

EDITORIAL: PROMOTING ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The publication of the second issue of the Journal of Natural and Applied Sciences (JONAS) of the Directorate of Research and Graduate Studies (DRGS) at the University of Zambia (UNZA) is reassuring to its authors, reviewers and readership that the journal is here to stay as one of the most important tools of natural and applied sciences research and communication. The Editorial Board of JONAS is mindful that the best way to achieve a stronger and journal of choice by researchers in the natural and applied sciences is by adding value to the manuscripts submitted to it by providing quality control through the peer-review process, improving content and presentation, and archiving to ensure that papers remain accessible. By so doing, the journal will be effective in contributing to science and engineering literature. This all depends on our ability to preserve the JONAS integrity and reader trust, a result of upholding academic integrity in all our publications.

The bedrock for the success of JONAS is therefore dependent on our ability to act with integrity. This means acts of misconduct by contributing authors, reviewers, and indeed the editors must be avoided at all times. The Council of Science Editors sponsored Retreat on the Journal's Role in Scientific Misconduct highlights some of such acts we must endeavour to avoid: examples of misconduct by scientists/authors include describing data that does not exist, forgery, misrepresenting or deliberately distorting data, suppressing data, stealing other people's ideas, violating copyright, omitting co-authors' names, including non-contributors as authors, and misrepresenting publication status; while examples of misconduct that editors and reviewers may commit include delaying the peer-review process for personal gain, publicly using confidential information, and stealing ideas (Anker, 2003). Although there is no enforcement to ensure compliance to the expected ethical behaviour by researchers, each one of us has an obligation and/or a duty to act with integrity if we truly mean well to the scientific community.

As we embark on this journey of promoting academic integrity in the JONAS publications, the editorial board shall ensure that research material published conforms to internationally accepted standards. On the part of contributing authors, we urge them to read carefully and adhere to the journal 'Instructions to Authors' in order for us to achieve short timelines for our publication process. We believe that a shorter average manuscript turnaround time is crucial in attracting article submissions, and you can help when you follow these instructions.

In this issue we are happy to publish five peer-reviewed research articles, which we hope you will find very valuable.

Levy Siaminwe, PhD
Chief Editor

Reference:

Ancker J. (Ed.) (2003), *The Journal's Role in Scientific Misconduct: Proceedings of the Council of Science Editors retreat*, Lansdowne Resort and Conference Center Lansdowne, Virginia, 7-9 November.