

Item 12: Proposal to Replace Executive Committee and Bureau with an Executive Board

Introduction

The governance of IUPAC has been discussed for more than a decade, but the topic was brought thoroughly into focus in 2001 by a proposal to restructure the Union and replace the Bureau and the Executive Committee with a new governing body. In September 2002, the Bureau authorized the formation of a committee, coined the Governance Structure Committee (GSC), to analyze the current governance structure and operations and to propose alternative structures, as outlined in the following charge:

- 1. Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the current structure and operation of the Bureau, including its Executive Committee.*
- 2. Develop proposals for alternative structures and analyze their potential strengths and weaknesses. Consider any impact on the functioning of other IUPAC bodies, including the Council, and any financial impact. Consult widely within IUPAC to obtain additional suggestions, also on improving communication between the Bureau and the Divisions and Committees of IUPAC.*
- 3. Provide a preliminary report to the Executive Committee and to all National Adhering Organizations by April 2003. Request comments and additional suggestions for structural changes that can be considered for inclusion in the final report. Provide options and recommendations to the Bureau and Council in August 2003.*

The committee produced a thorough report, which concluded that the current Bureau governance structure did not meet the needs of the Union and should be substantially altered. The committee recommended that the Council adopt a new governance structure and modify operations of some existing bodies, based on the following proposals:

- Abolish the Bureau and Executive Committee.*
- Establish an Executive Board [EB], consisting of the five IUPAC Officers plus four other members, all elected by Council that would assume all the responsibilities and authorities now given to both the Bureau and Executive Committee.*
- Establish a Union Policy Committee [UPC], with one member appointed by each NAO, to work closely with the Executive Board and to advise the EB on matters of IUPAC policy.*
- Provide for an annual meeting between the EB and the Division Presidents plus the Chairmen of the Operational Committees.*
- Extend the length of the Council meeting by one-half day to permit time for more meaningful discussion of issues by Delegates.*

Ottawa Discussion and Decision

The GSC report and the recommendations outlined above were thoroughly discussed at the Council meeting in Ottawa in August 2003. The discussion can briefly be summarized as follows:

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An important feature of the proposals is that the UPC will give each member country a direct role to play in the governance of the Union. Currently, the National Adhering Organizations (NAOs) have a limited opportunity to influence Union policy since the Council meets only every two years. Furthermore, the Council delegates are often new to IUPAC and unfamiliar with the issues before the Council meeting. There is an opportunity in this proposal for greater continuity of membership. The members of the UPC would become familiar with the issues facing IUPAC during the biennium since they would see material provided to the Executive Board on important matters and would be asked to provide comments on the policy aspects of issues being considered.

Further to this issue it was pointed out that replacement of the Bureau and Executive Committee by a single body, called the Executive Board, eliminates a source of confusion in the governance of the Union. In the current structure it is sometimes unclear if a particular decision can be made by the Executive Committee or if it should be left to the Bureau. Creation of the UPC would give the member countries a greater and more effective voice in IUPAC than is provided by the current Elected Members of the Bureau. In practice, some NAOs never, or very rarely, have an elected Member of the Bureau. The comment was made that it will be important that the NAOs name UPC members who are in a position to provide policy guidance and can solicit broad input from members of the chemical community in their home country.

The concern was expressed that the meeting of the UPC during the General Assembly would duplicate the discussion of items on the Council Agenda. The suggestion was made that this could be avoided by having the group meet after the Council meeting. It was then proposed that the agenda of the UPC should be devoted to future issues rather than the items on the agenda of the Council. It was felt that in this way the UPC could make significant contributions to set the agenda for the work of the Executive Board for the coming biennium.

Although many delegates expressed support for the GSC proposals, a fair number preferred a stepwise approach where the first step would be establishment of the Union Policy Committee and the second step could be replacement of the Bureau and the Executive Committee with a new governing body, called the Executive Board by GSC. Ultimately this position was supported by Council. However, there was dissatisfaction with the name Union Policy Committee, and a proposal to change the name to the Union Advisory Committee (UAC) was put forward and approved by Council.

