

EDITORIAL

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Many of you reading these words will have been attracted by the discussion paper [McShane and Wyner (2011)], in which case, this may be the first, but hopefully not the last, time you will have read anything in a statistics journal. I would like to take this opportunity to discuss the review process in our journal and to make some comments about the role of statistics and uncertainty assessment in paleoclimatology and the broader debate about climate change.

Most papers that are published in this journal, including McShane and Wyner (2011) are sent by an editor (in this case, me) to an Associate Editor who then seeks the input of one or more referees. The referees write reports giving their opinion of the work, including recommendations for how it might be improved if it were to be published. Taking into account the reports of the referees and his or her own reading of the paper, the Associate Editor generally writes an additional report and makes a recommendation to the editor as to the suitability of the paper for publication in the journal. In addition to synthesizing the opinions of the Associate Editor and the referees, I look through the paper myself and often add my own commentary to those of the other reviewers and make a decision about the publication status of the paper. Even when the recommendation is favorable, we generally request revisions and, in fact, during my term as an editor, I have not accepted a single paper without asking for at least some changes.

When an editor accepts a paper, it does not mean that the journal or the individual editor personally endorses or agrees with it. Indeed, we commonly publish papers that one or more of the reviewers, including the editor, will disagree with in part. Acceptance of a paper reflects our opinion that the work represents a meaningful contribution to applied statistics, broadly construed, and that the authors have made a good faith effort to respond to the concerns of the reviewers.

McShane and Wyner (2011) received a careful reading by two referees, an Associate Editor and myself. All four of us made detailed comments about aspects of the paper that we wanted to see changed before we could recommend publication in *The Annals of Applied Statistics*. The authors undertook an extensive revision of their work and the paper was reviewed again by all of the original reviewers as well as by Tilmann Gneiting, an incoming editor at the journal and, after additional minor changes, I accepted the paper.

Because of the obvious interest in this paper's subject matter, I decided to make it a discussion paper. After consulting with some members of the editorial board