

## **Item 7: Report of the Secretary General**

According to the Statutes, the Secretary General "shall carry out the business of the Union as specified by the Council, by the Bureau, by the Executive Committee, or by the President, and be responsible for keeping its records and for the administration of the Secretariat". The focus of my report is therefore all those aspects of IUPAC that particularly involve the Secretariat staff, and this will give an overview of current and developing policy areas.

### **The Secretariat**

The current staffing component is six positions, but one is currently unfilled. Since the last General Assembly there has only been one change, namely the resignation of Erin Slagle Carter as of 1 May 2007. Erin was the communications specialist responsible for the administration of the conference sponsorship and financial support programs. Erin left the Research Triangle area last year and was working from home, but she decided that this arrangement did not suit her needs. Since May, Erin's work portfolio has been dispersed to the other Secretariat members. Paul LeClair has taken over the handling of conference sponsorship and financial support applications. Linda Tapp is now responsible for communications with regard to the Affiliate Membership and Company Associates programs, as well as a variety of issues with NAOs and ANAOs. Enid Weatherwax has added the IUPAC Prizes to her portfolio. The management of the Secretariat continues in the very capable and experienced hands of the Executive Director, John Jost, who also carries a wide range of specialist administrative and financial tasks. He also continues to play a central role in the Manuscript Central submission and refereeing process for *Pure and Applied Chemistry*. Fabienne Meyers is responsible for all electronic publishing, and is guiding the implementation of website improvements. Fabienne is involved in many aspects of IUPAC work, the most visible of which is that of editor of the excellent *Chemistry International* magazine. She is also responsible for administration of the Project System, IUPAC's major work area, and the Young Chemist and Young Observer awards programs, as well as being proactive in many other ways. Fabienne continues to work from an office generously provided by the Boston University Department of Chemistry, whose support is again gratefully acknowledged. Paul LeClair continues to maintain and develop a wide range of databases that provide information about all those people who interact with IUPAC, and plays a key role in the Division election process. Linda Tapp and Enid Weatherwax smoothly handle a wide variety of administrative matters, in particular those concerned with the monitoring of projects and their finances and the processing of financial claim forms. Despite an increasing array of tasks, the Secretariat continues to function well within its budget.

The staffing situation will be monitored before a replacement for Erin is made. Given the increase in website activities, it is likely that a different job description will be more appropriate.

### **Web site improvements**

The situation regarding the web site functions and utility will always be fluid. Information technology developments are so rapid that we need to have access to the latest expertise so that we can maximise the value of the web site to all users. It is not possible for IUPAC to provide the full human resource requirements within the

## Item 7: Report of the Secretary General

Secretariat. Therefore the recent strategic alliance established with the Fachinformationszentrum für die Chemie Berlin (FIZ CHEMIE Berlin) is an exciting development. FIZ CHEMIE Berlin is Germany's Chemistry Information Centre, responsible for the provision of information services relating to the chemical sciences and chemical engineering to scientists in industry, academia, and government. It is funded by the German Federal and State Governments as a non-profit information agency. Since 26 June 2006, the IUPAC server has been located at FIZ CHEMIE Berlin, and the support provided there now enables the modernization of the technology underpinning the web site from HTML to XML. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed by the FIZ-CHEMIE Manager and the IUPAC President on 1 March 2007, and covers cooperation to provide web-based services to IUPAC bodies and the worldwide chemistry community through the IUPAC web site. On behalf of IUPAC, I wish to acknowledge the generous support of FIZ CHEMIE Berlin, who will implement these services on the IUPAC web site using its staff and at its own cost. The relevant FIZ-CHEMIE staff are collaborating with the Prague group, which has been instrumental in the transfer of the "colour" books and *Pure and Applied Chemistry* on to the web. So far, all existing systems have been transferred to the FIZ-CHEMIE computers, and a new IUPAC site search system has been developed and will be introduced by the Prague group to the new server in the coming months. Further work will lead to the development of an IUPAC bulletin board, and the implementation of a facile system for the storage of materials and data files with authenticated entry. Work with major databases still presents serious challenges, but they are being addressed. The alliance between IUPAC and FIZ-CHEMIE will also require some human resource developments in the Secretariat, so that we can maximize the cooperation.

