**BU Women’s Research Network**

**“Top Ten Things to Consider in Order to Get Published”**

**April 27, 2010**

**2:00-3:00 p.m**

**Room 043 Health Studies**

**Dr. Deborah Poff, from an editor’s perspective:**

She has been an editor or on editorial boards all her career.

She co-founded the Journal of Business Ethics, with Alex Michalos. It started as a small quarterly journal. Because ethics in business was a hot topic, it turned into a huge journal. It is now a large time commitment. It is interdisciplinary, and peer reviewed. The Financial Times picked it up as a Rank A Journal for Financial Times 40 – meaning it is a leader in the world. Articles are blind reviewed.

She started the Journal of Academic Ethics in 2002. This was, and still is, a quarterly journal, blind review form too, but not ranked.

She also has/does sit on editorial boards, including the Atlantis, a Women’s Studies Journal.

1. At what level do you wish to get published?

She mentioned these to note that journals differ. You must decide at what level you wish to get published. Some journals are not ranked. Some are of learned societies, in various countries. Some are peer reviewed. Some are Rank A, which indicates they also have a higher rejection rate, about 90%. Some reviewers are offensive. Your article will have more impact if published in a ranked journal – meaning it automatically goes on all citation indexes.

If at an early state in your career, it is important to get published, quickly, and to get people reading your material, so likely you will not wish to publish in a Rank A journal.

1. How well do you know the journal and its type of articles?

For example, the Journal of Women’s Studies publishes short articles, with themed issues. That type of journal would be a place to start.

1. Ask people to reach and comment before you submit your articles.

Dr. Poff mentioned/believes that women are not mentored as well as male grad students. They/you must develop your own groups to ask for feedback. Women are self-effacing. Men are bolder – they will write to famous people to ask for feedback and to ask if good enough. Now Dr. Poff does it – asks feedback from those who’ve published in the field. For example, she asked a U of Indiana prof for advice on one of her articles – she knew it was missing something but couldn’t put her finger on it. He noted that she had a gap in her argument at a certain stage. Then she was able to fix it.

1. Ask the Journal questions, such as: what is your rejection rate? Are you actively seeking submissions? Ask of the editor or the managing editor. Make your questions brief. Know that they will not likely answer long, or involved questions.
2. How will you/do you respond to criticism?

Think about how you will respond. She generally 1. Gets mad. 2. Then puts it away for a day. She’s found it a good idea not to respond in a knee jerk fashion when hurt and angry. 3. Think about how you can reasonably respond. Editors don’t expect you to change all. Write out what you’ve addressed from Reviewer A, and then Reviewer B, etc, and why you disagree with point 1, 2, etc. Submit this cover letter with your re-submitted manuscript. It will save the editor a lot of time, not having to go back to the original article and figure out what was changed. 4. DON’T review the reviewers! Such negative responses go to the bottom of the pile. Do not make it difficult for the editor. Reviewers should be helpful.

Questions:

1. Do the revised manuscripts go back to the reviewers? Dr. Poff noted that she doesn’t usually send them back to the reviewers if revisions are minor, but if they are major, she will likely.

2. If funded by a college to do research and you wish to publish, to whom do you submit stuff first? Dr. Poff noted that it depends on your contract with the funding agency. Maybe they have asked for the publishing rights. Or maybe it’s sufficient to include a footnote in the published article, acknowledging the funders. The question asker asked if it was alright to call Dr. Poff back tomorrow. The answer was yes.

3. Dr. Poff noted that most editors belong to COPE, an organization for ethics in publishing, and they take an oath to behave ethically.

Dr. Poff then left to go to her next meeting – the defense by the last of the graduate students for whom she is a reader.

**Dr. Bernadette Ardelli, from a science researcher’s perspective:**

Bernadette noted that she was using power point because, with her Italian background she needed something to keep her from talking too long! She noted that many of Dr. Poff’s points she agreed with, and were part of her presentation.

1. Five year strategic plan
2. Risk factors
3. Certificates
4. Data collection and analysis
5. Highly qualified personnel
6. Software
7. Journals
8. Drafts
9. Submission
10. Reviewers responses

Bernadette noted that for NSERC applications, they put 1/3 – 1/3 – 1/3 of the weight on the Applicant, the Proposal and the HQP (highly qualified personnel). For the applicant, this means they look at their peer-reviewed journal articles, any book chapters, etc.

1. Five year strategic plan: She needs money to do research, so plans for 5 years, 10 years and 15 years. She came here from McGill, where she was spoiled – all was taken care off – all she needed to do was the research. Now she is more of a lab manager. She looks for money from NSERC (National Science & Engineering Research Committee) for research, from CFI for equipment, and from others like the WHO and Bill Gates Foundation for other funds. For the NSERC grant, she set herself five objectives and experiments and possible number of actual publications. For each project she has a timeline and the number of publications she thinks she can get from each. She aims to squeeze all the information possible from each project – she must be practical.

2. Risk factors: To explain her concept of “risk factors”, Bernadette used her WHO funding as an example. This was/is a very long term project, because it involved working with a human population. It took a long time for all the ethics approvals, about two years. And the study dealt with a migratory population in Ghana, Africa, thus participants may not be there for return data collection. This was a “high risk project”. Now she chooses quick and dirty, but necessary, research. Especially if you are a new researcher, it is important not to select high risk projects. You need publications out quickly. As you gain publications, you can get involved in the high risk type ones, but combine then with easy to accomplish other goals, so you have publications coming out regularly.

