

## WSSA P1 PUBLICATIONS BOARD REPORT JANUARY 2024

**Committee Code and Name: P1 Publications Board**

**Chair and WSSA Board Coordinator: Chris Willenborg (2026)**

**Other Committee Members:**

<b>Nathan Boyd</b>	<b>2025-S</b>
<b>Sharon Clay</b>	<b>2025-NC</b>
<b>Antonio DiTommaso,</b>	<b>ex-off 2023-P4</b>
<b>Carl Libbey, ex-off</b>	<b>2024-P8</b>
<b>Jason Norsworthy, ex-off</b>	<b>2024-P3</b>
<b>Hilary Sandler</b>	<b>2025-NE</b>
<b>Sarah Ward (co-DP)</b>	<b>2026-W</b>
<b>William Vencill,</b>	<b>ex-off 2024-P2</b>

### ***Financial Reports***

Cambridge University Press has been invoiced (Dec. 12, 2023) for the following amounts for 2024 as per our contract:

Support for journal editor stipends: \$52,000

Sponsorship Fee (for support of Outstanding Paper awards): \$6,000

### ***2024 Revenue Forecast from CUP***

The forecast total income for WSSA journals in 2024 is **\$143,273** (\$157,022 in 2023), with forecast royalties to WSSA (39%) of **\$99,273** (\$113,022 in 2023). Guaranteed payment to WSSA (80% of forecast royalties excluding BioOne) for 2024 is **\$79,778** plus **\$6,000** award sponsorship fee and **\$58,000** editorial stipend support less the **\$20,000** hosting charge. CUP has been invoiced for \$79,778.

### ***WSSA Newsletter***

Carl Libbey continued to do an excellent job as Newsletter Editor in 2023, with quarterly issues published on time. The newsletter continues to receive timely information for members, and has started to publish short summaries of manuscripts submitted by members. Several large and timely reports on the work in Washington were submitted by Lee van Wychen, and several notices on the transition of the journals to open access were also included in this year's volume.

### ***WSSA journals in 2023***

2023 was the seventh year with Cambridge University Press (CUP) as our WSSA publishing partner. This has been a fantastic, positive partnership that has been excellent for our journals and our society. The strength of this relationship was reaffirmed when Sara Ward and I visited CUP in December of 2023. While a more detailed report is provided below, it is clear we are in good hands, with a true partner who is seriously invested in our society and our publishing goals. The depth and breadth of the individuals in Cambridge is truly extraordinary. In addition, all Editors and DPs spent time in a series of strategic development sessions with the CUP Managing Editor for the WSSA journals. Topics mainly focused on submission rates, editorial board positions, journal templates, potential new article types, etc.

Over the course of 2023, we continued working with CUP editorial and production staff to update WSSA journals based on current publishing practices. This now includes inclusion of the journals in the Plan S process (initiative for open-access publishing and more transparent publishing/data procedures). As part of this, we engage in the Transformative Journals process, with a commitment to transitioning to open access in the future. Weed Technology flipped to open access in early December. Weed Science will become open access in 2024, and IPSM will follow in 2025.

### ***WSSA journal metrics in 2022 (2021 figures in parentheses)***

Clarivate Analytics impact factors released in 2023 (for the publication year 2022) showed a decline in impact factor for all WSSA journals, although only a very slight decline for Weed Science. Our journals remain well-positioned and highly regarded in all areas of weed science despite the competitive environment that exists in scientific publishing. We remain mindful of the fact that authors have more choice than ever when submitting manuscripts in the discipline of weed science, but the WSSA journals continue to offer high quality reviews in a timely manner.

Numbers of published articles increased compared to 2022 for Weed Science and IPSM and declined slightly for Weed Technology. The increase for IPSM and Weed Science reverses a decline in the number of published articles over the past couple of years.

