

# Editorial Note

Lawrence O. Gostin

Mr. Merrill Kaitz, who has been the director of publications at the Society during the past six years, recently tendered his resignation. Mr. Kaitz left us last December to assume a position with the AIDS Action Committee, here in Boston. As the managing editor of *The Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics* (and its predecessor *Law, Medicine & Health Care*), he was instrumental in the success of the journal, and I want to take this opportunity to wish him success in his new endeavor.

While it is sad to bid farewell to Mr. Kaitz, I am delighted to introduce our new director of publications, Mr. Michael Vasko. Mr. Vasko, the former managing editor of *Synthese: A Journal for Epistemology, Methodology, and Philosophy of Science*, a major philosophy journal, is a capable individual. His vision and management skills will considerably strengthen the Society's publication activities.

In conjunction with ASLME directors and journal staff, we have rewritten the journal's operating guidelines and procedures in order to ensure the most timely, efficient, and scholarly review process for submitted manuscripts. The new guidelines have the following features.

Respecting independent manuscript submissions, after an initial screening process, all suitable papers will be peer reviewed. Decisions will be made on the basis of the readers' recommendations. In case referees' opinions offer opposing recommendations, another reader will be sought.

The basic evaluation procedure is similar for papers

submitted for symposia proceedings. All papers will be reviewed by two readers, neither of whom are guest editors of the particular symposium. Hence, for example, if a proceedings has two guest editors, manuscripts will be evaluated on the basis of the guest editors' and the two readers' opinions.

To enhance the review process further, we have revised our evaluation forms. The basic document is now structured so that referees may provide authors with insights and suggestions for revision. Reviewers, too, will find the format beneficial, for it offers them the opportunity to examine critically and constructively the intellectual merits of the manuscripts.

We have standardized our guidelines to guest editors of symposia papers so to ensure that invited papers are reviewed in a consistent manner.

We have designed these new guidelines to encourage more scholars to submit their next work to the journal, and to promise them a rigorous, thoughtful peer review process for all manuscripts.

As for journal content, we shall continue to draw selectively on ASLME-sponsored conferences so to give the outstanding papers the widest possible circulation. At the same time, we are planning to publish nonconference symposia on important and path-breaking subjects, and we are striving to cultivate a stronger complement of independent submissions of articles, book reviews, and letters to the editor.

I invite you to write to me if you have any comments or suggestions pertinent to the continued improvement of *The Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics*.