This report summarizes the discussions of the ISA Publications Committee in 2017 and provides information about the ISA journals based on the editors’ annual reports. Deliberations from the Committee produced recommendations for editorial teams for *International Interactions* and *International Studies Quarterly* and a proposal to increase subventions for all journals (documents provided separately).

The committee met in Baltimore on February 22, 2017. Topics of discussion included our first contract year with Oxford University Press (OUP), noting University of Connecticut’s support on ISA journal pages, and plans for the Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies (OREIS, formerly the Compendium). ISA President Brett Ashley Leeds described a special project for the committee that would result in a one-day summit in July to discuss proposals from editors and committee members about broader changes in subventions or operations for the journals. This retreat was organized in response to a proposal by a group of editors for increased subventions presented at the 2016 GC meeting, which resulted in a renegotiation of the contract with Oxford University Press (approved at the 2017 GC meeting) that included increased editorial subventions.

The ISA Editorial Summit occurred on May 12, 2017 in New York. The group discussed a new document that provides information to new ISA editors during the editorial team transition process. OUP representatives provided information about manuscript workflow, keywords, pre-prints, page budgets, staff changes, understanding usage and citation/Altmetrics data, marketing strategies (e.g. OUP blog, virtual issues), a centralized ISA family site for the journals, and the results of an author survey. Editors described various activities they had undertaken internationally to reach out to non-North American authors. The Publications Committee Chair provided the group with an overview of various financial categories used by ISA journals. We discussed whether subventions were adequate to cover essential tasks for the journals and what activities were difficult to support given current budget models. Editors were asked to submit proposals to the Publications Committee prior to the July summit. The group also discussed publishing abstracts in multiple languages\(^1\), strategies to handle reviewers who fail to respond or submit reviews, and copyright issues. We also discussed the possibility of centralizing some editorial functions through OUP’s virtual editorial office (VEO).

The Publications Committee received two proposals from the ISA editors for consideration prior to the San Francisco summit meeting on July 29, 2017. One proposal came from the editors of several journals (*ISR, FPA, ISQ, II, FPA*) and requested funds to expand *JoGSS*’ pre-submission exchange to encourage non-North American journal submissions and to support trips to international conferences to expand the audience for ISA journals. A second proposal came from the

\(^{1}\) Starting with the February 2018 issue, all print issues of *International Studies Perspectives* will include English and Spanish abstracts.
editors of *FPA* and requested additional funds to support international travel and a workshop for a potential special issue. Members of the Publications Committee, ISA President Leeds, and ISA Executive Director Boyer considered these proposals at the summit in addition to broader issues related to journal financing and operations.

President Leeds opened the discussion by noting the broad challenges facing ISA with regard to publications. Income from publications makes up a large proportion of ISA’s operating budget and allows ISA to provide many member services. Managing the peer review process to vet research is one of the main contributions of scholarly organizations like ISA. And yet, our current editorial model in which university based teams assume responsibility for editorial tasks for five-year terms is facing significant challenges. First, the job of editing is becoming more difficult and time consuming as the number of submissions to our journals continue to increase. Second, our association and the research covered by many of our journals is so diverse as to require a team approach to obtain the necessary editorial expertise. What this means is that it is no longer likely that our journals with larger submissions can be effectively edited by one person or even a team based at one university. Thus, the job of chief editor involves significant management expertise as well as academic and editorial expertise, and we are looking for many volunteer editors to staff a team for each journal bid. Second, the staffing and space required to handle a larger number of submissions increases the cost burden on universities. Given cuts in university budgets, many universities no longer see supporting association journals as a good investment. Thus, there is concern that it may be harder to recruit bids for editorships, particularly for our journals with larger numbers and more diverse submissions. While we received four bids for *ISR* in 2016, we received only one bid for *II* in 2017 and only one bid for *ISQ* in 2017, despite significant outreach aimed at identifying and recruiting potential editors. There is reason to be concerned that our current editorial model may not be sustainable.

