

## Editorial: Meystre Presents Plans to Maintain and Strengthen PRL as the Premier Physics Journal

As of July 1, I have the honor and the pleasure to serve as the Lead Editor of *Physical Review Letters*, succeeding Jack Sandweiss, who carried out that task for a remarkable 25 years. Let me take this opportunity to thank Jack for his extraordinary service to PRL and to our community.

*Physical Review Letters* is the premier Letter journal that broadly covers the full spectrum of current physics research. It is community driven and has not-for-profit status, and thus aims to provide high-profile publication of important results in all areas of physics. To maintain this mission, a few years ago PRL reinvigorated its standards for publication. A Letter should do at least one of the following: (i) substantially advance a particular field; (ii) open a significant new area of research; (iii) solve a critical outstanding problem, or make a significant step toward solving such a problem; or (iv) be of great general interest, based, for example, on scientific aesthetics.

That initiative has been successful, and we thank the community of authors and referees for their adherence to our more stringent criteria. Following a temporary drop, however, PRL submissions and published articles are again increasing. While the global upsurge of physics research is to be applauded and increased submissions reflect the extremely high regard for PRL, the continued growth in journal size is unsustainable: it puts considerable stress not just on the APS editorial and production staff, but also on our referees, our editorial board (Divisional Associate Editors), and most importantly on our community, as we all are flooded with increasing amounts of information.

To address these issues and maintain the status of PRL as the flagship journal in which to publish and share our most important results, we will in the coming months implement a number of actions.

First, we will engage in an ongoing conversation with you to determine the best way forward. We will enhance our outreach efforts with increased visits to universities and research labs to follow research developments in a proactive fashion, and establish more “user friendly” interactions between authors and editors, providing the ability to “fast-track” particularly important results.

Second, it will be necessary to enforce our acceptance criteria more rigorously. We expect, in particular, to see an increase in the number of rejections without external review, to elicit stronger involvement of the DAEs in early stages of review, and to request from authors on submission a more compelling explanation why their work meets the PRL criteria.

Third, to help both authors and readers better handle the information overload, we will enhance the electronic features of the journal, providing a more “dynamic context” for articles. This will take full advantage of the extraordinary wealth of APS assets, including a hundred years of publications that are now accessible digitally.

A considerable strength of PRL is that it is community owned. But as owners, we have the responsibility to increase its value and make it stronger and better. This needs to be a collaborative effort among authors, referees, readers, and the PRL editorial staff and board. I look forward to working with all of you in achieving our goals.

[See also Gene D. Sprouse, [Phys. Rev. Lett. 111, 100001 \(2013\)](#).]

Pierre Meystre  
Editor

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