

## Journal Review

# Building Healthy Academic Communities Journal

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## 1. Journal Information

Journal Name: [Building Healthy Academic Communities Journal](#)

Journal URL: <https://bhacjournal.org/index.php/BHAC>

ISSN (if applicable): 2573-7643

Wayback Machine URLs: [Building Healthy Academic Communities Journal Homepage](#), [About the Journal](#), [Policies](#), [Editorial Team](#), [Contact](#), [Author Guidelines](#), [Archives](#), [ISSN Portal](#) | [BHAC](#), [HealthyAcademics.org](#) | [2013 Homepage](#), [HealthyAcademics.org](#) | [2023 Homepage](#)

Dates of Wayback Snapshots: 2013-01-13, 2023-10-05, 2023-10-24, and 2023-10-25

## 2. Reviewer Positionality

Erin Owens, Professor - Associate Director of Library Public Services and Scholarly Communication Librarian at Sam Houston State University

I frequently assist researchers on my campus with identifying a high-quality journal whose scope accommodates a given manuscript. My personal and professional values, coupled with my knowledge and expertise around the economics of publishing, contribute to my preference for open-access journals with no author fees. Although this journal fits that category, I believe my biases will not skew my objective review. I recently assisted a researcher seeking to publish a manuscript within this journal's scope, and this journal was one of five that I suggested as promising venues. That encounter made me aware of the journal and interested me in contributing my review of it. I have no specific expertise in the health and wellness topics which this journal centers, but I have more than eight years of experience in multifaceted journal evaluations.

## 3. Journal Review

### 3.1 Transparency of Practice

*Building Healthy Academic Communities Journal* (BHAC) is the official journal of National Consortium for Building Healthy Academic Communities (NCBHAC) and is published on their behalf by The Ohio State University (OSU) Libraries using the Open Journal System (OJS) from the Public Knowledge Project (PKP), a common platform among academic library publishers. The journal has a registered ISSN, which I verified (ISSN Portal, n.d.), and it issues digital object identifiers (DOIs) for each published article; it does not use ORCID or another persistent identifier to identify authors. The journal's scope includes topics related to "wellness" in academic communities—envisioned broadly as including medical centers, community partners, policy makers, and others, in addition to education institutions. These topics include, for example, health promotion, wellness programming, and environmental health and safety. Submission formats include research articles; research, policy, and educational briefs; case studies; and quality improvement projects, a novel

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format which “prospectively and proactively examine[s] existing processes and making [sic.] measurable improvements” (BHAC Journal, n.d.-f).

BHAC is published in open-access format with zero author fees. Authors retain all rights to their work and permit the journal to publish the content under a Creative Commons-Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives (CC-BY-NC-ND) license (BHAC Journal, n.d.-c). The copyright and licensing policies are clearly outlined on the Policies page (misspelled as Polices both on the page itself and in the site menu).

The journal employs a double-anonymous peer review model, and reviewers are “experts and/or leaders in health and wellness” (BHAC Journal, n.d.-c). Users can register in OJS to indicate their interest in serving as a reviewer, but we must assume that registering interest is not a guarantee that one will be invited to review. The website states that the journal is published twice a year, a claim which is borne out in the archive, which shows two issues per year since the journal’s start in 2017. No submission deadlines or expectations for review or publication timelines are explicitly stated. However, each article identifies the date submitted and date accepted, so an average can be calculated. Looking at research and feature articles in six issues for 2021–2023, the time from submission to acceptance ranged from just thirteen days to nearly nine months but averaged about 89 days (not including the time from acceptance to publication). The range seems appropriate for an array of both experienced and developing authors. Some, though not all, of the briefs were accepted in a shorter time than the research articles, likely owing to their shorter and more straightforward format. This sampling of articles averaged six months from submission to official publication, with timeframes ranging from two to eleven months.

Policies explicitly align the journal with the Committee on Publishing Ethics’ (COPE) “Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing.” The journal was not listed as a COPE member; Ohio State University (OSU) is a corporate member of COPE, though it is unclear if that applies to the OSU Libraries’ publishing program. The journal adheres to the definition of *authorship* detailed by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE), which is a commonly accepted definition, and the journal follows COPE guidelines for handling authorship disputes. Additionally, the journal lists all the policies required by COPE’s core practices: conflicts of interest, complaints and appeals, copyright and plagiarism, allegation of research misconduct, and post-publication corrections, retractions, and removals are all clearly addressed. A data sharing policy encourages but does not require the deposit of relevant research data in “an appropriate repository,” though no specific repository is required or suggested (BHAC Journal, n.d.-c). A policy on research involving human subjects requires approval by an institutional review board or equivalent, as well as informed consent and compliance with the principles in the Declaration of Helsinki (BHAC Journal, n.d.-c).

### 3.2 Behaviour

I do not have any knowledge or experience of this journal instructing its authors in line with or counter to its stated policies, and I have no knowledge of the journal staff’s behavior.

### 3.3 People

BHAC clearly identifies the Editor-in-Chief and editorial board members, including full names, affiliations, and email addresses (BHAC Journal, n.d.-d). The editorial team represents a mix of public and private institutions from across the United States, and while two to three editors share an institutional affiliation in a few cases, no one institution seems over-represented. No editors outside the U.S. are included; however, it is unclear whether this is a concern since the journal states no geographical scope.