President Leeds also noted that despite the fact that ISA has seven journals, we may not be taking advantage of economies of scale in editorial tasks to the extent we could. Similar tasks are handled by seven different editorial staffs at seven different locations, and the staff for each journal changes every five years along with the editorial change. Thus, the following questions guided the day-long discussion:

1. What do we want editors to do?
2. How much should it cost to do what we want editors to do?
3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the current model in which editorial costs are shared between ISA and host universities?
4. How might we benefit more from economies of scale in ISA journal editing?

President Leeds specifically asked the committee to consider how the current structure for journal support influences who is able to bid for editorships and who is not and how changes in technology alter what we can do collectively.

ISA journal editors were asked to call in during the morning to answer questions from the committee about the proposals that were submitted along with broader questions being addressed at the summit. The committee asked the editors to share what they believe are the tasks most essential to being an editor. While there were some differences in responses, largely the answers clustered around the areas of selecting reviewers, making editorial decisions, and writing good feedback letters. Two other things that individual editors rated as essential tasks were recruiting for diversity and promoting what the journal publishes. The committee then asked the editors what tasks they spend significant time doing that are not essential for an editor to do and could be delegated. Here editors specified copy editing, originality/plagiarism checking, and promotion/social media. The editors also noted, though, that journals have many different needs which could make it difficult to centralize these tasks for ISA journals as a collective. There would need to be strong communication between editorial staff and centralized staff performing these tasks. The committee asked editors about the success of international recruiting trips and editors noted some success although the number of manuscripts submitted was small. We discussed issues of open access. It was also noted that many universities are unwilling to provide support for academic journals and that labor and other issues are not standard globally, limiting the
potential set of editorial bids that ISA can receive. Editors described experiences with plagiarism software, large journal back-logs, and replication.

After the phone conversation with the editors, the committee considered the proposals submitted by ISA editors and brainstormed several ideas based on the morning session. While committee members were in favor of the pre-submission process, there was a general sense that we should see how well it works for JoGSS before expanding it to a broader set of journals. Committee members raised concerns about embedding this process in a larger effort to provide mentoring to ISA members and questions about where journals would find mentors for the pre-submission process. The decision was simply to provide additional overall funding to the journals, and allow editors to determine whether pre-submission programs are a priority. Additional funding for FPA was considered as part of a broader idea to increase ISA journal subventions (see separate memo with the proposal and justification for the increase). We spent considerable time looking at the budget categories and journal budgets from the previous year. We discussed editors’ essential tasks and whether ISA subventions were adequate to do those tasks, especially in situations where universities could not provide support. We noted a very large difference across journal proposals (in the tens of thousands of dollars) which stems from variance in university support. Our proposal to increase subventions seeks to establish a minimum amount of support that an editorial team would need, even in the absence of local funding.

While some committee members expressed concern that the current editorial model restricts at least lead editors to coming from institutions that can provide editorial support and that this reduces the diversity of potential editors, others argued that it is important for universities to show they support editors with financial backing, much of which is not new expenses, but space and graduate student assignments. These committee members claimed that if a university will not make any investment to facilitate editorial activity, then perhaps it is not a smart move for a faculty member of such an institution to take on such a large task. Thus, the consensus was that ISA should provide increased subventions (as detailed in the separate report with action items), but that ISA should not fundamentally change the current editorial model of shared financial support from the home institution of the lead editor and ISA/Oxford.

The committee also discussed several ideas for centralizing editorial tasks. There was discussion of hiring a copy editor/originality checker and/or a science writer who could promote articles centrally from ISA Headquarters for all ISA journals. Before considering hiring ISA employees, however, the committee agreed to learn more about the Virtual Editorial Office (VEO) service that OUP provides including cost and scope.² It may be more cost effective for some of these tasks to be handled through Oxford.

In general, the publications committee did not believe that traveling to international conferences to recruit manuscripts was an essential editorial task; the members argued that the time and funds would be better invested in other initiatives. While diversity in authorship of publications is a goal of ISA, the publications committee was skeptical that editor panels at international meetings are a cost-effective way to accomplish that. Discussion also turned to working with Oxford to increase access to ISA journals for scholars from the global south and to provide abstracts in translation, which ISP has begun doing.

