

Editorial Board Meeting Record:

June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2009

V-R Meeting Room, 11<sup>th</sup> Fl. UNU, Tokyo, Japan

9pm - 10pm JST

Participants:

Japan Editorial Office:

Kazuhiko Takeuchi, Fukuya Iino, Darek Gondor

USA: Braden Allenby, William Clark, Jeffrey Steinfeld

Japan: Keisuke Hanaki, Mikiko Kainuma, Nobuo Mimura,  
Takashi Mino

China: Gang Yu

Australia: Jim Falk

Ghana: Edwin Gyasi

Switz.: Peter Edwards

Germany: Peter Wilderer

Meeting Chair: Fukuya Iino

## 0. Prof. Takeuchi, Editor-in-Chief, makes opening statement

See (Prof Takeuchi's opening remark.doc)

### 0.1 Member introductions

Members introduced themselves

## 1. Editorial Process

- *Darek Gondor read an overview of the Editorial Process for Sustainability Science, including the online submission and review process, and the responsibilities of editors.*

### COMMENTS FROM THE BOARD

**J. Steinfeld:** - in preparing the Special Feature Issue (v. 4 no. 1), the editorial office which was then at Todai was very effective in contacting reviewers, sending out various correspondence items, keeping records, etc. -- much more so than if I had even attempted to do this. I fully expect that the office at UNU will be at least as efficient. So I am pleased with Decision (1), that this can still be handled at the editorial office with the role of advisors / associate editors being to propose reviewers, evaluate reviews, etc.

**E. Gyasi:** - 'System of navigation may prove difficult for people from developing countries (especially Africa) to apply because of inadequate computer facilities. Therefore, simplify it for them'

**P. Edwards:** - sometimes editorial process not friendly, even some resignations – improve friendliness or it won't work. Need a fast process.

**G. Yu:** - shorten editorial process to build up reputation.

**J. Falk:** - Editorial Office should be prepared to speed it up.

**Decision:**

- 1. Keep editorial process as quick as possible, and allow for paper (mail) submissions if necessary (EO to add to IR3S, Springer website)**
- 2. Work with Springer to improve online software, making it more user friendly (EO)**

## 2. Journal Content Analysis

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- *Chair gave an overview of the Journal scope, download statistics, online deals, and an analysis of the types and origins of articles published in the journal (See detailed discussion topics.doc, Editorial Board Meeting.ppt, img.jpg files)*

### COMMENTS FROM THE BOARD

**W. Clark:** - may be a conflict of interest due to my editorship of PNAS/Sustainability Science, but 2 concerns about scope: too broad, and too indefinite. There is little mention of env. policy, science of natural systems. PNAS did a review to see where good papers in sustainability science were published, and found that no one journal publishes more than 3% of the best articles. IR3S, Sust, Sci. should think about a tighter focus to capture a niche in which it is the journal of choice. I

**E. Gyasi:** - failure to integrate ecosystems, not just human, but natural systems – integrate this into focus.

**W. Clark:** - agree with Prof. Gyasi, env. Systems must be included. Lots of good papers out there about human / env. systems but the niche not filled is one that focuses on the interactions of both of these.

**P. Edwards:** - but this is a very difficult thing to do. Most scientists still focused in their disciplines. Should be the focus of this journal. Requires training editors and reviewers in selecting and commissioning manuscripts. At the moment, there are not enough review articles to bring up impact factor. This is a very important point.

**P. Wilderer:** - articles are about various topics, not focused.

**W. Clark:** - we do precisely that at PNAS to formulate a clear concept.

**K. Takeuchi:** - Would you be able to prepare a concept note for us?

**W. Clark:** - I can say now that the discipline is driven by problems that need solutions, so we need problem driven research providing for human well being. Focus should be on human / env. interactions. We get about 500 submissions and many are good but if they do not incorporate various disciplines we turn them away. [Here is the statement of scope we use at PNAS: "Sustainability science" is an emerging field of research dealing with interactions between human and environmental (social and natural) systems. Within this domain, sustainability science focuses on research inspired by the

challenges of sustainability: meeting the needs of a much larger but stabilizing human population while conserving the life support systems of the planet and substantially reducing hunger and poverty. This new section on “Sustainability Science” in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS) seeks contributions reporting original research on both the fundamental character of interactions among humans, their technologies, and the environment, and on the utilization of such knowledge to advance sustainability goals relevant to water, energy, health, habitation, agriculture and ecosystem services. The section welcomes research addressing spatial scales from the global to the local, and drawing on a wide range of both disciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches.”

