

A Report by the Editor-in-Chief for *MBE*, Volume 29

Sudhir Kumar^{1,2}

¹Center for Evolutionary Medicine and Informatics, Biodesign Institute, Arizona State University

²School of Life Sciences, Arizona State University



Introduction

Molecular Biology and Evolution (MBE) publishes research at the interface of molecular and evolutionary biology, including molecular evolutionary patterns, processes, and predictions at all levels of taxonomic, functional, genomic, and phenotypic organization. It also publishes new and improved methods, resources, and theories that are critical for advancing molecular evolutionary research. *MBE* is entirely owned by the Society for Molecular Biology and Evolution (SMBE) and is published by Oxford University Press in conjunction with HighWire Press.

In 2012, *MBE* continued to serve the scientific community by providing a high-impact venue to publish their scientific discoveries, methods, resources, reviews, and perspectives.

Content and Manuscript Processing

To better align submissions to publications in journal volumes, I have begun reporting manuscripts received and decisions rendered from 1 July to 30 June for each year. **Table 1** provides the numbers of new and revised submissions received each year. It also summarizes the proportion of new manuscripts rejected. The rates of rejection of once and multiple times revised submissions are miniscule and are not reported here. In brief, the average number of new manuscripts submitted to *MBE* during the last five years is close to 1,000, and the rate of manuscript rejection has increased by ~5% in the same time period (2008–2013). The time taken for new submissions to receive the first editorial decision is currently less than 3 weeks. This includes less than 1 week time, on average, for rejection decisions made by the Board of Editors (BoE) directly after carefully reviewing the manuscript and an average of 5 weeks for manuscripts that are selected for in-depth reviews. Accepted manuscripts are being published in *MBE* at the rate of ~300 each year (**Table 2**) with the number of pages published showing a steady increase over the last 5 years.

Impact Factors and Rankings

The 2012 impact factor (IF) for *MBE* is 10.4, which is higher than 5.6 received in 2011. Based on the 2-year IF of nonreview journals, *MBE* is ranked 2 in evolutionary biology, 5 in genetics and heredity, and 13 in biochemistry and molecular biology, which are the three primary subject categories assigned to *MBE* in the Journal Citation Reports. Based on the 5-year IF of

Table 1. Submissions and Rejection Rates.

Years ^a	Submissions		Rejections ^b (%)
	New	Revised	
2007–2008	895	298	68.4
2008–2009	937	295	68.9
2009–2010	1,001	335	68.6
2010–2011	1,141	320	72.7
2011–2012	940	283	73.4
2012–2013	1,025	284	n/a

NOTE—n/a, rejection rate not available as many manuscripts are still under editorial consideration.

^aManuscripts received between 1 July and 30 June.

^bRejection rates are for new submissions.

Table 2. Manuscripts Published.

Volume	Manuscripts		Pages Published ^b
	All ^a	Open Access	
25	269	36	2,671
26	253	25	2,956
27	259	35	2,914
28	300	26	3,391
29	294	47	3,985
30 ^c	155	36 ^d	1,744

^aIncludes articles, letters, reviews, protocols, and perspectives.

^bIncludes all published pages that were assigned a page number.

^cCounts are from the first seven issues of volume 30 (July 2013).

^d2013 to May only.

11.2 in 2013, *MBE* rankings are 2, 5, and 10, respectively. These trends indicate that *MBE* is a high-impact and highly ranked journal among its peers.

Editorial Enhancements

In an effort to better serve our community, we are now issuing Calls for Papers, improving the submission process for authors, and updating the *MBE* and the submission websites. The calls for papers for the tree of life: molecular phylogenies, evolutionary interpretations of genomic differences, and software and resources resulted in 133 manuscript submissions (54, 47, and 32, respectively) and a rejection rate of 74%. We have improved the look and feel of the journal by encouraging author cover art submission and by creating fast tracks, discoveries, methods, and resources sections (Kumar 2013a).

MBE has begun to announce citation classics annually, which are divided into recent classics (five most recent

years; 2008–2012) and the early classics (since the inception of the journal; 1983–2007). They are selected based on the highest number of citations per year in each period (Kumar 2013b).