The outcome of the July retreat can thus be summarized as follows: (1) The publications committee proposes increased subventions for ISA journals as detailed in the companion report. (2) The publications committee favors continuing the current editorial model of shared financial responsibility between ISA/Oxford and a rotating home institution for each journal at least for the time being. (3) The publications committee recommends further investigation of Oxford’s VEO service and other means of centralizing tasks to take advantage of economies of scale.

² JoGSS began using the VEO service in late 2017 and thus will provide a pilot test for the quality of the services and whether it is cost-effective.
In the summer, the Publications Committee also considered a request from an editor to shut down new submissions during a hiatus (vacation) period. The committee deliberated via email on two proposals: 1) whether journals could create hiatus periods and 2) whether they could set a policy of not accepting new submissions during those hiatus periods. The committee voted in favor of the first proposal and noted that it would be useful for editorial proposals to include this information in the future. The committee voted against the second proposal, preferring that journals continue to accept new submissions while on hiatus. The results of the vote were communicated to ISA journal editors.

ISA editors and their staffs each year compile a very impressive set of data that provides details regarding manuscript submissions, acceptance rates, turn-around times, manuscript reviewers, diversity in authors/reviewers, and journal’s impact scores. It is truly impressive how much thought and effort the editors and staff at each journal puts into these annual reports, and they are easily found under the Publications tab on the ISA site. We urge you to take a closer look at these individual reports housed at the ISA website. Some highlights in 2017 are detailed below.

- **Contracts:** Continued success in our contracts with Oxford University Press (OUP) and Taylor and Francis, especially OUP’s launching of the website for the Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies (OREIS, formerly the Compendium).

- **Virtual Reach:** Enhanced web presence for ISA journals through blog posts, podcasts, and virtual issues; increases in ISA journals’ article downloads and impact factors in 2016. Journals such as *FPA, IPS,* and *ISR* increased activities on Twitter and other social media outlets.

- **Submission Rates:** ISA’s journals processed over 1,800 new manuscript submissions last year, a 14% increase from 2016. Acceptance rates ranged from 8.3% to 19.5%. Several journals including *FPA* and *ISQ* took successful steps to handle the large back-log of accepted articles.

- **Turnaround Time:** Our target for ISA journals’ turnaround time is 75 calendar days. All journals were better than this standard in 2017 (ranging from 36 to 72 days), which makes our journals attractive to potential authors.

- **Female Participation in ISA Publications:** Women authors represent 24-42% of the authors for accepted articles in ISA journals in 2017, paralleling the rates for female submissions. Reviewer pools at our journals also show that gender participation closely parallels their manuscript submission rates. Moreover, the rates at which women and men decline to review is nearly equal.

- **Non-North American Participation in ISA Publications:** We see only slow increases in participation by scholars from outside the United States and Canada in ISA journals. Submissions by authors range from 14 to 54 distinct countries across the journals. Editors engaged in a variety of activities to increase non-North American submissions including panels and other sessions at international conferences. *ISP* began publishing article abstracts in English and Spanish in 2018 following successful meetings with Global South scholars in Cuba and Mexico. *JoGSS* implemented a new pre-submission exchange program to provide feedback to authors typically underrepresented in mainstream international relations journals.

- **Editorial Changes:** In addition to recommending new editorial teams for *International Interactions* and *International Studies Quarterly* (see separate documents), the Publications Committee also approved a proposed editorial change for the lead editors of *Foreign Policy Analysis* (due to Cameron Thies becoming President-Elect for ISA) and associate editorial changes for *IPS, ISQ,* and OREIS.

- **Financial Reporting:** ISA instituted a policy of requiring editorial teams to provide a financial report each summer. The publications committee received and reviewed reports for six of the seven journals; the outgoing *ISR* team did not submit a financial report. The publications committee is pleased to report that the six journals are in strong financial shape.

The state of ISA Publications appears to be very solid and trending in desirable directions in several ways. The quality of our editorial teams is excellent, the relationship with our publishers is first-rate, and the management of our journals is very sound. The readership and external impact of ISA publications continues to rise markedly, as does the number of
scholars seeking to publish with us. We are increasingly diverse in both gender and geographic terms, although we can and will continue to improve on these fronts.