**E. Gyasi:** - lack of awareness this journal exists. Special attention should be paid to Africa and free copies sent to relevant institutions and libraries. When looking at the list of articles published, disappointed none from Africa. We need to find a way to encourage writers from Africa.

**W. Clark:** - Sustainability important in the developing world even more than elsewhere, is journal available to them? Springer may not be looking for solutions in this area.

**K. Takeuchi:** - Open access is available to Sustainability Science through the Developing Country Initiative, including Online Access to Research on Environment (OARE):

[http://oare.oaresciences.org/content/en/login\\_warning.php?name=Sustainability+Science&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.springerlink.com%2Fopenurl.asp%3Fgenre%3Djournal%26issn%3D1862-4065](http://oare.oaresciences.org/content/en/login_warning.php?name=Sustainability+Science&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.springerlink.com%2Fopenurl.asp%3Fgenre%3Djournal%26issn%3D1862-4065)

**J. Steinfeld:** - I would just like to suggest that a good contact for expanding coverage in Africa would be Philip Osano, an alumnus of the Y.E.S. program. You can get his contact information from Roger Baud, YES office, ACTIS GmbH, Zurich Switzerland.

### **Decision:**

- 1. Adjust the scope of the journal to be more specific or to capture a niche that isn't being exploited elsewhere by publishing about systems interactions instead of compartmentalized research that looks towards the knowledge of a single discipline for answers. Example could be to focus on needs of the developing world (EO compiles, and send to Advisors for approval, edits)**
- 2. Try to solicit review articles that are more likely to increase impact factor (EO, Editorial Board)**
- 3. Find a way to encourage more involvement from Africa and raise awareness by sending promotional material and free copies to select institutions (EO, Editorial Board)**

### 3. Journal Promotion

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**W. Clark:** - That (OARE) is great but the information is not easy to find in the promotional material. Open Access should be one of the reasons people have this journal bookmarked, and authors want to contribute.

**G. Yu:** - In places in China many research is happening on sustainability but not many are aware of this journal. Send me some promotional material and I can distribute it to some colleagues. Perhaps we can all contribute at least one article.

**J. Falk:** - More specific issues should be targeted to explore development and sustainability themes, especially for Africa and Asia, such as economics, population growth, and desertification. We can kill two birds with one stone by telling developing countries' educational / research institutes to submit, and also that they have free access.

**K. Hanaki:** - happy there will be an impact factor next year. I've been with the journal from the beginning, and we would be glad to have more contributors from outside Japan in the future.

**M. Kainuma:** - sustainability issues more important in developing countries, and in Japan as well, so happy to see papers from those regions. I am also leading some related projects, so maybe a paper can result from that.

**N. Mimura:** - opportunity to discuss this at COP 15 and other international forums, so if there are some brochures, they can be distributed there.

**J. Steinfeld:** - there is an American Chemical Society National Meeting scheduled for Boston, Mass. in August 2010 at which there will be an ACS Presidential Symposium on Sustainability Education. Some of the brochures will be very helpful in publicizing the journal there, and if Springer comes to the trade exposition at that meeting they may even want to have a table outside the meeting room.

**K. Takeuchi:** - promotional copies can be sent to advisors when they feel they can present them to someone interested in the field and who may want to contribute / subscribe.

*- Chair put out call to advisors to share with us events where Sust Sci. can target awareness. If there are no more comments I would like to invite Prof. Takeuchi to close the meeting.*

**K. Takeuchi:** - Thank you all for sharing your comments, we will try to adjust the scope of our journal to become more focused and will send you meeting minutes for your approval. I would like to organize such a conference once or twice a year from now on. I also hope to see many of you personally at the AAA meeting next year. Thank you.

**Decision:**

- 1. Re-design Springer and IR3S websites to make sure open access information is available and easy to find (IR3S, EO, Springer)**
- 2. Call for board members to send Editorial Office information on events of interest (Advisors)**
- 3. Editorial Office will send some informational material to Advisors to distribute, or display at their institutions (EO)**
- 4. Ask for a brochure from Springer / IR3S (EO)**