

## Inaugural Editorial

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Each editorial transition provides opportunities both to reflect on the past and anticipate the future. For readers of *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, the recent past was especially good, and we owe an enormous debt of gratitude to Ron Roesch, the retiring Editor, for breathing life back into a faltering journal and for restoring it to vibrant good health. Thanks to Ron's extraordinary efforts, the journal at whose helm I now serve enjoys a buoyant flow of increasingly strong and diverse submissions. The incoming editorial team will have its hands full as it seeks to maintain the standards of success and excellence set by Ron and his retiring team.

Looking forward, our goal is to broaden the coverage and readership of the journal at a time when respect for applied research has increased exponentially, allowing many psych-legal researchers to publish research with practical implications in many of the "mainstream" journals read by social, developmental, cognitive, experimental, industrial, organizational, community, and clinical psychologists, as well as in a variety of journals concerned exclusively with applied research and scholarship.

Importantly, however, all of these journals are predominantly edited and read by psychologists of various stripes. With few exceptions, empirically minded legal scholars and public policy analysts are not full participants in this scholarly community. The publishing space for scholarship at the intersection of psychology, public policy, and law is especially underpopulated, with *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law* the undisputed contender for dominance. Our ambition, as the journal enters a new phase, is to solidify its reputation and dominance.

Today's challenge for *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law* is to position itself in such a way that it retains recognition as the Association's flagship journal for those psychologists who work at the interface of psychology and law while broadening its appeal to authors and readers considerably beyond the current base. Of course, *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law* must continue to publish the very best research and the most thoughtful scholarly product of psycho-legal researchers, just as it has in the past. We hope that such authors will continue to see the journal as the first-choice outlet for their best work. However, there are several crucial constituencies to which the Journal needs to appeal more aggressively than it has in the past. The first two are the most obvious—(1) empirically minded legal scholars who seek to engage the complex issues at the intersection of psychology and law

which are typically not addressed (except polemically) in Law Review journals and (2) public policy analysts and makers striving to implement policies and practices that are consistent with empirical research on human behavior. The journal also needs (3) to broaden its appeal to scholars outside the United States.

Let me briefly address each of these aspirations in turn. It is imperative to foster dialogue with, not simply dissemination to, lawyers and public policy analysts and to move beyond a relatively narrow focus on criminal justice issues. The psychology, public policy, and law space is much broader than this, and it behooves the journal to position itself as the forum for these issues and debates, as it now hopes to do.

Sixty years after the psychological and social science research communities informed the United States Supreme Court's deliberations regarding segregated education, it is timely to remember the many public policy debates regarding which psychologists, legal scholars, and public policy analysts have much to contribute. To date, *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law* has contributed effectively to debates in the criminal law and policy arenas, with attention to such issues as testimonial competence, the fallibility of eyewitness testimony, developmental differences in witness reliability, culpability, and the potential for rehabilitation. However, burgeoning empirical scholarship can and should inform public policy and civil law debates on issues as diverse as appropriate postseparation parenting plans; adoption, fostering, placement, and child welfare intervention; the inclusion of children's voices in civil law contexts (e.g., parental divorce; placement after maltreatment); reproductive rights; educational policy (especially in relation to children with special needs); mental health treatment; and involuntary confinement or treatment. Accordingly, the journal's new editorial team aims to ensure that *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law* becomes recognized as the first journal experts consult when they seek informed discussions on such issues. Whereas the journal is currently a forum in which psychologists predominantly spell out the state of knowledge about a (currently quite narrow) range of issues, in sum, we now seek to broaden both the range of issues addressed and the range of voices represented. Increasing numbers of contributions by lawyers and policymakers will not only inform debates directly but also increase the quality and relevance of the applied and basic research conducted by the psychologists they inspire and with whom they engage.

Further, and perhaps more controversially, *Psychology, Public Policy and Law* must adapt to a globalized world, seeking to become a forum not only for the North Americans (mostly psychologists living in and studying the United States) and also for the many psychologists, legal scholars, and public policy analysts around the world who have been peripheralized in the past. We are fortunate to live in an era during which English has become a universal language and we should seek to capitalize on this by

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explicitly providing a forum for issues that are of interest to scholars outside as well as within North America.

Of course, it will not be easy to succeed in these goals but they are realistic aspirations. Success will require retention of the current readership (by continuing to publish the types of high quality articles now being submitted and accepted) while expanding representation on the editorial board by scholars from outside the traditional base (more specifically, by drawing on the expertise of lawyers, public policy analysts, and scholars outside North America) and encouraging submissions by authors who are not “the usual suspects.” Experience shows us how quickly new journals can achieve widespread recognition when they occupy a crucial uncontested niche. The time is thus ripe to establish *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law* as the flagship journal, not only for psychologists working at the interface with law, but also for those at the intersection of all three disciplines.

Of course, the success of this ambition will be evident in the content published, and this very first issue provides a sampling of the new range of scholarship we hope to publish. Symbolically, the journal is also shifting to a larger page-size, a bold new cover design, and a two-column format, thereby dramatically increasing the number of articles that can be published. Other features will not

change. Authors should still submit their articles for blind review by experts in the relevant topics. The editorial team will make every effort to reach publication decisions as rapidly as possible, with the editor’s judgment informed by at least two topical experts except in unusual circumstances (as when the topic is clearly inappropriate for the journal). *Online first* will allow accepted articles to be disseminated soon after acceptance and long in advance of print publication.

Over the succeeding months, readers will see the products of the incoming editorial team’s collective efforts unfold. We hope they will enjoy what they read, welcome the array of stimulating perspectives represented, and feel increasingly motivated to submit reports of their own research and scholarship for publication in the journal. We welcome submissions on all topics that fall within the broad fields at the intersection of psychology, public policy, and law and will judge it solely on the basis of its originality and scholarly quality.

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