BBA was to publish papers in biochemistry and biophysics and that has now expanded to include molecular and cell biology.

While BBA is published by Elsevier, as are many other journal in biochemistry, biophysics, molecular and cell biology (e.g., *Cell* and the *Cell* family of journals, *Trends in Biochemical Sciences* and many others), the editorial content of BBA is selected and managed by the Executive Editors and the Editorial Board. These scientists are well recognized in their respective fields and bring to authors of submitted manuscripts the required knowledge that ensures their manuscripts are fairly evaluated. To make sure authors are provided with expert reviews, BBA is divided into 9 sections, with each section having its own Executive Editors and dedicated members of the Editorial Board. The journal also seeks and receives editorial advice from expert scientists who are not on the board. The review process is organized in this way so that BBA can provide for its authors the best possible expert reviews of submitted manuscripts. The function of the editorial process at BBA is to assist scientists in reporting important research in biochemistry, biophysics, molecular and cell biology. Thus, we promise to provide expert reviews to our authors in a timely fashion.

In addition to our promise of scientific excellence in the processing of manuscripts, many other advantages are associated with publishing in BBA. There are no page charges or manuscript handling fees. We endeavor to provide a rapid publication time of 8–10 weeks after acceptance of a paper. The authors are offered PDF offprints of each article published in BBA. Accepted articles are online within 5 days. All papers are readily accessible via the Internet, as most university and industrial libraries subscribe to BBA and/or ScienceDirect.

BBA under the leadership of Professor Peter van der Vliet has also led the way in the development of special issues of the

journal on selected topics. We think this is a very important service to the academic community. To have a selection of papers and reviews on a special topic (e.g., *Molecular Basis of Neuronal Ceroid-Lipofuscinosis* was a special issue of *BBA Molecular Basis of Disease* in 2006) focuses the research field on the latest advancements in a single issue of the journal. These issues are of obvious advantage to those in a particular area of research as well as to those scientists just initiating research in the field.

When BBA was started 60 years ago, there was no Internet, fax, computers, or accessible courier service, and even electric typewriters were uncommon. Thus, the process of writing, mailing and reviewing was slow. It was not uncommon for the decision on a manuscript to take 2 to 3 months. Thankfully, the process is now much faster and we endeavor to provide authors with 3 quality reviews within 5 weeks of submission of their manuscripts.

Furthermore, 60 years ago there were no impact factors. The reputation of a journal rested on qualitative impressions of papers published in the journal. However, now every year Thomson (formerly the Institute for Scientific Information) attempts to quantify the value of a journal by calculation of the impact factor. While this does not directly measure the quality of papers in a journal, it is widely viewed as having some relevance to the quality of a journal. The impact factor is calculated separately for each of the 9 sections of BBA and not for the Journal as a whole. However, if one adds values for the 9 sections, then divides by 9, an average impact factor for BBA in 2005 was 4.28. While this indicates that the journal is one of the most highly cited journals in biochemistry, biophysics, and molecular and cell biology, we are committed to a serious improvement in the impact factors for BBA.

As I undertake the honor and privilege of being Editor-in-Chief of BBA beginning in January 2007, I want to express deep appreciation to Peter van der Vliet for his dedicated and superb leadership while he was Editor-in-Chief. In the future my goals are many. Foremost, I want to improve the quality of papers published in BBA. Working with the Executive Editors and Editors of each section, I shall encourage scientists to consider BBA for submission of their best papers in biochemistry, biophysics, and molecular and cell biology. We shall endeavor to continue to provide quality reviews in a timely fashion and to publish papers within 8–10 weeks after acceptance. As

Editors, we view our major function as assisting scientists in the publication of their important research and review articles. We provide this service to scientists with the firm belief that what we do as scientists is important to the intellectual pursuit of humanity and to understanding the process of life. We also think that what we do as scientists

and the publication of our results have practical implications for future developments in understanding and treatment of human diseases.

Dennis E. Vance
Editor-in-Chief, BBA