

Journal of Public Affairs Education

**Editor's Annual Report
to the Executive Council of the
Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration**

January 2, 2024

Editors-in-Chief

**Bruce D. McDonald III
NC State University**

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This report from the co-Editors-in-Chief of the *Journal of Public Affairs Education* to the executive council of the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration covers operations and editorial activities from the calendar year 2023.¹ The report presents information about the journal's status and influence on the field and details regarding the submission and processing of manuscripts and any relevant news from the editorial office. As appropriate, we have provided information from previous years for comparison. Finally, the report lists the editorial team members and the editorial board for the reporting period.

Importance and Impact

The *Journal of Public Affairs Education* strives to be a leading journal in the field of public administration. To this end, we are undertaking efforts to improve the overall quality of the journal and our reputation throughout the discipline. Currently, the journal is indexed in the Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI). Beginning in June of this year, Clarivate, which manages the ESCI and SSCI indices, began issuing an impact factor for all indexed journals. In doing so, however, the impact factor was simplified to only one point beyond the decimal. For all prior years, Taylor and Francis manually calculated the impact factor for the journal at our request. The result of this calculation is provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Impact Factor

Year	Articles Published	Citations	Impact Factor	Rank
2017	62	28	0.452*	44/48
2018	56	33	0.589*	44/47
2019	73	60	0.817*	40/48
2020	50	73	1.460*	39/47
2021	53	129	2.434*	30/49
2022	52	130	2.5	29/49

* Estimated

The impact factor gives the average number of citations in 2022 to articles published in the journal during 2021 and 2020. We are happy to report that our 2022 impact factor for the journal is 2.5, a 2.7% increase over the estimated 2021 impact factor and a 453.1% increase over the 2018 impact factor. There were 49 public administration journals included in the SSCI. If *Journal of Public Affairs Education* was one of these journals, our estimated 2022 impact factor for the journal would place us as 29th of the journals.

In the fall of 2018, the *Journal of Public Affairs Education* was accepted for inclusion in Elsevier's SCOPUS Index, which produces an annual "CiteScore" for the journal. The CiteScore is a measurement of a journal's impact, as measured by the ratio of citations to documents over a period of four years. The 2022 CiteScore, for example, counts the citations received in 2019-2022 and divides this by the number of publications published for the same years. Table 2 provides the journal's CiteScore, along with the journal's ranking among public administration journals indexed in SCOPUS.

¹ Please note that our access to Editorial Manager was removed on December 20, 2023. All data provided in this report extend only until this day.

Table 2. SCOPUS CiteScore

Year	Citable Documents	Citations	CiteScore	Rank
2018	23	27	0.9*	95/142
2019	110	191	1.7	69/157
2020	101	209	2.1	75/165
2021	97	311	3.2	62/190
2022	91	402	4.4	50/213
2023	85	426	5.0**	---

* 2018 data is incomplete due to JPAE's accepted into the index in the fall of 2018

** As of December 31, 2023

The 2022 CiteScore for the *Journal of Public Affairs Education* is a 4.4. This means that the average article published in the journal was cited 4.4 times during the years considered for the calculation. This score also ranked the journal 50th out of the 213 public administration journals for whom scores can be calculated. This effectively places the journal in the 76% percentile of public administration outlets. In addition, the 2022 CiteScore experienced a growth of 37.5% over the 2021 score. Since we began our editorship in 2018, the journal has seen growth in the score by 388.9%. As of December 31, 2023, the journal's 2023 CiteScore is estimated at 5.0.

Part of the impact factor and CiteScore growth can be attributed to the improved quality of research being accepted for publication since we began our term. Due to page limits imposed by Taylor and Francis, we have to be more discerning in the manuscripts we accept for publication. As a result, we have begun turning some manuscripts away that would have likely been accepted under the previous editorial team. By increasing the number of manuscripts submitted to the journal and staying within the allotted page limit of the journal, we are forced to accept only the absolute best manuscripts submitted.

The improvement we have seen in the impact factor and CiteScore is significant and reflects the journal's growing standing in the field. The continued improvement of the scores, however, is slow. As the incoming editorial team continues to publish higher quality and impactful research, we expect that the scores will continue to increase. Also of importance is the role that social media plays in the journal. Previous research has suggested that scholars are more likely to become aware of and cite research that they see on their social media accounts. This highlights the continued importance of the journal's social media editor and the social media strategies.

Submissions and Turnaround Time

The total number of manuscript submissions and the mean number of days from submission until the first editorial decision is made are provided in Table 3. The table provides the annual data beginning in 2011 when records in the Editorial Manager web service began and is extended through 2023. In 2023, the journal received 102 submissions, the most submissions received by the journal in a year.

Table 3. Yearly Submissions and Mean Turnaround Time

Year	Number of Submissions	Mean Turnaround Time (Days)
2011	47	34
2012	48	43
2013	69	40
2014	94	79
2015	93	64
2016	52	51
2017	41	72
2018	96	26
2019	82	38
2020	101	32
2021	89	26
2022	87	29
2023	102	23

As Table 3 also shows, the *Journal of Public Affairs Education* editorial team has been successful at reducing and maintaining a reduced turnaround time for the processing of manuscripts. Between 2011 and 2017, the journal experienced an average mean turnaround time of 55 days. A goal of our editorial team was to maintain a quick review process of 30 days or less. During the six years of our editorship, we maintained an average turnaround time of 29 days. For 2023, we are happy to report that we maintained a mean turnaround time for the first decision on manuscripts of 23 days. As the number of submissions received by the journal has increased, finding reviewers has become a challenge. Since the pandemic started, many potential reviewers are either not responding to requests to review or responding that they cannot review due to time constraints placed on them as a result of the pandemic. As a result, we have ensured that reviewing the journal's imposition is minimized, leaving us to take a more active approach to find adequate reviewers.

