

# Early Career Roundtable Discussion

---

## Morgan Baker

Moderators and participants in the Early Career Roundtable discussion enjoyed breakfast one morning during the 2017 Council of Science Editors Annual Meeting while discussing both changes to and opportunities in science publishing. The discussion not only focused on the goals of each participant but also addressed the overall workflow and management of journals within the science editing community. Three moderators facilitated the discussion: Erin McMullin, Executive Director at Kaufman Wills Fusting & Company; Merete Holtermann, Managing Editor of *The Journal of the Norwegian Medical Association*; and Shari Leventhal, Managing Editor of the *Clinical Journal of the American Society of Nephrology*. The moderators began by introducing themselves including the journals where they work and the services they provide. They represented a wide variety of careers in the science editing field and had years of experience from which they were able to draw to answer to the participants' questions. All of the moderators were hopeful about the future in scholarly publishing even though it is a quickly changing field. They focused on the opportunities that more advanced technology and increased mobility have on scholarly editors and publishers and gave advice regarding new opportunities in scholarly publishing.

Participants in the discussion included students and early-career professionals looking for more information about job opportunities or how to make the most of their current jobs. Additionally, there were participants who were contemplating a career change and were interested in learning more about scholarly editing and publishing. This diversity prompted discussions about the flexibility available in scholarly publishing and the idea that most people can find their own niche.

The moderators began the discussion by explaining that many people do not plan to work in scholarly publishing. Scholarly publishing is sometimes considered an "accidental career". Few people dream of becoming a copy editor or a managing editor of a scientific journal; however, this is likely because people do not realize that there are many opportunities in scholarly publishing. It is a common misconception that advanced degrees and formal copyediting training are required for a job in scholarly publishing. Though good language skills are appreciated, people with different talents and ambitions can find jobs in scholarly publishing to suit their interests. To find a job that fits an individual's skills and interests, the moderators emphasized the importance of

keeping options open. CSE offers many resources, including job boards and mentoring programs that highlight job opportunities within scientific publishing. The moderators also reminded the participants that they can always move up in a company and that their current job can open the door to their next job. Other advice included asking colleagues about their own jobs to learn what you would be interested in doing, and to show interest in areas you would like to work. It is important to be aware of all the possibilities to find a job that fits you best.

The discussion then shifted to working in scholarly publishing during big life changes. Some participants had ambitions to start a family, and they asked for information about working part-time or working remotely. Others were planning to move overseas for new job opportunities. In general, students and early career professionals tend to be in the midst of life changes that they should take into consideration when looking for jobs. In scholarly publishing, there are many opportunities to work remotely, which is helpful when navigating life changes. However, the moderators stressed that many companies prefer that remote employees work at the office first. Experience in the office ensures that the remote employee will understand the company workflow, and he or she will likely have built close relationships with their coworkers. Remote employees must also be disciplined and stay on task, which can be more difficult outside of an office. These caveats aside, all of the moderators agreed that the need to work remotely part-time or full-time does not put a career on hold and it has many benefits. Remote work can often be found through previous employers and there are companies that hire remote employees without in-office experience. There are also many scholarly publishing jobs available internationally. Many large journals have offices all over the world. International authors also might be interested in receiving outside expertise, providing more remote work opportunities or opportunities for editors moving to other countries.

This roundtable discussion provided a helpful overview of opportunities available in scholarly publishing, while recognizing challenges that people new to the field often face. The moderators gave advice that participants will be able to use throughout their careers in science publishing, and participants were eager to ask questions and join in the discussion, evidence that this topic is important to many CSE members. Being open to new opportunities was the overarching theme of the discussion, which was not only good advice for those new to scholarly publishing but also for those who have been involved in the field for many years.