Preface

With the introduction of COVID-19 vaccines toward the end of 2020, most people believed that life would return to normal in 2021, an optimism that was not fulfilled. As a result, frequent virtual interactions have become the norm. Despite the emergence of the Omicron variant of COVID-19, we expect that the effect will be less severe than the parent virus due to the modular nature of modern vaccine development strategies. We need affordable, simple, and accurate detection methods to contain the disease. A correlate to this issue is the need for effective therapies against COVID-19 and other emerging pathogens. We also face other critical issues regarding our environment, global health, and nutrition. These challenges necessitate the development of innovative methods, and analytical scientists are uniquely positioned to become an integral part of the solutions. Cognizance of the technological advances made in various research facilities, Current Analytical Chemistry (CAC) accepted some articles in 2021 that lay a solid foundation for developing highly sensitive sensors for biomarker detection, monitoring health, and the environment. As our way of contributing to societal needs, CAC will give priority to manuscripts received in 2022 that develop novel analytical methods for detecting viruses or infectious diseases. Equally critical are studies that present forward-looking solutions to global warming and environmental health.

In 2021, CAC received significantly more manuscripts than we could publish. This enthusiasm by authors to publish in CAC also led to the unfortunate rejection of more than 40% of the submissions at the editorial level to reduce our reviewers’ workload. While these initial decisions are disappointing, CAC is always willing to review improved versions of editorially-rejected manuscripts. If you fall in this category, we look forward to receiving an improved version of your manuscript for consideration in 2022. We implemented editorial screening in 2017 after the impact factor of CAC dropped to 1 that year. Less competitive manuscripts were returned to authors promptly for improvement or submission elsewhere. All thematic issues are now carefully vetted by the editorial team to identify submissions that meet CAC publication standards. A conscious effort to prioritize established researchers as guest editors is expected to lend credibility to all thematic issues. These efforts reversed the downward trend in 2018, with CAC impact factor trending upward from 1.000 in 2017 to 1.892 in 2020. The impressive quality of articles we have published over the past couple of years is expected to strengthen the journal’s reputation for publishing emerging analytical methods and their applications in diverse areas of human endeavors.

One area that needed improvement is the late publication of the final article with complete citation. While CAC has accelerated the publication of articles ahead of print, we have redoubled our efforts to release the final edited and fully citable version of all manuscripts accepted for publication. To address this problem, we increased the number of issues published per year from six in 2018 to nine in 2021. We have also recruited dedicated staff members to assist with screening all submitted manuscripts for compliance with editorial policies in a timely manner and continue to optimize the online manuscript submission process to achieve a high level of user satisfaction. To solidify and enhance scientific rigor, we are pleased that many pioneers in analytical chemistry have joined our editorial board. This provides additional oversight and expands the scope of papers we publish.

CAC has remained an authoritative scientific journal for over 15 years because of our authors, who send us their best manuscripts and patiently go through the extensive review process. I thank our smart reviewers worldwide who volunteer their time and expertise to refine, improve, and support many manuscripts through their invaluable comments. I am grateful to the Regional Editors, Associate Editors, Section Editors, and Editorial Advisory Board (EAB) members that continue to anchor this journal. With the recruitment of leaders in analytical science and energetic editorial board members over the last couple of years, we are filled with optimism for more vibrant, diverse, and high-quality publications in CAC in many years to come.

It is not by chance that CAC has continued to thrive since its inception in 2005. Thanks to the incredible support of the staff of Bentham Science Publishers who work tirelessly behind the scene, the logistics of managing the diverse administrative and implementation aspects of the journal have been flawless. COVID-19 pandemic did not disrupt their work. Instead, they even increased the number of issues published in 2021 at the request of our editorial committee. They are the unsung heroes of our time. Mrs. Ambreen Irshad, Senior Production Editor, and Mr. Syed Faizan Akhtar, Editorial Manager, embody the very best in this profession. Their tenacity, rigor, and insightful actions have made it possible to maintain CAC’s relevance in this ever-changing world filled with enormous challenges for analytical chemists.

I look forward to receiving your innovative manuscripts in 2022, especially those that report new ways to detect pathogens, identify biomarkers, and develop new methods to address areas of unmet needs in analytical chemistry.

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