



25th May 2017

Sent via email

Dear *IJOEH* Current and Past Editorial Board members,

Thank you for your letter dated 15th May 2017.

I appreciate that you still have questions and concerns about the journal. I sincerely hope that you will take up the offer of a meeting or video conference with my team and Dr Maier soon to talk these matters through. As we are beginning a new relationship with you all and a new chapter in the journal's history, we would value being able to discuss any concerns directly with you as a dialogue and in a more immediate way than we can through written correspondence.

In the meantime, in response to your requests, I have provided more information below on the specific questions you raise. I hope this will help us all move on with the important matter at hand – the smooth running and future success of the journal itself. To be clear, we would very much like to continue to work with the current Editorial Board on the journal, so we can make *IJOEH* the best it can be.

You ask about the reasons for the appointment of the new Editor-in-Chief, and about our intentions regarding repositioning the journal, which I will answer together. When we acquired the journal from Maney in 2015, we reviewed the journal and felt it was an opportune time to put in place long-term plans and goals for the journal's future development, including improvements to boost citation levels and rapidity of publication. We hoped to work closely with the incoming Editor in order to maximise the online readership over the coming years and confirm the journal as a high-quality outlet that meets the needs of researchers around the world.

Our aims are for the journal to put scientific research at the centre of academic discussion in this important subject area. We believe in taking a rigorous approach to peer review, enabling us to publish the best original international research (alongside balanced constructive discussion pieces where appropriate) in order to move the discipline forward and for the benefit of society at large. We do not see this as 'repositioning' the journal as such, but we do see it as a change of tack - putting in place long-term plans and goals for the journal's future development, enhanced by our expertise in marketing, online publishing, and bibliometric analysis.

You also ask about the process and criteria for selecting the new Editor-in-Chief. As I explained in our previous correspondence, we spoke to a number of contacts in the field to seek advice on the appointment of a new Editor-in-Chief and opportunities for the journal in general. One of those was Dr Jukka Takala, whom we first emailed on 11th March 2016 and whom my colleagues Andrew Kelly and Matthew Cannon subsequently spoke to by telephone on 14th March 2016. They spoke about the recent history of the journal and Dr Takala's views on opportunities for the future. They did not speak specifically about Dr Maier, as his name had not been suggested to us at that stage (and, for the avoidance of doubt, my previous letter did not say that Dr Maier was discussed).

In terms of our criteria for selecting the new Editor-in-Chief, our main criteria were finding someone whose vision for the journal matched the aims outlined above, who was willing to work

2&4 Park Square Milton Park Abingdon OX14 4RN UK
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7017 6000 Fax: +44 (0) 20 7017 6336
www.tandf.co.uk



collaboratively with us and who would uphold the highest ethical standards on peer review. It was not, nor would ever be, a criterion to find someone who represented a particular corporate perspective, whether pro- or anti-. All our journal editors have editorial independence and are expected to bring a balanced approach, grounded in their expertise within the field. I wish to reiterate that this was not a factor in our selection process.

You ask several questions about the three papers that are currently being reviewed. As I hope you will appreciate, we need to be mindful of the relevant authors on this issue, especially given that our previous correspondence to you has been distributed to the media. We are therefore not able to set out any further details here or to identify the authors of the three articles that have been flagged up as raising potential concerns. As I said previously, these three articles are being investigated as a matter of urgency and we expect to proceed with publication or confirm an alternative course of action directly with those authors shortly.

In terms of the role of the Editorial Board where an article has been flagged up as a potential concern (for example, because of potential libel or other legal issues), it is standard practice for the publisher to review the article in question with the Editor-in-Chief of the journal, unless a conflict of interest makes that impossible. We would also commonly consult with a specific member of the Editorial Board where that Board member has relevant subject area expertise or handled the reviews for that article. Otherwise, we would not ordinarily consult with the Editorial Board regarding such an article.

You also ask questions about the withdrawn paper. Withdrawing published articles is not unprecedented although it is rare. It is not a step we take lightly but we can and do take action in the exceptional circumstances where an article is found to have been unfit for publication at later stage. COPE is an advisory body, and we follow their guidelines, but it is the publisher's responsibility to take the most appropriate action in each particular circumstance, and that is what we have done here.

You ask if we are willing to reconsider the selection of the new Editor-in-Chief and support the continued participation of the Editorial Board. Dr Maier has been appointed, and contracted, to edit the journal and that will not be reconsidered, although the post holder for the Editor role on *IJOEH* may change in future years as part of the natural cycle of the journal. We would welcome the continued participation of the current Editorial Board in the journal, in your role in peer reviewing and assessing the scientific merit of papers submitted for publication, as well as in supporting Dr Maier in the journal's development.

Yours sincerely,

Ian Bannerman

Managing Director

Taylor & Francis Journals

2&4 Park Square Milton Park Abingdon OX14 4RN UK
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7017 6000 Fax: +44 (0) 20 7017 6336
www.tandf.co.uk