Report to the SAS Executive Committee

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Applied Spectroscopy has run without major issues since the last Governing Board meeting in October, 2009, although one major and a number of relatively minor problems must be addressed, as discussed in this report.

In 2009, 4 accelerated papers, 165 regular articles, 11 spectroscopic technique papers, 11 Notes, and 3 Focal-Point articles were published. The total number of articles printed was 194 which is a decrease of 13 from the previous year. However, the total was not significantly different from the previous six years, for which the average number of articles published was 203, with a standard deviation of 11 (see table on page 2 of this report.) The number of manuscripts received for review was 352, which is about the same as the total for 2008 (356). The rejection rate for contributed papers and notes was 41.8% (compared with 43.5% in 2008), indicating the continuing vigilance of the editors and reviewers in requiring that papers be of excellent quality. This figure is consistent with top quality journals. Comparisons with previous year's statistics are included on the attached table.

This year, the number of papers submitted to the journal has increased. Between January 1 and August 5, 2010, 219 manuscripts were submitted, which prorates to an annual number of 368, which is higher than the previous five years. (We didn't check back further.) In the same period, 120 manuscripts were rejected. Please note that this does not mean that 120 of the 219 manuscripts that were submitted were rejected, as most of the manuscripts that were rejected were submitted in 2009. This year, for example, of the 195 standard papers that were submitted since January 1, 50 were accepted for publication and 56 were rejected, with 89 pending. Although this appears to mean that our rejection rate is greater than 50%, a good number of the papers that are still pending will be accepted, so our expectation is that the rejection rate will not change too much.

The average number of days between the time a manuscript is submitted and the time that the first decision is sent to the authors is 48 days, which is longer than both the editors and authors would like. Potential reviewers are usually contacted within three days of the receipt of a manuscript. Some respond within a couple of days, while others take as much as 2 or 3 weeks. (If we haven't heard back from an individual, they are contacted again within 2 weeks.) Despite the fact that some people respond within a day, on the average, we learn whether someone has agreed or declined to review a paper in about a week. If someone declines, we have to go through the procedure again. For some topics, we sometimes contact as many as five different potential reviewers before we find someone willing to do the review. (Summer is a particularly bad season to find reviewers, especially from Europe where many people take four-week-long vacations!) However, the biggest problem with the reviewing process is getting our more recalcitrant reviewers to send in their reviews in a reasonable time. When the original request is sent, they are asked to submit their review within three weeks. If no review has been received in that time, a "gentle reminder" is sent. This is repeated every two weeks until the review has been received. The end result is that it takes an average of 47 days from

receipt of a manuscript to the first decision. Although some papers are rejected and a few are accepted without change, most papers require major or minor revision. Minor revisions are usually made quickly but major revisions can take several months. As a result, the average time between receipt of a manuscript to the final decision is a little over two months. We would like to reduce this time by at least two weeks but have not yet come up with a good way to achieve this goal. Annual data for the past 6½ years are shown in Table 1; detailed data for 2010 are shown as Table 2. All data in Table 2 are as of August 8, as are the italicized rows marked with an asterisk in Table 1.

Table 1	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**	**2008**	**2009**	**2010** (published or accepted through Oct. issue)	**2010** (est.)
Focal Point	4	1	4	2	6	3	1	4
Accelerated Papers	2	2	2	2	1	4	4	5
Submitted Papers	190	178	183	175	174	165	147	176
Spec Techs	6	7	14	11	14	11	5	6
Notes	15	11	4	6	12	11	5	6
Correspondence	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
Feature Article	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	0
*Rejected after review**	35	50	63	50	65	67	57	96
*Rejected without review**	41	30	54	75	90	80	19	32
Total articles printed or accepted through October	220	201	210	197	207	194	163	195
Total rejected	76	80	117	125	155	147	76	128
% rejection	25.7	28.4	35.8	38.8	42.8	43.1	31.8	31.8
*Papers rcvd for review**	296	292	321	352	356	352	*219*	*368*
Actual journal pages								
*Total A-pages**	362	308	344	292	362	354	*228*	*392*
*Total manuscript pages**	1536	1590	1526	1442	1430	1442	*966*	*1663*

