

## Journal Status Report 2020

The Philippine Journal of Science (PJS; philjournalsci.dost.gov.ph) continues to gain ground in terms of manuscript submissions received and accepted for publication. The PJS Editorial Office has also been able to shorten the manuscript peer-review process in 2019 and then again in the first six months of 2020. The aforementioned key indicators were achieved while keeping the acceptance rate at a steady level.

**Manuscript submissions.** A total of one hundred and forty-nine submissions (149) was received in the first six months of 2020 to yield an average submission rate of  $24.83 \pm 9.00$  manuscripts per month, which is a new high. It is sixty percent (60%) higher than the monthly rate ( $15.50 \pm 9.89$ ) in 2019, and 3.97 times more than it ( $5.00 \pm 1.54$ ) was in 2015.

**Acceptance rate.** The publication acceptance rate for manuscripts received in the first half of 2020 was 55.38%, which is lower than the yearly average of  $65.62\% \pm 3.40\%$  in the past five years (2015–2019). Without exception, every submission is subjected to a single-blind review process that involves at least two independent expert-evaluators. An editorial decision is immediately issued when major mandatory manuscript revision is recommended by all reviewers during the first round. In most cases, a final decision is rendered on publication suitability after the second round of review. The single-revision policy allows the concerned corresponding authors to consider resubmitting their work elsewhere without delay.

**Duration of peer-review process.** From 2015 (62.3 weeks) to 2019 (12.98 weeks), the Editorial Office was able to reduce the average duration of its peer-review process at an average rate of minus 9.86 weeks per year. Manuscript reviews in the first six months of 2020 took an average of 10.69 weeks to complete, which is 18% shorter than the time length in 2019. The review duration is computed from the manuscript receipt date up to the time that a decision is made by the Editor-in-Chief concerning its publication suitability based on the recommendations of at least two reviewers.

**Submissions by discipline.** In 2019, the following disciplines were the top three manuscript contributors: Biology (49 out of 186 or 26.3%); Agriculture & Forestry (22%); and Nutrition, Food Science & Technology (11.3%). In 2018 and in the first six months of 2020, the same contributors were in the top three: Agriculture & Forestry (27% in 2018, 23.5% in 2020); Nutrition, Food Science & Technology (21.7%, 16.1%); and Biology (14.8%, 22.1%). Together, the top three contributors accounted for  $62.27\% \pm 1.78\%$  of the annual submissions in the last three years ending 2019. Their total constituted 61.74% of the manuscripts received in the first half of 2020.

The figures indicate that the steady rise in submissions was not skewed and concentrated in the top three disciplines but resulted from a proportionate increase in activity across a broad spectrum of research areas. Hence, the multidisciplinary character of the PJS has been maintained and there is no apparent tendency for it to become a specialized journal.

**Affiliation of corresponding authors.** More than eighty-five percent (85.9%) of corresponding authors in the first six months of 2020 were affiliated with Philippine-based institutions. The number is lower than the corresponding percentage (92.5%) in 2019. On average, the relative share of local corresponding authors in the last five years (2015–2019) was  $78.26\% \pm 6.07\%$ . In 2015, only 67% of the sixty corresponding authors were based in the country.

In the first six months of 2020, 34.23% of submissions were contributed by collaborating teams of authors from two or more higher education institutions (HEIs) or research centers, which is comparable to the yearly average of  $33\% \pm 3.17\%$  in the past five years ending 2019. Authors from 11 Philippine HEIs contributed 14.1% of all the manuscripts received in 2020 led by the University of the Philippines (UP) Los Baños (6 out of 149 or 4%), UP Diliman (2.68%), De La Salle University Manila (1.34%), and the Central Mindanao University (1.34%). In 2019, 12 HEIs accounted for 28% of the total led by UP Los Baños (21 out of 186 or 11.29%), UP Diliman (6.99%), and UP Mindanao (2.69%). The eight constituent universities of the UP System are considered separately. The figures imply that an additional number of scientists and researchers from more HEIs and research centers are choosing to publish their findings in the PJS.

In AY 2018–2019, the Commission on Higher Education accredited a total of 1,963 HEIs, including one national university (UP) and 110 other nationally funded state universities and colleges as well as 131 public institutions that are financed by local government units. A total of 362 HEIs were accredited with the highest status of Level IV in terms of the quality of the faculty, services, and facilities. Less than one percent of HEIs were offering tenable Ph.D. degree programs in science, technology, engineering sciences, and mathematics (STEM) due to the lack of qualified Ph.D. faculty to handle advanced courses and to supervise the dissertation research of STEM Ph.D. students.

***Provenance of peer-reviewers.*** More than two hundred and sixty (263) experts generously served as independent reviewers in the first half of 2020, with 59.3% of them based in the country and the rest connected with foreign institutions. Their numbers were 412 (local: 47.3%) and 250 (50%) in 2019 and 2018, respectively. The expert advice and professional vigilance of our reviewers have been invaluable in improving the scientific content and presentation quality of our published papers. Their contributions are becoming increasingly crucial as the number of manuscript submissions continues to grow. Even for unsuccessful submissions, the constructive reviews that the PJS is providing to authors are still a valuable guide for them on how to improve their work.

The PJS has been able to steadily enlarge its pool of local reviewers, thereby strengthening the practice of self-regulation and meaningful participation of more members of the domestic science community. In 2016, only 45.12% (74) of the 164 reviewers were based in the country.

***Authorship and other publication issues.*** The average number of authors per article that appeared in the first three issues of Volume 149 is 4.46, including the Special Issue on Nuclear Science and Technology that was exclusively published online in January 2020. In comparison, the numbers were 4.75 (Vol. 148) and 3.99 (Vol. 147), respectively. The total number of pages devoted to research papers was 806, 718, and 453 in Volumes 148 (in four issues plus one special issue), 147 (in four issues), and 146 (four issues), respectively. The Special Issue on Genomics was published online in October 2019. For the first three issues that were released in January, March, and June 2020, the total number is 454 pages.

The journal publisher (Department of Science and Technology) continues to waive journal publication charges for accepted articles, which are fully accessible online without subscription restriction. Due to budgetary constraints, the PJS only produces printed copies of the four regular quarterly issues per volume while publishing only the focused (special) and supplementary issues online.

***Editorial Board updates.*** Dr. Victor Amoroso was appointed to the PJS Editorial Board in January 2020 and would serve for a term of three years until December 2022. He is a *professor emeritus* of Central Mindanao University in Musuan, Bukidnon in the island of Mindanao. He earned his Ph.D. degree in botany from UP Diliman in 1983 and was elected to the National Academy of Science and Technology in 2018.

The PJS also recognizes the valuable contributions of Dr. Florencia Claveria, who served as an Editorial Board Member for many years until December 2019.

***Shared sense of purpose.*** The PJS is a peer-reviewed journal that publishes research articles that satisfy the criteria of originality, novelty, and scientific merit. It is one of the 111 journals that is indexed as multidisciplinary in the Scopus database (scopus.com). Its distinguishing role as a Filipino publication is to serve as a veritable source of information about the current state of scientific research and development in the Philippines. The PJS also functions as an instrument for strengthening the practice of self-regulation and metric-based decision-making in the Philippine science community and the society at large.

The critical milestones that were surpassed in the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century were hard-earned and made possible by the sustained contributions and continued support of many stakeholders from the journal readers, authors, reviewers, the publisher, editorial board members, and technical staff at the PJS Editorial Office and the Science & Technology Information Institute.

CAESAR SALOMA  
*Editor-in-Chief*