

Reflecting on 12 Years as an *I&EC Research* Associate Editor

In 2007, my colleague, Professor Don Paul, who was Editor-in-Chief of *I&EC Research* at the time, invited me to join the *I&EC Research* editorial team. A long-serving associate editor for the journal, John Anderson, had recently stepped down, after being named President of Illinois Institute of Technology. Having been a long-time reader of *I&EC Research*, I was both pleased and honored to become an Associate Editor of the journal, and my tenure began on August 1, 2007.¹ I did not realize the very special journey that I was embarking on, how important the role of Associate Editor at *I&EC Research* would become to me, and how proud I would be of the work that my colleagues on the editorial team and I did for the journal and for the worldwide technical community. Now, 12 years later, I am stepping down from my associate editorship of *I&EC Research* to assume the Editor-in-Chief position at *Polymer*. I am profoundly grateful for the experience and opportunities stemming from my tenure with *I&EC Research* and for its role in preparing me for this next step in service as a journal editor.

Reflecting back on my experiences with *I&EC Research* over the past 12 years, I am continually struck by the hard and painstaking work that authors invest to do their research and record it in high-quality submissions to the journal. Our authors have provided an opportunity for me to become familiar with many aspects of chemical engineering research, far from my own, from across the globe. I am also extraordinarily grateful to the legions of exceptional peer reviewers who take time from very busy schedules to carefully review manuscripts and provide both the authors and me with critically important guidance regarding the quality of each submission and very valuable suggestions to improve the manuscripts.

When I began in 2007, it was a busy time for *I&EC Research* and for ACS Publications in general. We were launching web submissions of manuscripts, which would profoundly impact virtually every aspect of the publication process. In 2007, with a significant amount of manuscript processing still done using paper, the time from manuscript submission to appearance in final form was measured in months. Now, it is measured in weeks. *I&EC Research* had been on a sharply upward trend in terms of journal submissions in the years leading up to 2007. In hindsight, we were only handling a small fraction of the submissions received today, reflecting the increasing popularity of *I&EC Research* and its central role as a key outlet for recording original research in chemical engineering and related fields. The strong increase in the number of manuscripts submitted and the changing geodemographics of submissions over the past 12 years necessitated a substantial increase in the number and diversity of editors around the world. I am extremely grateful to have had a ringside seat to watch this explosive growth in a key journal in chemical engineering.

Another significant change that occurred during my tenure was ACS's implementation of iThenticate to check, in real time, for potential plagiarism issues with submitted manuscripts. Prior to iThenticate, it was exceptionally rare that

editors could identify plagiarism prior to publication. Over time, as the use of iThenticate became routine, it has clearly provided extraordinarily valuable feedback to editors and readers, who are less and less exposed to plagiarized material. It has been a real educational tool for authors to better understand what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it, which strengthens the publication process for the entire technical community. The decision to implement this process was another example of the continuous and long-term dedication by ACS Publications to raise the quality of information presented in all ACS journals, including *I&EC Research*.

In 2007, plans were being laid to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the publication of *I&EC Research* or its predecessors, which first began publication in January 1909. The 100th year anniversary in 2009 brought many special contributions to the journal, further raising its profile in the field. Another major milestone occurred in 2014 when Professor Phil Savage took over for Professor Don Paul as Editor-in-Chief of *I&EC Research*, who had served in that capacity for 27 years.^{2,3} Phil has consistently provided steady and effective leadership to the entire editorial team and has very smoothly managed the journal's rapid growth while simultaneously increasing the standards for publication in *I&EC Research* and guiding our impact factor higher and higher. Phil, it has been an honor to work with you and to witness the care and effort you put in every day to making *I&EC Research* more and more successful over time. You are a very positive role model for me as I embark on my next editorial assignment.

I want to thank the ACS Publications staff and the journal administrative staff who work behind the scenes to make every journal run efficiently and smoothly, which certainly has been the case at *I&EC Research*. Rhea and Nikki, my hat is off to you for a job superbly done. It is always a pleasure to interact with you, and I know the journal benefits enormously from your kind and careful attention to it.

Without a doubt, one of the most important and positive changes for me stemming from being an Associate Editor for *I&EC Research* was having the good fortune to have managed Ms. Carol Assadourian as my editorial assistant. After joining our team, Carol became much more than someone who simply processes journal manuscripts very efficiently and keeps me abreast of the fast-moving workflow required to perform my editorial duties. She took on additional roles and responsibilities associated with managing the day-to-day administration of my research group, which gives me more time to focus on editorial duties, to engage with undergraduate and graduate students, as well as postdocs, and to pursue research proposal opportunities that I could not have pursued without her help. Carol, words alone cannot express the depth of gratitude and thanks I feel toward you every day for your tireless, excellent, and thoughtful service.

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In closing, I am very grateful to the authors, reviewers, staff members, and the rest of the *I&EC Research* editorial team for this wonderful opportunity to participate in creating the permanent record of research for a cornerstone journal in chemical engineering. I also want to offer my best wishes for the future to the entire *I&EC Research* team and particularly to Professor Huanting Wang of Monash University, who has just joined *I&EC Research* as an Associate Editor specializing in membrane separations. Huanting is an outstanding research scientist, a kind and caring mentor, and one of the most organized and responsive people I know. All of these attributes are powerful characteristics of an excellent editor. With the current editorial team and with Huanting's addition, *I&EC Research* is in very good hands for continued growth and relevance to the worldwide scientific community. I will look forward to continuing to read *I&EC Research* and contributing to its continued success as an author, reviewer, and Editorial Advisory Board member.

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Notes

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■ REFERENCES

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