Table 2

Manuscript Types	Total # of Submitted Manu-scripts	Acceptance Rate (%)	Total # of Accepted Manu-scripts	Total # of Rejected Manu-scripts	Total # of Pending Manu-scripts	Days from Receipt to First Decision	Days from Receipt to Final Decision
Submitted Paper	195	47	50	56	89	48.1	65.3
Spectroscopic Technique	12	25	2	6	4	32.5	34.4
Note	9	43	3	4	2	42.1	56.3
Focal Point article	2	100	2	0	1	44.5	34.5
Accelerated Paper	1	100	1	0	0	43.0	43.0
Total	219	47	58	66	95	46.97	62.3

From Table 2 above, it can be seen that the average time from receipt of a manuscript to the time that both reviews have been received and a decision (*i.e*., accept as is, minor revision, major revision, reject) has been made is 47 days. Clearly many reviewers take an excessively long time to respond once they have agreed to undertake the review. At the Editorial Board meeting held in Louisville last October, it was decided to reduce the time that we ask that a review be submitted from four weeks to three weeks. Reminders are sent out at that time and at intervals of two weeks thereafter. If one reviewer is late but the other has sent in his/her review, we will usually accept the recommendation of the one reviewer, but only after the second reviewer has failed to send in a review after the second chaser. However, this is still an exorbitantly long time for an author to wait for the decision and only having one review reduces the quality of the journal. (This happens with fewer than 10% of the submitted manuscripts.)

The good news is that the number of days between receipt of a regular submitted manuscript and the final decision decreased from 74.7 last year to 65.3 this year.

The number and percentage of papers from countries that have submitted the most manuscripts which resulted in published papers are shown below.

	2007/8	(Total = 415)		2009/2010*	Total = 301
	Total papers	Percentage		Total papers	Percentage
USA	177	42.7	USA	119	39.5
Japan	39	9.4	PROC	34	11.3
England	38	9.2	Japan	25	8.3
France	24	5.8	England	21	7.0
PROC	21	5.1	Germany	21	7.0
Canada	20	4.8	Spain	18	6.0
Germany	18	4.3	France	15	5.0
Spain	15	3.6	Canada	11	3.7
Italy	10	2.4	Austria	6	2.0
South Korea	9	2.2	Denmark	6	2.0
Denmark	7	1.7	Switzerland	6	2.0

* Through the July issue

We are now receiving about 44% of the published papers from North America, 30% from Europe, and 22% from Asia, with the contributions from USA and Canada dropping and those from Asia (in fact from the PROC) increasing, while the number from Europe remains approximately constant. The percentage of papers submitted from PROC is now about 25%.

As noted in our previous report, all authors are asked to name up to four potential reviewers. However, if we know the names of appropriate people other than the ones who are named by the authors, we make it a practice to ask them. Some authors, especially in the developing nations, name reviewers who are from the same geographic region (and hence may be perceived by the authors to give a favorable review to a mediocre paper).

This is particularly relevant for authors from mainland China since over 20% of our manuscripts are now submitted from the PROC. The papers are usually written in marginal English and often would be very difficult for the average reader of *Applied Spectroscopy* to follow. However, if sent to another Chinese reviewer, the papers rarely receive a rating any worse than "publish with minor revision". Hence we always ensure that at least one reviewer is from North America or Europe. However, this puts an unfair burden both on these reviewers and on Rebecca Airmet, part of whose responsibility includes converting these manuscripts into acceptable English. At the meeting on Monday, October 18, the Editorial Advisory Board will be asked to discuss whether manuscripts should be rejected without review when the English is unacceptably poor.

Another area of some concern is the number of Focal Point (FP) articles published this year. Only one FP article was published through the August issue but we expect three more by the end of the year. The number of review articles has a significant effect on the Impact Factor of the journal and it is our goal that at least six Focal Point articles should be published each year. With the help of the FP Editors, Rina Dukor, Ben Smith and John Chalmers, we hope to increase the number of FP articles next year to at least 6. Attached as Appendix A to this report are the prognostications of Rina, Ben and John, from which it can be seen that we should meet or exceed this goal.