Judging from titles and affiliations, editors represent expertise in health and wellness, nursing, and interprofessional practice, relevant and appropriate to the journal’s scope. One oddity worth note is that the board is labeled “Inaugural Editorial Advisory Board,” and no “former editors” are identified (BHAC Journal, n.d.-d). With the inaugural issue in 2017, this raises the question of whether the editor-in-chief and all advisory board members have served in these roles for over six years or whether this page lacks updates.

In terms of authorship, the names of individuals affiliated with the publication do seem to appear semi-regularly—for example, in Volume 5, Issue 2 (2021), the bylines for two feature articles include an individual who is also attributed in the same issue as the President of the

NCBHAC Board of Directors. However, this does not seem to be a pernicious problem of self-publishing: when searching the journal's articles for various editors' names, although the highest two outliers totaled 16 and 12 citations (all formats, including editorials), the authorship of most editors ranged from zero to five pieces over six years.

A section of the journal's front matter identifies the names and affiliations of the journal's peer reviewers; it is not clear from the journal's website whether reviewers must opt in or may opt out of this acknowledgement. No front matter or website content appears to acknowledge copyeditors, a Layout or Production Editor, or similar individuals who would be responsible for copyediting and formatting. These tasks may be done by members of the Editorial Board, student assistants, or third-party contractors, but their labor is not transparently noted.

### 3.4 *Equity, Inclusivity, and Accessibility Practices*

The primary reference to diversity on BHAC's website is in their *About the Journal* statement, which reads: "Building a healthy academic community requires diversity in people, thought, and research" (BHAC Journal, n.d.-b). The journal has made no reports regarding inclusion or statements of principles in the area of equity and inclusion, and no statements are made concerning the diversity of the editorial team or published authors.

Author affiliations include a variety of higher education institutions and a handful of hospitals or other health entities; although a very few other countries are represented, the USA is undeniably predominant. Rather than authorship being confined to PhD scholars, authors reflect varying educational degrees, including BS, MA, MEd, and PhD, suggesting respect for diversity in expertise. Additionally, subject matter in the publication shows consideration for diverse populations, including LGBTQ+ and trans students and students with mental health concerns. The populations studied are primarily US-based, though Volume 7, Issue 1, also includes a study set in a Latin American university.

The site does not explicitly provide any details about content accessibility; however, the site footer does include a point of contact "if you encounter problems with the site..., including any access difficulty due to incompatibility with adaptive technology" (BHAC Journal, n.d.-a). This statement and the point of contact come from the OSU Libraries' publishing program, rather than uniquely from BHAC, but both indicate that maintaining content accessibility is a priority of the journal's hosting platform. However, full-text articles are published only as PDF files, though HTML is often considered more accessible to screen readers.

### 3.5 *Scholarship*

No references to this journal were found in the Retraction Watch database. Based on the review of a sampling of articles, the content seems to fall squarely within the journal's stated scope. The research questions seem logical, and the various methods represented (quantitative, qualitative, literature review, etc.) seem reasonable; no obvious errors stood out. I have no personal experience with this journal as an author, reviewer, or otherwise, but articles appear to be copyedited, proofread, and formatted according to a consistent style. Reference lists appear complete, including digital object identifiers (DOIs) wherever available, and each article bears a Creative Commons license that matches the journal's open-access publishing policy.

### 3.6 *Relationships*

BHAC is the official journal of National Consortium for Building Healthy Academic Communities, NCBHAC (BHAC Journal, n.d.-b). From NCBHAC's current website, it is difficult to tell how long they have existed as an organization and whether they pre-date the first issue of the BHAC journal in 2017 (National Consortium for Building Healthy Academic Communities, n.d.). Their Facebook presence dates only to 15 August 2018 (Facebook, n.d.). However, exploration via the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine reveals the first archival snapshot of their website on 13 January 2013 (The Inaugural Building Healthy Academic Communities National Summit, 2013). BHAC is published by OSU Libraries, which makes sense, since the 2013 snapshot explicitly links NCBHAC to OSU's College of Nursing. In comparison, this institutional affiliation appears downplayed on the current NCBHAC site, revealed only through their physical mailing address, which a web search confirms is at OSU—but this perhaps simply indicates that NCBHAC wishes to

be recognized as a national organization transcending the OSU campus (National Consortium for Building Healthy Academic Communities, n.d.).

BHAC make no claims regarding journal indexing. Ulrich's Global Serials Directory indicates full-text content is available via the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), EBSCOhost–Bibliosan, and ROAD: Directory of Open Access Scholarly Resources. BHAC does not claim membership in the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA), and neither BHAC nor OSU is listed among their members; as noted previously, OSU is a member of COPE. I did not identify any geographic anomalies or noteworthy academic community interactions.

### 3.7 Background and History

BHAC has published twice annually for just over six years and amassed 13 issues so far, with consistent types and amounts of content in each issue. Publishing continued during the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused missed issues or other publishing hiccups for many scholarly journals. All issues are open access on the journal's website and through DOAJ. BHAC has not previously appeared in *RJR*.

## 4. Discussion & Conclusions

BHAC is a peer-reviewed, open-access journal with no author fees. The journal is affiliated with the National Consortium for Building Healthy Academic Communities and The Ohio State University Libraries. Its documented policies are comprehensive and aligned with COPE standards, and the journal appears to be transparent in policies and practices. Review timelines ranging from approximately one to nine months appear typical for a smaller niche journal whose authors vary in publishing experience. Published content appears appropriate in scope and appropriately edited, copyedited, and formatted.

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National Consortium for Building Healthy Academic Communities. (n.d.). [Index/Homepage]. Retrieved October 24, 2023, from <https://web.archive.org/web/20231024221618/https://healthyacademics.org/>

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