

### Abstract

Publishing opportunities for undergraduate students continue to grow, particularly in university-hosted, student-led open access journals. The MacEwan University Student eJournal (MUSE) is a recent initiative that involves undergraduate students from across disciplines at every level of the publication process, from solicitation of submissions through to blind peer-review, and dissemination. These students are each actively involved with faculty mentors, affording them the opportunity to work alongside experienced academics while gaining insight and knowledge about the ways in which scholarly and creative publications are managed.

Drawing on the experiences of those involved with MUSE, along with related efforts of other undergraduate research publications, this poster describes in detail ways that journal managers can work to ensure meaningful and sustainable faculty engagement in student journals. This includes best practices for recruiting faculty mentors, and effective means of providing necessary support to ensure a worthwhile and engaging experience for faculty and students alike during every stage of the publishing process.

### Faculty Mentored Student Publishing

Venues that publish scholarly work by undergraduates are increasing (Council on Undergraduate Research, 2011), particularly in open access journals supported by the widespread use of open source publishing software Open Journal Systems (<https://pkp.sfu.ca/ojs>), and the hard work of faculty and student volunteers. The experiences of undergraduates engaged in these publishing initiatives are well documented, highlighting benefits that include:

- Gaining experience in the final stages of professional research: peer review and dissemination.
- Opportunities to improve upon communication skills through receiving feedback and presenting work to a real audience.
- Producing publications for inclusion in CVs and grad school applications. (See for instance Hart, 2012; Omans, 2014; Pritchard & Thomas, 2010; Walkington & Jenkins, 2008.)

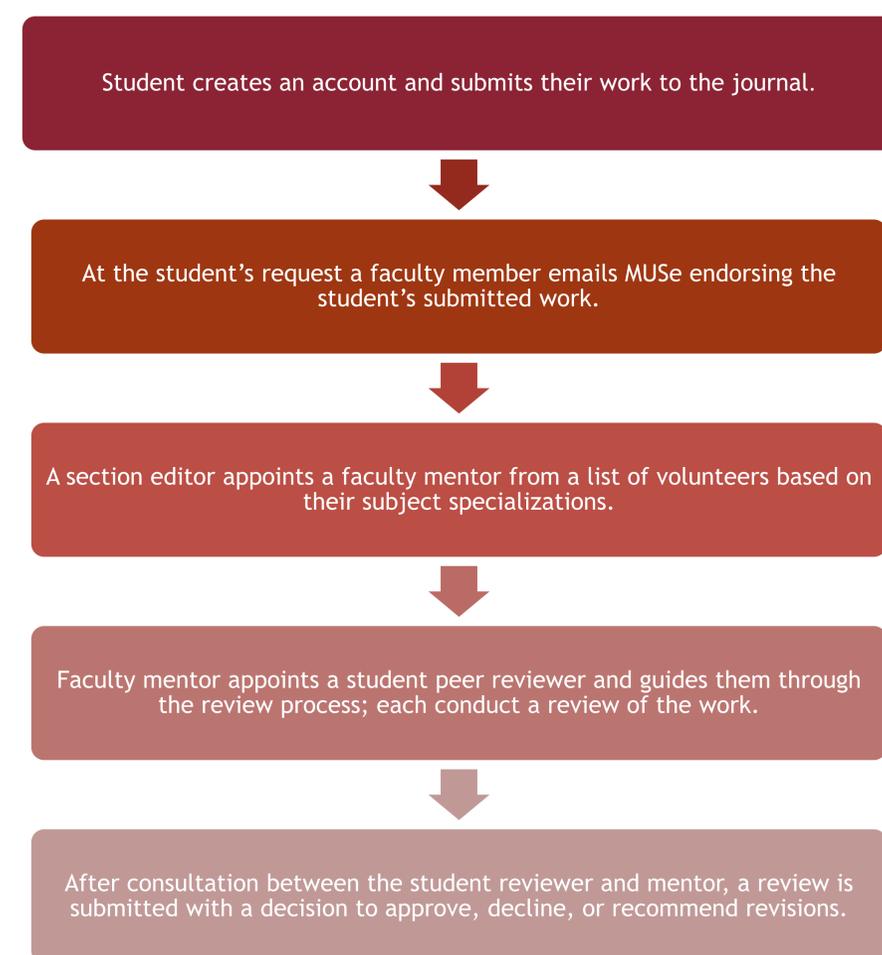
However, very little attention has been given to the involvement of academics who commonly champion and guide these initiatives. The publishing model used by the *MacEwan University Student eJournal (MUSE)* provides a vantage point for better understanding how faculty members can be meaningfully involved in undergraduate publishing, and how their involvement can lead to enriched teaching and learning experiences for students and faculty alike.

While students sit on the MUSE Editorial Board, conduct peer-reviews, and provide copy-editing services, faculty serve the following roles:

- **Manager**- Oversees the general operations of MUSE.
- **Editor**- Works with the Editorial Board to ensure academic quality.
- **Section editors**- 5 faculty members sit on the Editorial Board representing MacEwan's faculties and schools; each oversees the review process for submissions from their respective areas.
- **Faculty mentors**- Discipline-appropriate faculty appointed by section editors to both conduct and help guide students through peer review of works.



### MUSE PUBLISHING MODEL



### Recommendations

#### Faculty involvement helps ensure sustainability

At undergraduate institutions student turnover is frequent. Faculty involvement with student journals is therefore beneficial because of the ongoing commitment they can provide. To help ensure MUSE's sustainability, faculty members on the MUSE Editorial Board serve two year terms, while the Director of Research Services and a library representative serve indefinitely and provide ongoing administrative and technical support. MUSE also has a modest budget to support a journal manager.

#### Tips for recruiting faculty

- Ask for recommendations from currently involved faculty members. Approaching recommended faculty to be involved with MUSE directly has proven much more effective than sending out general calls for volunteers.
- If seeking student reviewers, connect with faculty familiar with submitted work as they can help with finding someone appropriate for the task.
- Gather and circulate testimonials from those who have worked with a student journal to attract interest and involvement.

#### From peer review to publication, process matters

- To produce an institution-wide journal, having members from all areas of the University participate on the Editorial Board and with the peer review process helps ensure fair representation and distribution of workload. MUSE also has a cap on how many submissions can be published from each faculty or school per issue to ensure equal representation.
- Clearly explain peer-review processes to avoid misinterpretation. For instance, with MUSE some faculty mentors completed reviews themselves without involving a student while others failed to fill out the appropriate review form, all having not carefully read emailed instructions. (Conducting user-testing of a journal site can help avoid such problems.)
- Be clear with all involved about the quality and type of work that is sought; undergraduate student journals like MUSE publish exceptional *student work*, not professional-level academic scholarship.
- Since much of the work that goes into student journals is undertaken by volunteers, recognizing their efforts and thanking them for their service is an important consideration. MUSE is planning a launch party when the first issue is produced in Fall 2014 to honour everyone who has contributed.

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