By far the worst news in this report is the dramatic drop in the Impact Factor of the journal for 2009. The statistics for 2008 and 2009 for *Applied Spectroscopy* and several other journals are shown below.

Journal	2008	2009	Change	% Change
Analytical Chemistry	*5.712*	*5.214*	*(0.50)*	*-8.7*
JAAS	4.028	3.435	(0.59)	-14.3
Analyst	*3.761*	*3.272*	*(0.49)*	*-13.0*
J. Raman Spectrosc.	3.526	3.147	(0.38)	-10.8
Anal. Bioanal. Chem.	*3.328*	*3.480*	*0.15*	*+4.5*
Spectrochim. Acta B	2.853	2.719	(0.13)	-4.6
Applied Spectroscopy	2.062	1.564	(0.50)	-24.2
J. Near IR Spectrosc.	1.822	0.991	(0.83)	-45.5
Vibrational Spectrosc.	1.810	1.931	0.12	+6.6
J. Mol. Spectrosc.	1.636	1.542	(0.09)	-5.5
Spectrochim. Acta A	1.51	1.566	0.06	+4.0

Journals covering more than spectroscopy are shown in italics.

What conclusions can be drawn from these data? As can be seen from the above table, several journals suffered a setback in their Impact Factor, but the percentage change for *Applied Spectroscopy* was the second greatest of any journal. We throw out a few thoughts on the reason for this change.

Publications like the *Journal of Analytical Atomic Spectroscopy* and the *Journal of Raman Spectroscopy* have relatively high impact factors, presumably because they cover more specialized topics. *Applied Spectroscopy*, on the other hand, covers the electromagnetic spectrum from x-rays to microwaves (not to mention NMR, EPR and a little mass spectrometry). Should we consider becoming more focused on certain spectral regions?

The lack of a viable web site is hurting the overall impression of the Society and, by extension, the *journal* as viewed by the members and the outside world. It seems that no progress has been made on the new web site since March. Certainly, almost any time that we try to use some function, it doesn't work. From the viewpoint of the editorial staff, we were significantly better off last February than we are now.

Large publishing houses, such as Elsevier, Springer, Wiley and the American Chemical Society, are able to supply libraries with a "package deal" for all the journals that they publish, whereas this is not the case for Allen Press. Authors find it much easier to access articles from journals to which their libraries have a subscription than going through sources like Ingenta, where they have to pay for a reprint.

There is one other possible cause for the drop in the Impact Factor. We were surprised to see that the IF of *Vibrational Spectroscopy* increased, even though most spectroscopists would think that the quality of the papers in *Applied Spectroscopy* is significantly higher. However, the use of color in this journal is free whereas color costs authors $600 per page in *Applied Spectroscopy*. Is it possible that authors choose to publish their more important articles in a particular journal because it doesn't charge for the use of color?

In light of the reduced Impact factor, it is surprising that the combined number of downloads from Ingenta and Optics InfoBase is *not* showing a concomitant decrease, see Appendix B.

To increase the accessibility of FP papers to electronic search systems, all FP articles now contain an abstract and key words (as do the Notes) and we plan to include the word "Review" in the header and the abstract (which is vital if FP articles are to be recognized as review articles by abstracting services.) This is vital if *Applied Spectroscopy* articles are to be more readily accessible for literature searching.

At the Publications committee meeting in March 2010, Mike Blades proposed that there may be value in striking a "Task Force" to study and offer some suggestions on the strategy for moving forward with the journal. The purpose of the Task Force would be to gather data and opinion and to make a recommendation on a strategy for addressing the issues that face the journal. This Task Force has now been set up and consists of the following people: Mike Blades (Chair), Peter Griffiths, Hide Sato, Bruce Chase, Zhong-Qun Tian, Heinz Siesler, Pavel Matousek, Frank Bright, Isao Noda, Rebecca Airmet. There has already been some productive correspondence. The Task Force will meet for the for the first time at the FACSS meeting in Raleigh and will have a report in time for the Executive Committee meeting at Pittcon next March. Among the issues that will be covered by the Task Force are the following:

1. How to improve the Impact Factor (see above).

2. How should Applied Spectroscopy respond to the appearance of new journals such as the Journal of Biophotonics that will potentially sap its author base?