3. Certificates: For research with human and animal populations, most journals require evidence/copies of your ethics approval. This is Tri-Council Policy. For example, even if taking blood samples from humans, you must have ethics approval.

4. Data Collection: Bernadette analyzes her data from the first collection. She has found if she waits until all is collected, it is a daunting task. She starts writing immediately too – doing the literature review, writing the materials and methods sections and creating and arranging the results and figures.

5. Highly Qualified Personnel: These refer to the post docs, masters students, PhD students, research technicians and undergrads that work on the research. Bernadette prefers to use PhD students and undergrads, rather than going for adjunct status at another institution to have access to masters and post docs – she prefers having assistants on site, so she can check on them daily and keep them on track. Post docs know how to write – that is an advantage. To work with undergrads, you must know their limitations. She has to work out the kinks in the method/process herself, and asks the undergrads to run the samples (thousands of them!) and collect the data. They are able to do a good job because she can train them. For literature searches, she does them, then asks the undergrads to get the literature and write up a summary for each.   
Don’t make promises you can’t keep to assistants – that is, don’t promise publications with their names on them, unless you can follow through.

6. Software: She found that much of the software she needed was not available at BU. So she used San Diego super computer to run her analyses. She has used all of her PDA at BU to purchase necessary software. Managing citations is time-consuming – she uses “reference manager” software, such as “endnote” or Adobe Professional. She would like to see a list of software held by BU researchers that could be shared.

7. Journal: When picking a journal to publish in, consider:

(i) impact factor

(ii) review turn around time

(iii) data submission – do they wish you to submit your data?

(iv) guidelines – you must follow the journal’s guidelines for formatting, etc

(v) declarations – if the article has multiple authors, some journals require that all sign declarations.

(vi) your contribution – many journals ask that you specify what your contribution was to the paper.

8. Draft copy: get a colleague to read the draft(s). She also puts it away for a week and come back with fresh eyes.

9. Submission: actually send it off.

10. Reviewers’ Responses:

(a) Remember – the reviewer is your friend.

(b) She responds to every comment, noting the changes made, and justifying when she doesn’t change.

(c) Be polite and courteous.

(d) Respond with your revisions within the time limit they specify.

**Dr. Di Brandt, from a creative writer’s perspective:** Dr. Brandt adheres to these guidelines:

1. Spend 95% on writing, and 5% on getting published.
2. Do not send out until it’s ready and you’re ready. Ask others to read it – preferably not close friends or family. Decide when you’re ready to defend it to the world.
3. Attend as many conference presentations/readings as possible.
4. Read, write, start over, revise 🡪 repeat these steps several times. She has heard some who have rewritten thirty times.
5. Her secret recipe – put your ass on the chair and your hands on the keyboard.
6. Give yourself one hour restorative “nothing time” per day, to allow your brain to create.
7. Join a group reader/pen pal group – not your mother or best friend.
8. Stop every day when you still have something to say – that will start you off tomorrow. She tended to finish what she had begun, each day, but has found this technique of “not finishing” makes it easier for her to get rolling the next day.
9. Keep your eyes and ears open at all times and record and file the snippets. They come in handy when you get down to writing.
10. Don’t be too earnest or serious.
11. Either tell the truth, or lie through your teeth (for creative writing!). No have ways, or small lies.
12. If you are bored, so will be the reader.
13. Never apologize! But do your very best!
14. Do spiritual pushups.
15. Take a good look at obstacles.
16. Choose magazines/journals that resonate with you. See inside the front cover of the magazine for contact information – the address and the right person (up-to-date).
17. If it’s your first submission, ask for their feedback.
18. Publishing creative works is tough now. The best seem to be avant-garde small ones.
19. Be persistent because it is tough for creative writers to get published right now.
20. Responding to reviewers – she has argued her points – *after* the article was accepted for publication. She fought hard for her first book to keep her content/format/style. She spoke to one famous author and found she had caved to publishers wishes and rewritten the ending of her book – Di didn’t like it; asked for the original version, which she did like – and managed to get the original version into an article she wrote (since the original publishers declined to publish a new version of the book with the original ending). Choose your battles. Some regret not fighting hard enough.

Questions and Comments:

Fran Racher: noted:

1. For impact factor in Health Studies, she consults Pubmed and Seenow (I’m not sure of this spelling at all – KN).
2. After several papers (20), then she got a backbone. She wrote to the editor about a particularly rude reviewer, and did receive an apology.

Karen Clements: enjoyed the range of presenters, as well as the concrete suggestions from all.

Di Brandt: noted that if you choose to publish in a small, avant-garde journal/magazine you will need to explain your choice and translate its importance in your application for tenure and promotion.

As well, in creative writing, there are no blind reviews. Explain in your application that this is the normal procedure in the creative arts. And explain how the significance of publications/performances is evaluated in the creative arts.

Bernadette: noted that once you’ve started publishing, if you are asked to be a reviewer, consider it – she notes that it has made her a better writer.

Fran noted that when making promotion and tenure applications, use appropriate language / language that puts things in the best light. For example, one group in health studies referred to a member’s work as a Manual, whereas it really was a book and would receive greater recognition if called a book.

Notes by Kathleen Nichol

Typed on May 3, 2010