Thus, the Council decided to establish a Union Advisory Committee [UAC] as an *ad hoc* committee and directed the Executive Committee to formalize UAC with respect to its composition, terms of office, and terms of reference.

UAC – Establishment and Activity

The decisions made by Council were implemented quickly. The Composition and Terms of Office were approved as follows:

- (i) *The Union Advisory Committee is an ad hoc committee with one Member chosen by each National Adhering Organization.*
- (ii) *The period of service of a Member shall be two years (initially for the period 1 January 2004 to 31 December 2005) subject to reappointment.*

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(iii) The President shall serve as chairman of the Committee.

Furthermore, the Terms of Reference, also approved by the Executive Committee, have the following wording:

- (i) To provide advice to the Executive Committee on Union policy matters as requested, e.g., on the governance of the Union.*
- (ii) To bring to the attention of the Executive Committee matters of importance to be considered by the Officers, the Executive Committee, or other IUPAC bodies.*
- (iii) To serve as a principal two-way communication link between the Executive Committee and each National Adhering Organization, as well as the chemical community in the member country.*
- (iv) To meet at a General Assembly on the call of the Chairman but otherwise to conduct business primarily by e-mail, phone, and postal communication.*

Appointment of members to the UAC was solicited from all the NAOs, and by January 1st 2005, almost all of the 45 member countries had appointed their members. The members have been kept informed by e-mail of matters being considered by the Executive Committee, and several significant matters have been referred to the committee for comments, assessment, and feedback. Collectively the response from the committee members has not been as expected, but on the other hand it is encouraging to observe 1) that the reply frequency has been more than twice of that achieved regularly when comments are solicited from the NAOs, and 2) that this frequency is increasing. It is therefore reasonable to believe that when the UAC has been in function for a longer period of time, the communication between the IUPAC governance and the NAOs will have improved.

Among the proposals sent to the UAC for comments and feedback was the proposal to establish an Executive Board, consisting of the five IUPAC Officers plus four other members, all elected by Council, which would assume all the responsibilities and authorities now given to both the Bureau and Executive Committee. While the majority of the answers from the UAC members were in favour of going ahead with the change, only eleven responses were received. The Executive Committee believes that on such an important issue we require an overwhelming majority; thus, the EC decided to postpone the decision to the General Assembly in Torino in 2007. This conclusion was arrived at for two reasons:

(1) When the UAC has been in operation for two more years, its position within IUPAC will be stronger. Quite a few members of the committee have been members for less than one year and have thus had little opportunity to interact. However, they are senior scientists, who will be able and willing to provide sound advice, and to communicate when needed to and from the NAO and its appropriate committees and staff. Furthermore, the UAC meeting in Beijing will help develop personal interactions and relationships. This will conceivably increase the committee's engagement and activity to a considerable extent, and that will be important when/if the Bureau and the Executive Committee are going to be replaced by an Executive Board.

(2) Establishment of an Executive Board to replace the Bureau and the Executive Committee requires the revision of a number of Statutes and Bylaws. In fact, the consequences of such a change will not become completely clear before such a revision

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has been carried out, particularly since the current version of the Statutes and Bylaws dates back to 1975 and contains inconsistencies and ambiguities that have crept into various sections in the intervening years. It therefore makes sense to revise the Statutes and Bylaws and present a version, at the General Assembly in Torino in 2007, which is based on the assumption that an Executive Board is introduced in place of the Bureau and the Executive Committee. With such a timetable it will be possible to consult thoroughly with the UAC as well as the NAOs in the process, which in this way will become both interactive and transparent.

On this basis we are bringing before the Council the following motion:

Council authorizes the President to appoint a small working party, under the chairmanship of the Secretary General, to draft the revised Statutes and Bylaws necessary to implement the replacement of the Bureau and Executive Committee with an Executive Board. A final decision on whether to accept the revised Statutes and Bylaws and to create an Executive Board would then be made at the next Council meeting at Torino in 2007.

If the motion to draft fails, the proposal to replace the Bureau and Executive Committee with an Executive Board will lapse.