Editorial Decisions

Table 4 provides the decision outcomes for initial submissions, first revisions, second revisions, and third revisions during the reporting period. As outlined in this table, in 2023, we made decisions on 95 manuscripts.

Table 4. Editorial Decisions

Decision	Initial Submission (n=98)	First Revision (n=41)	Second Revision (n=18)	Third Revision (n=3)
Desk Reject	42	---	---	---
Reject	9	2	---	---
Revise and Resubmit	35	13	3	---
Accept	12	26	15	3

We have tried to take a preemptive approach with our desk rejects in making editorial decisions on manuscripts. To preserve a positive relationship with our reviewers, we have sought to desk reject those submissions that were inappropriate for the journal or unlikely to merge from review with a favorable decision. At the same time, we have seen a dramatic increase in the quality of manuscripts being submitted, leading to higher-than-expected positive decisions.

Reviews and Referees

In 2023, the *Journal of Public Affairs Education* received 114 referee reports. The mean number of days from the invitation to review until the receipt of the review is 24.1 (or 22.8 days from the day the referee accepts the invitation). The distribution of recommendations from the reviews we received is provided in Table 5.

Table 5. Frequency of Reviewer Recommendations

Recommendation	Percentage (N=114)
Reject	10.5%
Revise and Resubmit	43.8%
Accept with Minor Revisions	21.9%
Accept as is	23.7%

We believe that the frequency of the reviewer recommendations shows a skewed relationship. Upon taking over as editors in 2018, we realized many reviewers recommended accepting all manuscripts sent to them regardless of the manuscript quality. At that time, we adjusted our assigning of manuscripts to include the use of the rating tool to indicate the quality of a review quickly. This allows us to ensure manuscripts are sent to reviewers to provide a more accurate perspective of the manuscripts. In 2023, we saw a recommendation to accept 45.6% of manuscripts, compared to 36.8% in 2022, 42.7% in 2021, 35.3% in 2020, 33.9% in 2019, and 43.2% in 2018. We have also seen a decline in recommendations to reject manuscripts. This may reflect an improvement in the quality of manuscripts submitted to the journal and efforts to desk reject manuscripts unlikely to emerge from the review process; however, it may also reflect long-standing reviewer perspectives about the kind of research that appears in the journal.

While 114 reviewer reports were received, a total of 198 review requests were sent out during the reporting period. The distribution of responses to the invitation is provided in Table 6.

Table 6. Responses to Invitation to Review a Manuscript

Response	Percentage	Subtotal
Completed Review	56.6%	
Review in Progress	6.1%	
		62.7%
Declined Invitation	17.7%	
Never Responded	16.7%	
Review Not Submitted	3.0%	
		37.4%

Editorial Team

The 2023 editorial team for the *Journal of Public Affairs Education* was:

Editors-in-Chief

Bruce D. McDonald – North Carolina State University
William Hatcher – Augusta University

International and Engagement Editor

Kendra Stewart – College of Charleston

Case Studies Editor

Sean McCandless – University of Illinois Springfield

Book Review Editor

Rachel Emas – George Washington University

Social Media Editor

Megan Hatch – Cleveland State University

Assistant Editor

Michaela Abbott – North Carolina State University

Editorial Board

Members of the editorial board for the *Journal of Public Affairs Education* serve three-year, rotating terms that adhere to the calendar year, with service beginning on January 1st in year one and ending on December 31st in year three. Each year, ten members of the editorial board end their service. To select new members, the editors-in-chief of the journal and NASAA's journal oversight committee each nominate five new members. Nominations are then subjected to confirmation by the other nominating group.

The current editorial team for the *Journal of Public Affairs Education* is:

Hunter Bacot – University of North Carolina Greensboro
Domonic Bearfield – George Washington University
RaJade Berry-James – Virginia Commonwealth University
Brandi Blessett – University of Minnesota
Erin Borry – University of Alabama at Birmingham
John Diamond – Edge Hill University
Ian Elliott – University of Glasgow
Michelle Evans – University of Tennessee at Chattanooga
Tia Sheree Gaynor – University of Minnesota
Ting Gong – City University of Hong Kong
Jeremy Hall – University of Central Florida
Myung H. Jin – Virginia Commonwealth University
Meagan M. Jordan – Old Dominion University
Jamie Levine Daniel – New York University
Peng Liu – Renmin University of China
Jeannine Love – Roosevelt University
Elaine Yi Lu – John Jay College
Craig S. Maher – University of Nebraska Omaha
Lindsey McDougale – Rutgers University
Charles E. Menfield – Rutgers University
Janine O'Flynn – The Australian National University
Rosemary O'Leary – University of Kansas
Cristian Pliscoff – Universidad de Chile
Gabriel Puron-Cid – Centro de Investigacion y Docencia
Sara Rinfert – Northern Arizona University
Edmund C. Stazyk – SUNY University at Albany
Ador Torneo – De La Salle University
Kimberly Wiley – University of Florida
Sarah L. Young – Kennesaw State University