

EDITORIAL

The first issue of the Journal of Natural and Applied Sciences (JONAS) is finally out two years after its launch by the Directorate of Research and Graduate Studies (DRGS) of the University of Zambia (UNZA) as a gateway entry to the world of publications and to make their research findings available to the rest of the academic community. The rather late publication of the JONAS first issue prompted a look at its publishing process.

The JONAS is a peer-reviewed journal. Peer-reviewed journals provide a system of filtering papers based on quality and interest to the target community. This is an accepted practice in the academia where the “peer-reviewed journal” is used as a proxy for evaluating the quality of the research work itself. The path to publishing in a peer-reviewed journal has two major decision points:

- (i) The editorial board of a journal has to decide whether the submitted manuscript is within the scope of the journal before it is submitted to the review process; and
- (ii) Two or more reviewers make a recommendation about whether or not the journal should publish the paper.

So far we have received a very good response from the postgraduate students and researchers, and we are indeed grateful for the manuscripts they have submitted. The editorial board has also worked very hard to see to it that the submitted manuscripts are sent to appropriate reviewers. We wish to express our gratitude to all reviewers who have performed their duty timely and in a constructive manner. It is because of their quick and helpful comments that this first issue of JONAS has come to be. I need to point out that this first issue of the Journal includes just a few of the several manuscripts received since the launch of the JONAS. Some others are still under revision and will be published in following issues. Unfortunately, in most cases the review process has been slow and, in some cases, rendering the whole process unworkable. Remember, without the review process there will not be a reliable publication. Let me address myself to two questions as an appeal to potential reviewers of JONAS; what is the importance of publishing, and what are the benefits of being a reviewer of any journal?

Publication promotes one of the vital cornerstones of the scientific process that is the free exchange of information and growth of scientific knowledge. In fact, research is not complete until its results are published to allow the scientific community to evaluate the findings themselves. Publications foster science progress: published works are used by other scientists to expand their own work and build upon reported new findings rather than every scientist having to “reinvent the wheel”. The review process adds credibility to the publications. This is because reviews are meant to evaluate the methods used and identify any potential flaws in logic or methodology that might shed doubt on the findings. Additionally, constructive reviews give the author(s) a broader view of the work, and often suggest useful paths that the author(s) may not have otherwise taken; the reviewer may inform the author(s) of latest development in their field and may suggest adding or deleting some information. Further, the reviewer can bring to the notice of the editor any plagiarism, piracy, or already published data by others or any wrong information. Clearly, the quality of publications hinge on reviewers. As a reviewer of JONAS manuscripts, you will be contributing to the facilitation and extension of the scientific processes, of which one of the cornerstones is the free exchange of information. In this regard, we sincerely salute all the reviewers who accepted our request to review manuscripts we received, and they performed their work diligently without any form of remuneration, a demonstration of a true sense of duty and obligation to the science fraternity.

Let me conclude by highlighting some of the benefits of being a reviewer of JONAS. Most importantly, to be invited as a reviewer must be understood as recognition of your expertise and work in a given area. Reviewers are selected on the basis of sufficient knowledge in design, conduct, discussing scientific results, as well as writing scientific papers. Other subtle benefits include keeping you up to date with newly developing research in your area and before it is published in the mainstream, refreshing of your knowledge, the scientific fraternity understanding your values, the process may evoke ideas to work on, and you will spend a quality time while reviewing others and talking with other scientists through in the process. In a nutshell, an invitation to serve as a reviewer is an appreciation to your work, and therefore it is a responsibility to be taken seriously.

We look forward to continued support from colleagues submitting manuscripts and/or collaborating as reviewers. JONAS is your journal and its future existence lies in your active participation as a contributor of manuscripts or reviewer. Enjoy the first issue.

Levy Siaminwe (PhD)
Chief Editor