

Editor's Note

Steven R. Aragon

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

A little over two years ago, I was offered and accepted two challenges. The first was to take over as editor of the newly named *Career and Technical Education Research (CTER)* which had a 29 year history as the *Journal of Vocational Education Research (JVER)*. The second was to follow in the footsteps of some outstanding editors, the most recent being Joe Kotrlik. At that time, I was not only faced with maintaining the momentum that Joe had established as editor of the field's top research journal but to also promote the journal under its new name.

As most of you know, that first year was a challenge. The first issue of *CTER* did not "hit the stands" until August (maybe after) of that year – about five months later than expected. We went into '06 thinking that we would be rapidly catching up on the remaining two issues and have the journal back on publication schedule within a few months. However, that did not happen. All three issues of '06 are coming out in '07.

In the beginning, I was concerned about the fact that the issues were not on schedule. After missing a few of the publication deadlines I had set for myself and the *CTER* staff, I finally stopped being bothered. The reason being, the quality of the journal was not being comprised as a result. In fact, I believe it was being strengthened.

When I took over as editor, I made a commitment to myself as well as to the ACTER Board that the manuscripts published in the journal would exemplify the rigor expected from a top-tier journal. As I look back through the issues of the journal that have been published under my editorship, including the current issue, I feel confident in saying that the manuscripts have represented this level of rigor. It is my hope that you, as readers, feel the same.

As I prepare to step down as editor of *CTER* and pass the baton to James Greenan at Purdue, there are several individuals that deserve a word of thanks for helping make this experience a positive and rewarding one. I would like to take this opportunity to publicly recognize them.

The first would be Joe Kotrlik. Joe was responsible for creating the electronic database that allowed me and my staff to effectively manage the submission and review process of each manuscript. He had created all of the various letters we used and had well-defined procedures for each step of the process. He also spent time with me teaching me the ropes of the job.

A big word of thanks goes to all of the reviewers that worked with me and my staff during these past two years. I know the hard work that goes into producing a carefully crafted, thorough, and thoughtful review. Often times, reviewers had to review manuscripts multiple times. I appreciate your willingness to engage in this lengthy process.

I thoroughly enjoyed working with the Editorial Board. The advice and encouragement was very much appreciated. I especially want to thank Neil Knobloch and Levon Esters for their work as chairs during my time as editor. I could always count on both colleagues to give me helpful and timely advice as well as support my decisions.

I would also like to thank Morgan Lewis and Oscar Aliaga who served as the managing editors during my time as editor. They demonstrated the highest levels of patience when we would send files to them that still had formatting errors. Even though we felt like we had proofed each issue several times and corrected all of the problems, they still had to be sent back to us for further updates.

I thank my department head, Scott Johnson, for the support of a dedicated RA to serve as assistant to the editor. I worked with two great individuals during these two years. It would have been impossible to fulfill my editorial responsibilities without the support of this position.

Finally, my biggest word of thanks goes to Jessica Egan and David Ortner. Jess and Dave served as my assistants during my time as editor. Both were responsible for processing manuscripts which included sending out requests for reviews and receiving completed reviews. Each in their own way, found ways of providing “gentle nudges” to individuals who were late on completing their reviews or formatting. In addition to handing the manuscript review process, they were both in charge of formatting the articles as well as the additional support materials that comprised each issue of the journal. Both Jessica and David took over the day-to-day operations of the journal which made it possible for me to focus specifically on the editorial functions of the journal. Thanks again to you both!!!

As I move into my role as President-Elect of ACTER, I look forward to working with the organization in a different role. My goal as President-Elect and President is to continue to promote rigor in CTE research both through the organization and the journal. I look forward to working with you and to seeing the organization grow!