Research institutions, professional societies, and scientific publishers must make a unified commitment to addressing the perverse incentives created by the current hypercompetitive research environment. The American Society for Microbiology (ASM) recognizes this dangerous cultural problem and is continuously implementing new initiatives to enhance scientific and publishing integrity to address this problem. It is essential that we discourage this hypercompetitive ideology by emphasizing and rewarding instead a culture of rigor, transparency, data sharing, and meaningful evaluation of science.

The ASM American Academy of Microbiology organized a colloquium and published a report entitled "Promoting Responsible Scientific Research." In response to this report, ASM has developed an ethics portal and ethical guidelines for authors. ASM journals follow the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) and Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) guidelines. ASM realizes how important it is that publishers help authors understand best practices and be trained in ethical handling of publications. After a manuscript is accepted for publication, it is analyzed for potential data manipulation and plagiarism. Further, ASM takes allegations of scientific misconduct seriously and investigates these claims thoroughly. Following the Code of Federal Regulations and ASM policy, we pursue allegations of publishing misconduct made within 6 years of publication in an ASM journal but will not comment on allegations made on public websites or through social media. In this regard, ASM and Molecular and Cellular Biology (MCB) have analyzed publications where a reader(s) brought to our attention potential image concerns. After ASM staff independently confirmed the allegations, the authors were contacted and are currently working with ASM and MCB to correct the scientific record.

We note that ASM has eliminated the journal impact factor (JIF) as an evaluation metric from their journals, focusing instead on publishing high-quality science that is rigorous. ASM journals are trusted, authoritative, and scientist run. Though the ultimate responsibility lies with the institutions and researchers to educate the next generation of scientists in the ethics of research and publishing, scientific publishers have a contributing and important role in the maintenance and integrity of the scientific record.