 Photonics Research emerges as a top choice for publication in photonics: editorial

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In a farewell editorial, founding Editor-in-Chief Zhiping (James) Zhou reviews the first six years of Photonics Research. © 2018 Chinese Laser Press

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Time really flies! It has been six years since I assumed the founding Editor-in-Chief position for the new journal, Photonics Research, in August 2012, then approved seven founding Associate Editors, opened its submission site in December 2012, and published its first issue in June 2013. Now Photonics Research is much more mature, so it is also time for me and the group of founding Associate Editors to pass on the editorial responsibility to a new team.

Photonics Research is a peer-reviewed, open-access partnership journal between The Optical Society (OSA) and Chinese Laser Press (CLP). The uniqueness is that it provides a much-needed opportunity for the Chinese optics community to gain global exposure for their innovative research in a high-quality international journal. It also functions as a bridge to link Chinese researchers with the rest of the world, and, conversely, to advance the presence of OSA in China. The goal was to publish fundamental and applied research in optics and photonics, and to become a preferred choice for rapid, peer-reviewed publication of high-quality research in photonics.

Just like all newly started journals, Photonics Research also experienced a low volume of submissions due to the lack of reputation in its infant stage. To ensure the new journal had high-quality papers to publish in the early issues, the editors, particularly the Editor-in-Chief, solicited manuscripts from reputable authors and conferences. Both publishing partners, OSA and CLP, actively promoted the new journal. Thanks to the authors, reviewers, editors, journal staff members, and particularly the diehard support of the photonics community, Photonics Research was able to publish 29 high-quality papers in its inaugural year in 2013. The first paper published was “Self-configuring universal linear optical component [Invited]” authored by Prof. David A. B. Miller of Stanford University [Photon. Res. 1, 1–15 (2013)].

After the first year, submissions to Photonics Research expanded rapidly: from 68 in 2013 to about 900 in 2018. In the first six volumes and 40 total issues, about 600 papers and 4000 pages have been published. The journal is indexed in SCIE and received its first Journal Impact Factor (JIF) of 3.179 in 2016. Its JIF has steadily increased since then: 4.679 in 2017, 5.242 in 2018, and ranked #10 out of 94 optics journals by JIF in the Clarivate Analytics Journal Citation Reports. This is a strong indicator that Photonics Research has been attracting and publishing papers that meet the needs and interests of the global photonics community. The journal’s reputation and influence has also risen as more and more people around the world talk about, praise, and submit to Photonics Research.

During the last six years, the photonics community has progressed on many fronts, as has the Photonics Research journal! Advances have been reported in lasers, micro-ring resonators, nanowaveguide properties, nano-optics, ultrafast optics, metamaterials, and nonlinear optics, to name but a few topic areas that continue to push forward the boundaries of photonics research. This year, the Nobel Prize in Physics was awarded “for groundbreaking inventions in the field of laser physics.” One half to Arthur Ashkin “for optical tweezers and their application to biological systems,” and the other half jointly to Gérard Mourou and Donna Strickland “for their method of generating high-intensity, ultra-short optical pulses.” Both inventions are in the heart of photonics.

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To attract the hot topics and innovative research that is making an impact around the world, Photonics Research invites Guest Editors to organize two or three feature issues per year. So far, a total of 13 special issues have been completed or are in progress. They are all photonics-centric. The special issues include Group IV Photonics (2014), Photonics Based on Two Dimensional Materials (2015), Integrated Photonics: Challenges and Perspectives (2015), Terahertz Photonics: Applications and Techniques (2016), Recent Developments in Light-Emitting Diode Technology and Applications (2017), Nonlinear Integrated Photonics: Current Status and Future Trends (2018), and Quantum Photonics (2019). It is likely that the papers published in these special issues have a much stronger influence and are better received by the community. Many special issue papers are either highly cited or most-downloaded, such as “Few-layer MoS2 saturable absorbers for short-pulse laser technology: current status and future

By spanning its scope from fundamental properties of light and its interactions with matter, to the latest developments in optoelectronic devices, to the emerging physics and applications involving quantum information, nanophotonics, and ultrafast phenomena, Photonics Research has been synchronizing with the world and staying on top of research and developments in photonics.

The “duel” management of the publishers, OSA and Chinese Laser Press, is a unique feature of the journal. The articles published in Photonics Research enjoy double exposure with the diverse marketing activities worldwide conducted by OSA and Chinese Laser Press. As a result, the citation and download numbers for Photonics Research articles are very positive and continue to increase.

The success of Photonics Research would not have been possible without the dedicated editors, composed of a distinguished international group of 23 leaders who reflect and serve the needs of authors and readers in the greater photonics community. They have been working actively in handling peer review, organizing feature issues, soliciting articles from highly reputable authors, and promoting the journal worldwide. With their efforts, Photonics Research has provided a fair review process with a rapid publication turnaround time, while aiming for high innovation in the published articles. Photonics Research also relies on the support of its reviewers, who ensure authors receive constructive feedback to improve the quality and clarity of their papers. Of course, a journal requires authors to be successful and Photonics Research has been fortunate to have a growing author base.

It is gratifying to see that Photonics Research has become a top publication choice for many researchers in China and throughout the world. Looking to the future, it is our sincere hope that Photonics Research will continue to serve the needs of the international photonics community.

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