

Editorial

I am honored and humbled to have the opportunity to serve as the Editor of the *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences*. I have long referred to *JGSS* as “my favorite journal,” and still recall my elation when my very first submission to the journal was accepted in 1998. I am committed to upholding the journal’s high quality and international reputation by continuing to publish innovative, theoretically grounded and methodologically rigorous work that explores the most important and cutting edge issues facing social gerontologists in the 21st century. I also look forward to introducing new features and practices, to help share our valuable work with the widest possible audiences.

I recognize that I have large shoes to fill. *JGSS* has been a tremendous success under Editor Merrill Silverstein and Managing Editor Kathleen Jackson. Under Merrill’s editorship, the journal has risen steadily and steeply in terms of its impact factor, number of annual submissions, and prominence in the field of social gerontology. I will make every effort to continue to publish innovative scholarship; to uphold our upward trajectory of annual submissions; to sustain and increase our high and rising impact factor, which topped 3.0 under Merrill’s leadership; and to maintain a rapid turn-around on manuscripts, treating both authors’ and reviewers’ time with the utmost respect.

As Editor, my primary goal is to maintain and uphold the journal’s reputation as *the* premier home for first-rate scholarship on social scientific studies of aging. My view of “social sciences” is necessarily broad, encompassing scholarship from demography, economics, psychology, public health, sociology, and other related disciplines. However, our net is not so wide and diffuse as to undermine our distinctive identity and voice. The unifying core of *JGSS* has been and will continue to be its authors’ thoughtful attention to sociohistorical, economic, and cultural contexts, broadly defined. In this way, *JGSS* is distinct from yet complements the excellent scholarship published in long-time sibling publications *The Gerontologist* and *Journal of Gerontology: Psychological Sciences*, and our “youngest” sibling publication, *Aging and Public Policy*.

To continue this tradition of excellence, I will work to ensure that the journal’s content, authors, and reviewers truly reflect the field of social gerontology today. That means assembling an Editorial Board and reviewer pool that is diverse in the fullest sense of the word. That means encouraging submissions from authors worldwide, and ensuring that the journal publishes the very best scholarship on aging in North America, Latin America, Europe, Asia, the Global South, and elsewhere. That also means welcoming high-quality submissions from scholars using all methodological approaches, from ethnography to social network

analysis, from in-depth interviews to the most sophisticated quantitative modeling strategies. I will welcome articles that adopt population-level approaches, using sample survey data sets that capture all adults, yet I also encourage work focused on smaller or specialized subsamples about whom we know little, but who are important and often understudied populations, including centenarians, LGBT elders, and older immigrants. Ultimately, a manuscript’s quality and its potential to influence the discipline—not method or topic—are the factors that will determine its publication in *JGSS*.

My second major goal is to ensure that our articles are widely read, and that our readership includes and transcends our immediate community of scholars. With global public and personal interest in the “graying” of society, we social gerontologists are ideally suited to contribute to national and international conversations about aging trends, policies, and practices. The journal will facilitate this in three ways. First, one article per issue will be selected for a feature on the Oxford University Press blog; I will invite the article’s author(s) to submit a short, lively blogpost that summarizes their work for a general audience. An engaging blog can be immensely valuable to undergraduates studying aging for the first time, a caregiver struggling with the challenges of hospice care, or journalists hoping for a quick primer on a complex issue related to aging; we are precisely the people who can and should speak to these audiences. Second, one article per issue will be selected for a Policy Snapshot, a new one-page feature recapping the study’s main results (in text and easy-to-read charts) and its implications for policy and practice. My hope is that this one-page snapshot can be shared with the broad base of consumers of our work, ranging from policy makers to practitioners on the front lines of care. Third, using venues like Facebook, Twitter, and other social media sources, I hope to disseminate widely the latest cutting-edge findings to appear in our journal’s pages.

My third goal is to provide authors a venue for rapidly publishing their results. Together, we can do this by responding quickly to reviewer invitations, submitting our reviews within 3 weeks, and submitting our revised manuscripts on deadline. I also propose a new forum for quickly disseminating our work. The journal has long had a Brief Reports option, where authors are given 3,000 words (rather than the 6,000 word Original Research Report) to share their ideas. Few authors have taken up this option. I propose a rebranding, where Brief Reports are not simply shorter articles, rather, they will have their own distinctive identity. I see Brief Reports as similar to GSA’s “Late Breaking Poster Sessions,” where scholars can present results from just out-of-the-field data collection, or controversial new ideas they have tested (with only a brief conceptual

framing). Although not an option for all authors, this can be a vehicle for quickly disseminating “hot” new results via an expedited review process.

My final goal is to ensure that our journal meets the intellectual and professional needs of you—*JGSS*’s readers, authors, and reviewers. I plan to publish several special issues that reflect the interests and research areas that are rapidly emerging in social gerontology, ranging from Biosocial Intersections to Cutting-Edge Methodologies to LGBT Aging. I welcome your ideas and contributions to these issues. I also hope that the journal can play the role of unofficial mentor to junior scholars, by both engaging them as reviewers, and ensuring that the reviews they (and all scholars) receive are constructive, specific, timely, and mindful of the emotional and intellectual investment that all authors put into their work.

I look forward to working together to sustain the quality and visibility of *JGSS*. It takes a village of dedicated authors, reviewers, and editors to create a top-notch high-impact journal, and I am fortunate to have smart and thoughtful colleagues to help achieve this mission. Merrill Silverstein, the immediate past editor, has been a wonderful and honest source of information, advice, and wisdom about the journal. Judie Lieu at the GSA office and David Crotty and his colleagues at Oxford University Press have been helpful, enthusiastic and supportive, as I have peppered them with

questions, and shared my ideas to make the journal even more influential, widely read and cited than it already is. And I truly could not do my job without the assistance of the indefatigable Kathleen Jackson, whose organizational skills, smarts, enthusiasm, and good humor make her a dream Managing Editor.

I am delighted that the dedicated team of Associate Editors appointed by Merrill will continue to work with me over the next 4 years. A sincere thank you to J. Scott Brown, Feinian Chen, Jessica Kelley-Moore, James Raymo, J. Jill Sutor, and Jan Warren-Findlow for their past service; I look forward to our next 4 years. A special thank you to long-time Associate Editor Carlos Mendes de Leon who will continue to serve as a valued member of the journal’s Editorial Board. I also extend a warm welcome to new Associate Editors Philippa Clarke and Emily Greenfield. I will rely on this superb team of Associate Editors to make decisions on manuscripts in their areas of expertise, and to make decisions on manuscripts authored by past or current collaborators of mine. I also am fortunate to have an exemplary Editorial Board and pool of ad hoc reviewers. Together, we help to make one another better scholars. I am excited about the work that we will do over the next 4 years, as we shape and guide the field of social gerontology, with the ultimate (albeit ambitious) goal of publishing work that enhances the well-being of older adults worldwide.

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