

School of Communications and Theater
Support of Journal Editorships

Rationale

Editorship of scholarly journals is a long standing, widely accepted and very cost-effective means by which SCT can; a) contribute as a major school should to the development and shaping of the scholarly agenda in the broad field of communication/mass communication or film, b) achieve high visibility for SCT and our member departments in the eyes of both the most productive faculty and the up-and-coming faculty in the field, c) build the networks and links needed to recruit the best researchers and students into our faculty and graduate cohorts, and d) enliven our intellectual environment.

It is the policy of SCT to support such journal editorships within the bounds of reason and available resources. SCT Personnel, Tenure & Promotion and other Committees are encouraged to develop policies or procedures for valuing such editorships based on their own judgments as to how much editorships contribute to such things as, a) scholarly development of the editor in question, b) impact of the editorship, c) contributions to the department, school, university and field, d) the degree to which a particular editor succeeds in using their editorship to enrich the academic experiences of our students.

Differentiation

Of course, editing any journal is in large part a “labor of love,” seldom, if ever, compensating editors for anywhere near the number of hours they, their review boards and their editorial assistants dedicate to the effort. Even within this context, however, not all journal editorships are equal. While, the importance of such editorships actually ranges along a continuum -- meaning that judgments about support for such efforts should also range along a continuum -- much can be learned from brief descriptions of the poles that anchor that continuum. Some journals, whether because of small readerships and highly specialized content or just publishers’ policies of off-loading significant portions of the costs of doing business onto editors and departments, return little or nothing to the editor, to SCT, or to Temple. Editing such journals, while commendable and consistent with [at least] the service mission of Temple University, is often best thought of primarily as a personal contribution by the editor. Such efforts are eligible for reduced levels of support from the SCT Dean’s Office which might include a class release OR research assistant [for a quarterly], OR a small stipend to help defray costs associated such things as phone, photocopying, postage or limited work-study hours. Such editorships are not eligible, however, for the levels of support normally associated with the major “national” journals that demonstrate the highest rejection rates in their respective fields

Other journals, often but not always those sponsored and/or published by the leading scholarly bodies in their respective fields; are very selective and confer great visibility and prestige on the editor in question and, by extension, on their department, on SCT and on Temple. Such editorships can play an important role in the research, teaching

and service missions of the School and University. For example, *Communication Monographs*, *Journal of Communication*, *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* or *Cinema Journal* would all be found among a select group of leading journals that anchor the high end of the continuum and, therefore, would normally be expected to warrant higher levels of support than journals farther down the continuum.

It is the intention of the SCT Dean's Office to support such editors in ways typically found at other Carnegie I-level universities including, whenever possible, a course release, research assistant [although this sometimes should be paid for by the publisher for journals at this level], limited hours of secretarial support and the possibility of occasional stipends or summer compensation in special situations.

The level of support available in a particular case is, of course, subject to the same vagaries of the economy, state funding and tuition as everything else in the university but six criteria will typically inform the decision.

- a. Prestige and visibility of the journal [as indicated by such things as academic association sponsorship, impact, length of publication, circulation, and inclusion in the CIOS/ComAbstracts/Comserve/ComIndex or CommSearch data bases].
- b. Rejection rate of the journal [reasoning that a 100 page publication with a rejection rate of 90% would require vastly more editing work and scholarly judgment than a 250 page publication with a 30% rejection rate and that the former would typically bring much more recognition to Temple, SCT, the Department and the individual editor than the latter.].
- c. Peer vs. editor/staff reviewed [reasoning that reading and deciding on a piece is substantially less work than recruiting, organizing and administering an editorial board and then reading and editing the article and synthesizing the reviews]. Blind reviewed journals are the backbone of an academic field so editorship of them is an important achievement.
- d. Technical workload [e.g., whether the editor's staff is responsible for blue lining, figures/tables/graphs, checking references, distributing and collecting galleys, and the like, or whether the publisher does some or all of these].
- e. How directly the subject area of the journal relates to the mission and interests of our department, School and University.
- f. Whether the editorship brings one or more graduate assistantships into the School with external funding [e.g., from the publisher].

Non-Academic Journals

Finally, there is the matter of other editing opportunities that arise from time to time for publications that do not fall within the scope of the scholarly journals discussed here. Most often these opportunities involve practitioner or industry/trade publications that are not primarily scholarly in nature. Although such editing opportunities will be considered for VERY LIMITED support on a case-by-case basis they do not typically make a

contribution to the research or teaching missions sufficient to warrant the strategic investment of substantial faculty, monetary or in-kind resources. There are, of course, exceptions to this general rule which is why each such case will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. It should be noted, however, that the argument that editing practitioner journal A or industry trade publication B will “will raise Temple’s [or SCT’s] visibility in a particular industry” is typically a non-compelling argument for the simple reason that equal or greater visibility can often be achieved by other means without running the risks associated with a continuing cost item, the draining-off of valuable faculty hours that could be dedicated to increased student contact, classroom innovation or research and publication, or the risk of becoming seen as a service/funding resource for industries that are better off financially than most universities.