

News from IUPAC

IUPAC moves to a project-driven system

The organization and management of IUPAC's scientific work will soon begin a transition to a system that emphasizes individual projects, rather than the allocation of Titular Members among a large number of Commissions and Committees. By a vote of 20–0, with two abstentions, the Bureau has approved an integrated programme proposed by the Strategy Development and Implementation Committee (SDIC) and the Committee on Project Evaluation Criteria (CPEC) that will: (i) assign to greatly strengthened Division Committees the pri-

mary responsibility for overseeing the initiation, approval and management of scientific projects, and (ii) establish a uniform procedure for evaluating and funding such projects. Some aspects of the new programme will begin immediately, but there will be a gradual phase-in over the next three years, as Division Committees, Commissions and other IUPAC bodies develop plans for long-range implementation of the new system, as well as proposals for specific new projects.

Changes in the organization and management of IUPAC's scientific work

To meet the challenges occurring world-wide in chemistry and the chemical industry, IUPAC has developed a Strategic Plan to redefine its role as the international organization principally responsible for the promotion of the Chemical Sciences. This plan provides guidelines for the Union to respond to the globalization of science, to the expansion of the borders of chemistry in a wide range of scientific fields, to the interdisciplinary nature of modern chemistry and to the service of chemistry to society. The Strategic Plan articulates the policy of the Union and provides general guidance to our operating arms, the Divisions and the Standing Committees.

The present structure of the Union precludes the fulfilment of many of its central scientific functions, as reflected in organizational fragmentation and resulting hindrance in the inception and conduct of horizontal interdisciplinary projects. The founders of IUPAC envisioned and made provision for the organization and action of a dynamic Union. In time, the concept of a changing structure was replaced by the current system of long-term Commissions, with little opportunity for Divisions to plan for scientific renewal and growth. Significant past attempts for the restructuring of IUPAC by the creation of the Pool Titular Members and by the interdisciplinary unification of Divisional activities have not been effective. IUPAC must build on past successes but must aim toward its future accomplishments, impact and image.

The Bureau has now approved a policy and an operational programme based on the conceptual framework that the Union represents and serves the entire world chemistry community. The objective is to improve the quality, relevance, international impact and effectiveness of the Union's scientific work. The integrated programme constitutes a holistic plan, which rests on major changes in the responsibilities of the Division Presidents and Division Committees, in the election procedures on a Division level, in project evaluation, and in the future function of the Commissions.

I would like to articulate explicitly and clearly that these changes are aimed at the enhancement of IUPAC's future contributions and impact, and do not in any way question the accomplishments and dedication of IUPAC's bodies and of the eminent scientists who have collectively contributed, over the decades, to the Union's reputation.

I am delighted that the Bureau has approved the integrated programme, some elements of which will begin immediately. To implement the programme, we will consult closely with our National Adhering Organizations, which collectively constitute the ultimate authority of the Union and are in turn accountable for the public and scientific resources used by all IUPAC bodies. The newly approved programme will shape IUPAC's role towards the 21st century

Professor Joshua Jortner
President, IUPAC

The programme approved by the Bureau is designed to give clear direction for the Union to

- revitalize its scientific activities,
- ensure the selection of only high quality projects to bear the IUPAC label,
- encourage participation by the world-wide chemistry community,
- optimize the use of IUPAC's limited financial resources, and
- simplify management and accountability.

There are five principal components of the new programme:

- 1** The Union will gradually replace its long-time practice of allocating resources by the assignment of Titular Members to Commissions and Committees, with a system in which funds are directly allocated to carry out approved projects. The purpose of the change is to ensure that high priority projects are adequately funded and can be started and completed as expeditiously as is feasible. Uniform IUPAC-wide procedures will be implemented by January 1999 to evaluate proposed projects for quality and suitability, and to fund them within individual Divisions or from central IUPAC funds. Generally, each project will be carried out by a limited-term Task Group. The new system is designed to simplify management, reduce bureaucratic rules and clarify accountability. The Executive Summary of the report by the Committee on Project Evaluation Criteria can found on page 167.
- 2** Division Committees have been given the responsibility for seeking out ideas for projects, evaluating proposals and managing approved projects. The Division Committees will be strengthened by new procedures for the nomination of their Members. The Bureau has given approval, effective immediately, for an interim modification of Division Committees as needed to ensure necessary expertise and breadth. Over the next three years, existing Commissions are expected to continue to provide the primary source of new projects, but efforts will start immediately to solicit ideas and interested participants for new Task Groups from the world-wide chemistry community.
- 3** Beginning in 2002, there will be a major redistribution of funds, with increases in Division budgets, the establishment of a central pool of money to support interdisciplinary projects and projects that require resources beyond the scope of an individual Division or Standing Committee, and the termination of separate budgets for the General Assemblies. Council will be asked to amend Bylaw 4.307, which currently describes the 'right' of Titular Members to receive

travel reimbursements, irrespective of responsibility for projects or other activities.

- 4** The role of Commissions will change drastically beginning in 2002. As an initial step, Council will be asked in 1999 to exercise its responsibility under Bylaw 4.302 to decide not to continue any existing Commission beyond the end of 2001. This action will permit each Division Committee to utilize the period 1999–2001 to take a fresh look at its overall programmes, to consider how best to allocate its resources, and to determine the optimum way to provide for oversight of activities and continuity of programmes. During this period (and thereafter) if a Division Committee believes that a new Commission is needed for a particular purpose, it may request the Bureau and Council to form such a Commission by making a persuasive case under the procedures of Bylaw 4.301, including specification of the life of the proposed Commission. Such a Commission might be established, for example, to generate a long-term strategy and develop IUPAC's role in a new area or to accomplish an important short-term task. Funding will be provided as needed to accomplish the objectives.
- 5** After 2002, it is anticipated that there will be a substantial reduction in the number of Commissions and a significant increase in the number of short-term Task Groups. These changes will require reconsideration of the 'membership' of the Divisions—currently defined in the Bylaws as the Titular and Associate Members of Commissions and Division Committees. The Secretary General and Division Presidents have been charged by the Bureau to develop proposals that could be acted on by Council in 2001. In addition, the role of National Representatives will be re-examined. The plan approved by the Bureau includes provision for a limited number of nonvoting National Representatives on Division Committees, but additional mechanisms are to be developed to enhance participation by a large number of scientists from both large and small countries.