### The Project System and Strategic Opportunities Fund

IUPAC's major output is generated by the Project System, through which the Union's unique global perspective can be put to work: modest amounts of money can be used to great effect through the efforts of many volunteers. As the President has indicated, the Project System is very successful, and numerous worthwhile outcomes are generated. Most projects are initiated through budget allocations to the Divisions and Standing Committees, and the Project Committee, and there currently is also a "last resort" project reserve fund at the discretion of the Secretary General and Treasurer. Following the current President's Critical Assessment (while Vice-President), which focused on the Project System, further discussions led to a proposal from the Finance Committee, and this was accepted by the Executive Committee in 2006. This proposal requested the Treasurer to budget a Strategic Opportunities Fund, which for 2008-2009 would be USD120,000. This fund will be used by the Executive Committee to allocate funds to projects judged to be of strategic importance to the Union: it would replace the reserve fund. In practice, the Project Committee would first review all major projects applying for funding from the Project Fund. The Secretary General would then decide if a project should be considered by the Executive Committee for funding from the Strategic Opportunities Fund. A further recent decision has been made to recover unspent funds by more careful auditing of projects well past their completion dates, and any recovered amounts would be added to the Strategic Opportunities Fund.

## Item 7: Report of the Secretary General

### Validation of New Elements

Late in 2005, claims were received concerning the discovery of new elements of atomic number  $>111$ . The chair of the previous working group - that dealt with roentgenium - was asked to nominate members of a new working group to investigate these claims. Recent news indicates that the working group will submit two reports, the first, later this year, dealing with element  $Z=112$ , and the second dealing with elements  $Z>112$ , after further work is done into 2008. So this Council meeting will have an opportunity to act with respect to element 112. The working parties charged with the validation of claims for new elements are jointly representative of IUPAC and IUPAP. During negotiations to appoint the current joint working group, it was felt useful to compile some guidelines in order to facilitate the appointment of future groups. These guidelines have now been drafted and agreed by Secretaries General of both IUPAC and IUPAP, and now need formal approval by the respective Unions. Under these guidelines, each Union would put forward five nominees, so as to achieve a ten member panel of "Standing Nominees" from whom a joint working group of five would be chosen, such that each Union would be represented by at least two members.

### Pure and Applied Chemistry

*Pure and Applied Chemistry* has been providing data to CrossRef, a consortium of scientific publishers, for more than a year now. This means that users of journals participating in CrossRef can link directly from references in an article to *Pure and Applied Chemistry* and from *Pure and Applied Chemistry* to references in other journals participating in CrossRef. Another pleasing feature of *Pure and Applied Chemistry* is the continued rise in its impact factor, presumably as the result of careful article selection by the Scientific Editor. There is still a special niche for publications arising from plenary, keynote and oral presentations at IUPAC conferences, and organizers of sponsored conferences should find *Pure and Applied Chemistry* a highly desirable vehicle for publication. The application of Manuscript Central is working smoothly to facilitate all aspects of the publication process.

### Sponsorship of Conferences

This remains one of IUPAC's most important roles and results in much of its current visibility. It should be noted again that IUPAC sponsorship is not financial, but simply an accreditation of quality. However, this is a serious factor in attracting participants and results in significant revenue accruing to the host country. Thus the decision to allow sponsored conferences to be held only in NAO countries provides a very tangible benefit to full membership commitment.

In September 2006, the First International IUPAC Conference on Green-Sustainable Chemistry (ICGC-1) was held in Dresden, and very successfully inaugurated what will become a major two-yearly series arranged by the Sub-Committee on Green Chemistry. This is an area of rapidly-growing importance, and IUPAC is at the forefront in promoting it with the highest quality science.

### Financial Support of Conferences

Applications for conference financial support must come via the relevant Division, which must present a strong case to the Project Committee. Typically for IUPAC, quite small

**Item 7: Report of the Secretary General**

amounts of money are involved to add value to a conference already adequately financed. The Project Committee considers applications twice a year. The aim of this scheme is to encourage Divisions to be proactive in supporting emerging scientific regions, or emerging fields of chemistry. Applications in the former category are not restricted to NAO countries, and award of financial support in such cases also automatically confers IUPAC sponsorship.

*David Black*