AMS Peer Review
A collaboration between volunteers and staff

Gwendolyn Whittaker
Peer Review Support Manager
gwhittaker@ametsoc.org
Volunteer Chief Editors, Editors, and Reviewers

THE PROBLEM

- 10 journals
- 13 volunteer Chief Editors and ~110 volunteer Editors
- Hundreds of reviewers
- Busy careers, limited time to volunteer
- Chief Editors and Editors must focus on content of papers, choosing good reviewers, making decisions
- AMS peer review standards and practices must be consistent from Editor to Editor, journal to journal
Volunteer Chief Editors, Editors, and Reviewers

THE SOLUTION - AMS Staff Support for Peer Review

• Each Chief Editor and Editor is assigned an AMS staff assistant

• AMS has 10 full-time Peer Review Support Assistants

• Each assistant supports at least 10 editors

• Each assistant works with editors in multiple journals

• Staff provides consistency between Editors and journals

• Staff provides continuity as Editors retire and new Editors are appointed
What Do AMS Peer Review Assistants Do?

Assistants are responsible for routine peer review tasks

- Provide weekly status reports to Editors, keeping them on schedule
- Send reviewer invitations
- Remind reviewers and authors of deadlines
- Check reviews for anonymity
- Proof Editor decision letters
- Respond to questions from authors & reviewers
- Ensure that new Editors are familiar with AMS expectations
- Ensure that all Editors learn of new developments
Authors, Editors, and Reviewers: Supported by AMS assistants

AUTHOR submits: AMS assistant checks for formatting and other requirements

CHIEF EDITOR determines if paper is suitable for the journal and which Editor should be assigned: Chief’s assistant tracks Editor workloads, provides details if paper is a resubmission, enters assignments into system

EDITOR chooses reviewers, makes decisions: AMS assistant invites and reminds reviewers, handles author and reviewer questions, keeps peer review on schedule, makes sure all details are correct before decisions are finalized
AMS “Editorial Manager” Submission System: An Essential Tool for Volunteer and Staff Collaboration

- Authors use system for all new submissions and revisions
- Reviewers use system for all reviews
- All information on every paper is in the system for Chief Editors, Editors, and AMS staff
- Many automated tasks save time for Editors and staff (reminders, scrubbing file properties for anonymity)
AMS “Editorial Manager” system: more benefits for AMS peer review

- The system is a database of potential reviewers shared by all the journals - every new author becomes part of this reviewer database

- AMS can use standard publishing tools such as CrossCheck and ORCID, and to adopt new tools as they emerge

- Ongoing software development: new features are provided every few months

- Reporting tools: we can generate standard performance statistics by editor, by journal, across journals

- Authors and reviewers experience a consistent interface across AMS journals
Training Volunteer Editors: What do editors need to know?

- AMS Policies
- Chief Editor expectations
- How to manage peer review process
- Submission system details
- How to keep papers on schedule
Training Volunteer Editors

• AMS staff work with AMS Publications Commissioner and Chief Editors on editor training

• Training Goals:
  • Ensure new editors understand expectations of Chief Editors and AMS
  • Provide all editors with information on policies, practices, changes to submission system
AMS Editor Training Resources

Training for new Editors:

- Initial training via web conference
- Close contact with AMS assistant as new editor works on first papers

Training for all Editors:

- Mentoring from Chief Editor
- AMS web pages (resource for authors, editors, reviewers)
- Editor Guide newsletter (monthly)
- Editor Resources web page (for Editors and staff)
- Some journals have periodic conference calls with the journal Chief and all Editors and assistants
AMS Peer Review

Authors, Editors, and Reviewers are expected to uphold the high standards set by AMS journals.

AMS is pleased to provide staff to help fulfill this expectation.