3. Should the topics covered by the journal be more restricted? At the moment the question of appropriate content for the journal is determined by the Editors. Bearing in mind the emergence of China and the increasing manuscript flow from China and other developing countries, is it time to consider what is appropriate content for the journal? This is particularly relevant in light of the powerful influence of un-cited papers on the Impact Factor of the journal.

4. Open Access: Although most commercial academic publishers (including Allen Press) require that the authors of the works they publish sign all copyrights over to the journal, Congress recently mandated that all researchers funded by the National Institutes of Health retain the right to freely distribute their works one year after publication (several foundations have similar requirements). Since then, some publishers started fighting the trend, and a few members of Congress are reconsidering the mandate. Now, in a move that will undoubtedly redraw the battle lines, the faculty of MIT have unanimously voted to make any publications they produce open access. Coming up with the funds to support open access publication will be difficult. (There is no way that institutional support will become available at the University of Idaho, for example!) Nonetheless, within North America the number of institutions with open-access funds has grown from two to 15, including Calgary, Columbia, Cornell, Dartmouth, Harvard, Memorial Sloan-Kettering, MIT, Ottawa, Oregon, Simon Fraser, Tennessee, UC Berkeley, North Carolina, Wake Forest, and Wisconsin, within a two-year period.

We would like to raise one additional issue at this point. We think that it would be useful at this time to clarify the relationship between the *journal*, the Society, and its members. *Applied Spectroscopy* is published by the Society for Applied Spectroscopy, presumably on behalf of the members. However, most of the people who publish in the *journal* are not members of the SAS and it is questionable whether the content of many of the papers is actually of interest to the majority of members. This goes back to the broad range of spectroscopies that are covered in the journal in contrast to the relatively narrow fields in which most SAS members work. We would like to recommend that the Executive Committee discuss what they believe the relationship between the Society and the journal should be?

Finally, some kudos to the staff who make the journal work. We are incredibly fortunate to have LeNelle McInturff, Rebecca Airmet and Jonell Clardy as the members of the production team. They allow us to put out a high quality issue on time and on budget every month and maintain a wonderfully high standard of professionalism in their dealings with the authors.

Appendix A: Status of Focal Point Article as of October, 2010

Author	Topic	Expected Date	Editor
D. Hahn N. Omenetto	Laser Induced Breakdown Spectroscopy (two articles)	Sept. ’10	BWS
G. Hieftje	Sources, spectrometers and systems in atomic spectrometry	Confirmed in progress	BWS
D. Guenther	Laser Ablation ICP MS	reconfirmed	BWS
D. Pappas	Fluorescence Correlation Spectroscopy: Biochem., Microfluidic, and Cellular Applications	Spring, ’11	BWS
B. Denton	Current state of the art in imaging detectors	Possibly ’11	BWS
W. Kiefer	Nonlinear (ps/fs) Raman spectroscopy	Dec., ’10	JMC
S. Parker	Inelastic neutron scattering	Fall, ‘11	JMC
D. Proefrock	Quantitative analysis in environmental and life sciences with ICP-MS detection.	Spring ‘11	JMC
T. Parker S. Umapathy	Time-resolved Raman spectroscopy	Dec., ’10	JMC
T. Parker M. Towrie	Time-resolved infrared spectroscopy	Summer ’11	JMC
E. Smith D. Graham	Surface-enhanced resonance Raman spectroscopy	Summer ’11	JMC
K. Chou	Nanoscale Far-field Microscopy	April, ’11	MWB
V. Deckert	Tip-enhanced Raman spectroscopy	2011	RKD
L. Nafie Y. He, R. Dukor	Update on VCD	Jan., 2011	RKD
F. France	Hyperspectral imaging in art conservation	Fall, 2010	PRG