Board of Editors

The editorial structure has changed significantly following a directive by the SMBE Council, which is detailed in the 2013 inaugural message in *MBE* (Kumar 2013a). The *MBE* BoE currently consists of 54 associate editors (AEs), 11 senior editors (SEs), and 1 editor-in-chief. Since the last editor's report (Uyenoyama 2013), there have been 23 new associate editor appointments: Joshua Akey (University of Washington), Doris Bachtrog (University of California, Berkeley), Miriam Barlow (University of California, Merced), Juliette de Meaux (Universität Münster, Germany), Joel Dudley (Mt. Sinai School of Medicine), Xun Gu (Iowa State University), Lars Jermiin (CSIRO, Australia), Yuseob Kim (Ewha Womans University, Korea), John Logsdon (University of Iowa), Stuart Newfeld (Arizona State University), Katja Nowick (Universität Leipzig, Germany), Csaba Pal (Institute of Biochemistry, Hungary), Tal Pupko (Tel Aviv University, Israel), Eduardo Rocha (Institut Pasteur, France), Claudia Russo (Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil), Bing Su (Kunming Institute of Zoology, China), Emma Teeling (University College Dublin, Ireland), Nicholas Vidal (Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle, France), Shizhong Xu (University of California, Riverside), Patricia Wittkopp (University of Michigan), Greg Wray (Duke University), Stephen Wright (University of Toronto, Canada) and Meredith Yeager (National Cancer Institute, Bethesda).

The new associate editors come from diverse scientific and geographic backgrounds. They bring exceptional talents and scholarships, making *MBE* a more vibrant and relevant journal. At the same time, they are filling the gap created by the departure of 16 associate editors: Patricia Beldade, Carlos Bustamante, Alexei Drummond, William Jeffery, Claudia Kappen, Yi-Ju Li*, Elizabeth (Lisa) Matisoo-Smith, Lauren McIntyre, Norihiro Okada, Hervé Philippe, Jonathan Pritchard, Sohini Ramachandran*, Neelima Sinha, Billi Swalla*, Richard H. Thomas, and Kenneth Wolfe. We are indebted to them for their exceptional service to the society and look forward to their return to service in an editorial capacity for *MBE*, including those who have chosen to take sabbaticals for a variety of personal and professional reasons (marked by a star).

Eleven new senior editors were appointed to the *MBE* BoE: Anna Di Rienzo (University of Chicago), Brandon Gaut

(University of California, Irvine), Manolo Gouy* (Université Lyon, France), S. Blair Hedges (Pennsylvania State University), Barbara Holland* (University of Tasmania, Australia), Howard Ochman (Yale University), Anne Stone* (Arizona State University), Naoko Takezaki* (Kagawa University, Japan), Jeffrey Thorne* (North Carolina State University), Arndt von Haeseler* (Center for Integrative Bioinformatics, Austria), and George Zhang (University of Michigan). Six of them were promoted from the existing group of *MBE* AEs (marked by a star).

I have requested Barry Hall and Marcy Uyenoyama to advise me on various *MBE* and publication matters, both of whom have previously served *MBE* as editor-in-chief. Their involvement will make available their wealth of experience and expertise to me, as did James Bull, Brian Golding, Richard Lewontin, and Howard Ochman to the previous *MBE* editor-in-chief. Thank you for your service to *MBE*.

I would like to thank the Oxford University Press staff for their excellent production and publication work alongside exceptional services provided by the *MBE* editorial assistant. A special thanks to Cathy Kennedy who recently retired as the publisher of OUP/*MBE* and a warm welcome to Jennifer Boyd of the *MBE* team.

I wish to close this report by expressing a deep gratitude on behalf of the SMBE Council and the community to the outgoing *MBE* editor, Marcy Uyenoyama. She oversaw *MBE*'s growth in reputation, impact, and page size. She is the one to be credited for this year's high IF, which is a result of manuscripts published in 2010 and 2011 that were handled by her BoE. Thanks to her exceptional efforts, *MBE* has succeeded in fulfilling the needs of the scientific community as envisioned by its founders. During her term, *MBE* has also made significant financial returns to SMBE, allowing the society the opportunity to support many communitywide activities, annual meetings, and young scientists. Personally, I am grateful to her for being always there to answer questions I had during this transition and to provide sage advice. *MBE* and I will benefit from her experience for years to come, as she has agreed to become an advisor for *MBE*, which again shows her commitment and drive to support *MBE* and SMBE. Thank you Marcy for all you have done and agreed to do in the future for us all.

References

- Kumar S. 2013a. Editor's inaugural message. *Mol Biol Evol.* 30:1–2.
 Kumar S. 2013b. *MBE* citation classics. *Mol Biol Evol.* 30:3–4.
 Uyenoyama MK. 2013. Editor's report for volume 28 (2011). *Mol Biol Evol.* 30:236–237.