***Weed Science*** Manuscripts submitted: 172 (160)  
Acceptance rate: 46% (40%)  
Total page number for 2022 volume: 614 (714)  
Number published articles: 60 (77)  
Mean time from submission to first decision: 44 days (41 days)  
Impact factor 2.5 (2.58)  
a. 26/88/90 Agronomy Journals  
b. 102/239 Plant Sciences Journals

***Weed Technology*** Manuscripts submitted: 154 (160)  
Acceptance rate: 60% (59%)  
Total page number for 2022 volume: 669 (739).  
Number published articles: 91 (98)  
Mean time from submission to first decision: 49 days (49 days)  
Impact factor: 1.4 (1.81)  
a. 58/88 Agronomy Journals  
b. 160/239 Plant Sciences Journals

***IPSM*** Manuscripts submitted: 60 (42)  
Acceptance rate: 53% (59%)  
Total page number for 2022 volume: 258 (159)  
Number published articles: 25 (26)  
Mean time from submission to first decision: 42 days (51 days)  
Impact factor 1.1 (1.333)  
a. 182/239 Plant Sciences Journals

**Information Posted to WSSA Website:**

Links to journal activity, press releases on the new featured journal article each issue, and WSSA Newsletters are posted on the WSSA website. Unfortunately, our long-time contract writer for these pieces, Linda Edgerton, retired in 2023. Going forward, we are pleased to be working with John Pocock, who replaces Linda. Press releases are now sent, via email, to all society members to ensure membership is kept abreast important scientific findings. Press releases are also posted to our twitter page to provide greater visibility.

**Funds spent in 2023:**

Editorial stipends: \$52,500

Outstanding Paper and Outstanding Reviewer awards: \$6,000

Payment to Linda Edgerton/John Pocock for writing featured article press and blog releases: \$3,132.50 (\$6,000 budgeted).

**Goals for 2024:**

- \* Continue our work toward the open access flip for Weed Science and IPISM journals
- \* Continue to work towards publication of the Herbicide Handbook 11e as a subscription database
- \* Continue to work towards increasing submissions and reducing time from submission to acceptance for each journal.

**Board Actions:**

Sarah Ward, Chris Willenborg  
Co-Directors of Publications  
January 2024

## REPORT ON VISIT TO CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS UK

We flew into London Heathrow arriving Monday December 3, travelled by train to Cambridge, and spent 24 hours recovering from jet lag before a lengthy series of meetings through December 6 and 7 with Cambridge University Press staff at their University Printing House headquarters. Our visit was generously hosted by Catherine Hill, our UK-based Executive Publisher at CUP who oversees publication of the WSSA journals. We also had extended in-person discussions with:

Caroline Black, CUP Publishing Director for Science, Technology and Medicine journals

Jack Macdonald, CUP Director of Library Sales

Catherine Glover, CUP Digital Publishing Partnerships Manager

Emma Williams, Senior Marketing Executive for CUP Life Sciences journals

Andrew Varney, Senior Institutional Marketing Manager

Chris Bailey, CUP Collections Commissioning Editor

Matt Day, Head of Open Research Policy & Partnerships

Our New York-based CUP publisher, Gabrielle Bauman, joined our discussions via Zoom for part of the second day. Broader discussions covered topics such as transformative agreements and impacts of open access on various stakeholders including researchers, libraries, and professional societies; competition from publishers with marginal review standards; how journals evolve to reflect changes in research communities. Specific suggestions for WSSA journals that emerged from our discussions include:

*More emphasis on publishing themed special collections of invited papers. This would attract new content, increase citations, enhance the reputations of WSSA journals as leaders in their fields, and attract more geographically diverse associated editors and authors working in emerging research areas. Chris Bailey at CUP can help us identify topics and provide logistical support.*

*Appointment of a review editor to commission and follow up on invited articles and themed collections. Given their existing workloads, WSSA journal Editors do not have sufficient time or resources to do this.*

*Consider appointing a social media editor for each WSSA journal to publicize newly published featured articles and special topics. This could provide a first step for early*

*career researchers to get involved with WSSA journals. CUP marketing staff are active on social media and can provide support.*

*Establish renewable term limits of 3-5 years for WSSA journal Editors. This would provide a regular opportunity to review workload and job satisfaction with each editor, and to develop succession plans when appropriate.*

*Provide introductory training and establish a mentoring system for new Associate Editors. This could also help recruitment to expand subject specialty and geographic diversity on journal editorial boards.*

*Identify further steps to improve author experience when submitting and revising manuscripts. CUP is currently testing the Paper Pal Preflight tool to automatically flag manuscript items needing author attention. We volunteered to trial this tool with WSSA journals.*

Overall, the trip provided an invaluable opportunity for us to interact with experienced Cambridge University Press staff working in the fast-evolving landscape of academic publishing, and to establish personal connections that will facilitate future collaboration. We will now follow up on potential initiatives at the upcoming editorial board and WSSA Publications Board meetings.

Sarah Ward and Chris Willenborg  
WSSA Co-Directors of Publications