



Opening ASBMB publications freely to all

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We are extremely excited to announce on behalf of the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (ASBMB) that the *Journal of Biological Chemistry* (JBC), *Molecular & Cellular Proteomics* (MCP), and the *Journal of Lipid Research* (JLR) will be published as fully open-access journals beginning in January 2021. This is a landmark decision that will have huge impact for readers and authors. As many of you know, many researchers have called for journals to become open access to facilitate scientific progress, and many funding agencies across the globe are either already requiring or considering a requirement that all scientific publications based on research they support be published in open access journals. The ASBMB journals have long supported open access, making the accepted author versions of manuscripts immediately and permanently available, allowing authors to opt in to the immediate open publication of the final version of their paper, and endorsing the goals of the larger open-access movement (1). However, we are no longer satisfied with these measures. To live up to our goals as a scientific society, we want to freely distribute the scientific advances published in JBC, MCP, and JLR as widely and quickly as possible to support the scientific community. How better can we facilitate the dissemination of new information than to make our scientific content freely open to all?

For ASBMB journals and others who have contemplated or made the transition to publishing all content open access, achieving this milestone generally requires new financial mechanisms. In the case of the ASBMB journals, the transition to open access is being made possible by a new partnership with Elsevier, whose established capabilities and economies of scale make the costs associated with open-access publication manageable for the ASBMB (2). However, we want to be clear: The ethos of ASBMB journals will not change as a consequence of this new alliance. The journals remain society journals: The journals are owned by the society, and all scientific oversight for the journals will remain with ASBMB and its chosen editors. Peer review will continue to be done by scientists reviewing the work of scientists, carried out by editorial board members and external referees on behalf of the ASBMB journal leadership. There will be no intervention in this process by the publisher.

Although we will be saying “goodbye” to many years of self-publishing (115 in the case of JBC), we are certain that we are taking this big step for all the right reasons. The goal

for JBC, MCP, and JLR has always been and will remain to help scientists advance their work by rapidly and effectively disseminating their results to their colleagues and facilitating the discovery of new findings (1, 3), and open access is only one of many innovations and improvements in science publishing that could help the ASBMB journals achieve this goal. We have been held back from fully exploring these options because of the challenges of “keeping the trains running” with self-publication. In addition to allowing ASBMB to offer all the content in its journals to all readers freely and without barriers, the new partnership with Elsevier opens many doors for ASBMB publications, from new technology for manuscript handling and production, to facilitating reader discovery of content, to deploying powerful analytics to link content within and across publications, to new opportunities to improve our peer review mechanisms. We have all dreamed of implementing these innovations and enhancements (4, 5) but have not had the resources or infrastructure needed.

A critical aspect of moving to open access is how this decision impacts the cost to authors. Like most publishers that have made this transition, we have been extremely worried that achieving open-access publishing would place too big a financial burden on our authors. We are pleased to report the article-processing charges (APCs) to publish in ASBMB journals will be on the low end within the range of open-access fees: \$2,000 for members and \$2,500 for non-members. While slightly higher than the cost an author incurs now if the open-access option is not chosen, these APCs are lower than the current charges for open access on our existing platform.

Rest assured that the decisions to move to open-access publishing and to partner with Elsevier were not made lightly. Extensive deliberations took place last year among the society leadership, the journal editors, and a task force specifically assigned to do due diligence on the open-access possibility. These deliberations culminated with a decision in September that ASBMB journals would become open access, but financial analysis accompanying the decision-making made it clear that ASBMB needed a partner to pull this transition off. Several possible partners were considered, and Elsevier presented a convincing set of advantages for the journals and the society that led to its selection.

From the Editor-in-Chief, *Journal of Biological Chemistry*; Editors-in-Chief, *Journal of Lipid Research*; Editor-in-Chief, *Molecular and Cellular Proteomics*

We have been heartened throughout this voyage by the very high regard that all of those involved in these discussions have for ASBMB's publications. Even more important has been the guarantee that we will remain the editorial stewards of our journals: As mentioned above, all three journals will continue to be subject to peer review practices and policies that remain the responsibility of the scientific editorial leadership, including editors, associate editors, and editorial board members. Moreover, the dedication to rigor and reproducibility and the quality control we apply to all of our published material (3, 6–8) will not change one iota.

We hope that our community of authors and readers will join us in celebrating the brighter future of the ASBMB journals that will be ensured because of these major decisions. There will be an exciting and eventful transition to the new world order, so please watch this space and stay loyal to your journals!

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