Subjects for which invitations have been issued in August, 2010

I. Levin	Spectroscopy: from bench-top to bedside	PRG
B. Lendl	Quantum cascade lasers	PRG
S. Xie	Stimulated Raman scattering microscopy	RKD
I. Lednev	Deep UV resonance Raman spectroscopy	RKD
D. Griffiths R. Yokelson	Spectroscopy in the study of fire	PRG
D. Pivonka	Optical activity spectroscopy in the pharmaceutical industry	RKD

Leads that have "gone stale" but might be reactivated:

B. Lendl	Quantum Cascade Lasers	PRG
J. Harris	Optical-Trapping Confocal Raman Spectroscopy of Particles	PRG
F. Van Haecke	Direct solids analysis by ETV-ICP-MS	
Robin Garrell	Microfluidics	RKD
C. Hassell	Spectroscopy in security and defense	RKD
K. Kalsinsky	Hair analysis	RKD
J. Olesik	Ion-molecule reactions in ICP-MS	BWS

Topics that could lead to a good Focal Point article but don't have an author

The Pulsed Glow Discharge: Status and Prospects

Spectroscopic Characterization of Nanoparticles

Appendix B: Download Statistics

The download statistics for Ingenta and OSA InfoBase usage for the calendar years 2005-2010 are as follows:

		2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	*2010 to date*	On pace 2010
Ingenta	Content pages viewed:					78,849	*62,713*	107,508
	Abstracts viewed:					402,777	*226,057*	387,526
	Full-text downloads:	47,672	58,843	51,673	48,370	40,167	*19,252*	33,003
OSA	Full-text downloads:	-	-	68,248	63,148	66,502	*49,201*	70,287
Total Full text downloads		47,672	58,843	119,921	106,518	106,669	*68,453*	117,348

In terms of full-text downloads, the countries with the largest number of downloads are:

	2009	*2010 (to date)*	On-pace for 2010
USA	22,790	*10,787*	18,492
Canada	2,631	*2,494*	4,275
United Kingdom	2,437	*977*	1,675
Germany	1,823	*764*	1,310
Italy	851	*525*	900
Spain	753	*415*	711
Japan	1,044	*388*	665
Taiwan	774	*325*	557
Sweden	947	*280*	480
Austria	336	*246*	422

As the table shows, the number of full-text downloads from Ingenta is showing a continued downward trend. In 2007, 51,427 full-text article downloads were provided through Ingenta. This number dropped to 48,370 in 2008 and, as can be seen from the data above, dropped again (to 40,167) in 2009. This drop has been offset by an increase in the numbers from the Optical Society of America InfoBase system. In 2008 there were 63,148 downloads of Applied Spectroscopy articles through Optics InfoBase, which increased to 66,502 in 2009 and is on-pace for 117,348 for 2010. OSA has told us that most of the downloading are accessing InfoBase through an institutional subscription.

Downloads through personal subscriptions or through download benefits (50 complimentary downloads) are generally much lower. It is likely that institutions have access to either OSA or Ingenta so this may be just a matter of how the institutions use search methodology to point to the journal source.

For comparison here is a table of statistics for OSA's other journals.

PDF Journal Downloads through Optics InfoBase: Jan 1 - July 31, 2010

Journal	PDF Downloads
Advances in Optics and Photonics	5,318
Applied Optics	545,618
Applied Spectroscopy	49,201
Biomedical Optics Express	677
Chinese Optics Letters	15,407
JOSA	70,439
JOSA A	150,175
JOSA B	147,852
Journal of Display Technology	5,519
Journal of Lightwave Technology	51,174
Journal of Optical Communications and Networking	4,233
Journal of Optical Networking	5,168
Journal of Optical Technology	7,730
Journal of the Optical Society of Korea	4,885
Optics and Photonics News	9,484
Optics Express	717,260
Optics Letters	530,426
Optics News	942