

**A New Model for Scholarship Dissemination in Agricultural Communication, Education,
Extension, and Leadership**

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Introduction

Dissemination of results is a fundamental component of the research process (Ary et al., 2018). Most research is reported in scientific journals published by various professional societies, organizations, and institutions. These journals have evolved over time, with the Internet leading to substantial changes in the dissemination of research. The American Association for Agricultural Education's (AAAE) *Journal of Agricultural Education (JAE)* is no different (*JAE*, n.d.). Emerging trends in scholarship dissemination include open-access, open-data, publication ethics, and document/researcher ID numbers (Conrad, 2022). Social media is also now a common way to share published research (Klar et al., 2020)

In the AAAE, we have repeatedly discussed challenges related to timely publication of research, reviewer fatigue, indexing our journals, and impact factors. Given the changing landscape of scientific publishing and recurring challenges expressed within our profession, we created a new research journal, *Advancements in Agricultural Development (AAD)*, to explore how things could be done differently. The purpose of this poster is to share what we have learned so far.

How It Works

The development of *AAD* was based on thorough examinations of other journals in the field, adopting things which worked, and seeking innovative solutions to problems. Our review led us to focus on how to staff the journal, submission guidelines, and the editorial process as key components impacting the quality and efficiency of the publication process. First, we adopted a staffing model which distributes the workload over multiple people with built in redundancy in case someone is temporarily unavailable. This includes an Editor-in-Chief, Senior Editors, Editors, and Editorial Assistants. None of our staff have defined terms of service. At the time of this submission, the *AAD* staff has 8 people, split equally between editors and editorial assistants.

Second, we developed submission guidelines designed to focus on the "so what?" question with 2/3 of the allowable pages devoted to results, conclusions, and implications. We also decided to keep the total page length shorter (15 pages double spaced) to make it easier for readers and reviewers to get to the essence of the article without the undue burden of excess pages of peripherally related content. Finally, we required each article to cite research published in Web of Science journals to connect our work with the broader scientific community.

Third, we developed an editorial process designed for both efficiency and rigor. When an article is initially submitted it is reviewed by the Editor-in-Chief to ensure it fits the aims and scope of *AAD* and then proceeds to an editorial assistant to review adherence to submission guidelines and strictly follows APA style (Stage 1). So far, every article submitted has required revisions at this stage. Following revisions, each article then goes through a rigorous review from one of our editors for technical merit, which serves as the first peer review (Stage 2). Some articles are rejected at this stage; others are asked for revisions to address noted deficiencies. Fewer than 5% of submitted articles make it past this stage without revisions. Once revisions are made, an article

then goes to external peer review (Stage 3). Two reviewers are assigned and given two weeks to review. Once reviews are received, the editor managing the article makes an editorial decision (reject/resubmit/accept). Depending on the reviews, the editor is empowered to accept the article after revisions without additional peer review. Once accepted, the article is immediately sent to copyediting and then published once the page proof is approved by the authors (Stage 4). We use three social media platforms to share newly published articles and highlight previously published articles. These include Facebook (@agdevresearch), Twitter (@agdevresearch), and LinkedIn (<https://www.linkedin.com/company/agdevresearch/>).

As mentioned previously, *AAD* is an editor strong journal. Our editors all have experience as editors of other journals and are also very experienced researchers in our field. In addition to this internal experience, we seek guidance through our editorial board. We intentionally seek out established and emerging scholars with a wide range of expertise. We continue to add new board members to increase diversity of thought. Our current board has 9 members from 4 countries.

Results to Date

Detailed accomplishments can be found in Roberts et al. (2022) and Roberts et al. (2023). *AAD* has published 76 articles written by 197 unique authors representing 46 unique institutions from 7 different countries. As of January 2023, there have been 43,196 views of abstracts and 23,669 downloads of full articles. This equates to a total of 66,865 interactions with content published in *AAD*. People from 112 countries have accessed content from the *AAD* web platform.

For the calendar year 2022 (Volume 3 of the journal), we averaged 29 days to provide the initial editorial decision (end of Stage 2). The average peer reviewer completed their assigned review in 10.39 days (Stage 3). Finally, once accepted, we averaged 38 days for copyediting and getting author approval for publication (Stage 4). The largest observed delays in this process (Stages 2-4) have been slow responses from authors when resubmitting revisions or approving page proofs.

Future Plans

First, we are always assessing and improving our editorial process to provide the best experiences for both authors and readers. Second, we are continually seeking to engage new authors and readers from around the world. Third, as submissions to *AAD* increase, we will add additional editors and editorial assistants. Finally, we are making systematic adjustments to position *AAD* for acceptance into the prestigious indices of Scopus and Web of Science in 2024.

Costs/Resources

AAD operates as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Annual operating expenses include: the PKP/OJS web platform (\$1,500/year); Crossref membership and registrations (approx. \$300/year); editor travel reimbursement (\$1,500/editor per year); and miscellaneous filing fees (approx. \$100/year). An additional non-monetary cost is time as all personnel involved are volunteers. Income is generated through publishing fees (\$295/article). We want to acknowledge the Department of Curriculum and Teaching at Auburn University for paying the fee for the PKP/OJS web platform the last three years.

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