Bioscene: Journal of College Biology Teaching
Guidelines for Reviewers

Bioscene's mission has been to provide a forum for sharing ideas, experiences, and educational research for the membership of ACUBE and anyone interested in teaching biology at the college and university level. Being asked to review a manuscript for *Bioscene* is privilege, but it can also be a significant time commitment. The editor and members of the editorial board appreciate the willingness of all reviewers to take this upon themselves. We hope that the following guidelines help make the task easier and constructive.

I. General Policies and Procedures

Authors submit their manuscripts to *Bioscene* typically via email. The editor will select two appropriate reviewers, either one or more editorial board members or an ad hoc reviewer to review it. The editor will email the prospective reviewers with a request for review indicating the type of manuscript, these guidelines, and a timeline for returning reviewed manuscripts. Prospective reviewers should accept or decline within 48 hours of receipt.

A. If you decline the invitation to review:
- Please indicate why you are declining.
- If possible, please suggest a colleague who may be able to review the manuscript. Do not "transfer" your invitation to review the manuscript to a colleague.

B. If you accept the invitation to review:
- The editor will send the article to you electronically.
- Make sure that you can open and print out the manuscript and appropriate figures. If you have difficulty, notify the editor as soon as possible
- Check that you have the most recent submission guidelines by going to the ACUBE web site (ACUBE.org)

Reviewers are kept anonymous. However, authors' names are not anonymous unless requested by the author. Please keep in mind the following during the review process:

1. **Do not communicate with the authors during or after the review process.**
2. **The document is to be treated as a privileged document (in other words, do not share the document with colleagues or cite it prior to its being published).**
3. **Confidential remarks directed to the editor, should be delimited as such in correspondence with the editor. Avoid making statements of acceptability in the actual review, only in the email to the editor. Indicate to the editor whether the manuscript is acceptable with minor revisions, acceptable for major revisions, or not acceptable for publication in *Bioscene*.**
4. **Reviewers may not send corrections text-embedded corrections back via Microsoft Word edit. This function contains code that allows authors to identify anonymous reviewers. The review should be in a separate document that the editor will copy.**

Therefore the only code that will show will be the editor's presentation of the review.

II. The Review

The review should be organized as follows: There should be an introductory paragraph indicating suitability of the manuscript, a summary of major points of the manuscript, your general impressions of the manuscript, and any major shortcomings. This paragraph (or paragraphs, if needed) should be followed by specific, numbered comments. These may be subdivided further into major and minor points. This system will allow communication between the editor and the author, at time of resubmission. These criticisms should be presented clearly and dispassionately. A positive, yet critical perspective is desirable. Again, reviewers are asked to avoid making statements about the acceptability of the paper in suggested revisions.
The following should be considered when reviewing a manuscript:

- **Suitability:** The manuscript relates to teaching biology at the college and university level. Please keep in mind that *Bioscene* readers have expressed an interest in more articles dealing with "methods that work" either in the classroom or the laboratory.
- **Novelty:** The manuscript presents new information of interest for college and university biology educators or examines well-known aspects of biology and biology education, such as model organisms or experimental protocols, in a new way. In your criticisms, avoid dogmatic and dismissive statements about the novelty (and suitability) of the manuscript.
- **Organization**
- **Adherence of Guidelines for Submission**
- **Length**
- **Use of correct scientific nomenclature and measurements**
- **If the manuscript is a study, the appropriateness of the design and its analysis**
- **Adequacy if title and abstract**
- **Relevance and soundness of discussion and conclusions**
- **Appropriate literature citations and references list**
- **Appropriateness of figures, tables, and accompanying legends**
- **Appropriateness of appended material**

Typographical, grammatical, and stylistic errors should be pointed out whenever discovered. Reviewers, however, need not provide corrections for these.

In terms of recommending acceptability to the editor, keep in mind the following:

1. Most papers require some type of revision.
2. Rejection of a manuscript is typically the recommendation when there are obvious, serious flaws in a study; broad conclusions are drawn from small sample sizes; additional work is clearly needed; the article would be of greater interests to another audience; and there are enough stylistic, organizational, or grammatical problems that hinder a thorough critical review of the manuscript.

3. If revisions can be completed in 6-8 weeks, then a recommendation of accept with minor revisions should be the choice
4. If significant revision is needed, then recommend with major revisions. These manuscripts may be reviewed a second time to insure that reviewers' suggestions were taken into account.

Some ethical considerations ought to be taken into account during the review process. Plagiarism, missing or complete references, or hints of dual submission are problems that have surfaced with submission. The editor relies on reviewers for detecting these breaches of ethics and they should be reported to the editor. In addition, any possible conflict of interest that reviewers might have with carrying out the review should be noted when deciding to accept or decline reviewing responsibilities.