

Item 7: Report of 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". As this is my first report, I shall try to comment on all those aspects of IUPAC that impinge in particular on the Secretariat staff, and to give an overview of the developing policy areas. This might also be useful for those Council delegates attending their first meeting.

The Secretariat

The current staff consists of six persons, but since the last General Assembly there have been some changes. Laura Abernathy and Lucinda Kelly have resigned and been replaced by Erin Slagle and Enid Weatherwax respectively. Many members will already be familiar with both of these new staff members, through their particular roles. Also Fabienne Meyers has moved to Boston and continues her work for the Secretariat from an office generously provided by the Boston University Department of Chemistry, whose support is gratefully acknowledged. 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. In particular, since the last Council meeting, John has masterminded the introduction of the Manuscript Central submission and refereeing process for *Pure and Applied Chemistry*. Fabienne Meyers is responsible for all electronic publishing, and will guide the implementation of website improvements, following recommendations from the Committee on Printed and Electronic Publications (CPEP). However, the description of Electronic Publishing Manager does not adequately reflect the wide range of Fabienne's activities. Her role as editor in the transformation of *Chemistry International* will already be widely appreciated, and she is also largely responsible for a range of new brochures and publicity material. Fabienne is involved in many aspects of IUPAC work, including the Young Chemist and Young Observer awards programs. In conjunction with the Committee on Chemistry and Industry (COCI) and the relevant National Adhering Organizations (NAOs), Fabienne has initiated a pilot program to grant complimentary Company Associate status for one year to companies financially supporting IUPAC conferences. It is hoped that such companies would then see the benefit of this association with their NAO and IUPAC and continue the link and the subscription. Fabienne also administers, with efficiency and sensitivity, the operation of the project system, IUPAC's major work area. Paul LeClair continues to maintain and develop a wide range of databases that provide information about all those people who interact with IUPAC in any way. His contribution is no less valuable for being perhaps a little less visible to most members. Erin Slagle has taken over as the communications specialist and is also responsible for the administration of the conference sponsorship and financial support programs. Both of these programs are quite complex, and are characterized by a need for careful and discretionary handling: current discussions are seeking to clarify some ambiguous aspects. Linda Tapp and Enid Weatherwax smoothly handle a wide variety of administrative matters, the most visible of which are 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, and recent steps have been taken to build a more cohesive structure by giving each member a clearer idea of the overall operation. I should like to thank all the

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Secretariat members for their capacity and dedication, and also their patience in helping to educate a new Secretary General.

The Project System

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 this is the major topic of the Vice President's Critical Assessment, I shall make just a few brief comments here about its operational process. Most projects are initiated through the activities of Divisions and Standing Committees, but can be submitted by anyone, anywhere in the world. Completion of the web-based form indicates those relevant Divisions and Standing Committees which are then able to comment on the merits of the proposal. External reviews are also sought. Frequently, a Division or Standing Committee commits its own budgeted funds to provide full support to a project. Larger or inter-Divisional projects are sent to the Project Committee for evaluation, and funding can then be compiled from Division or Standing Committee input as well as additional support from the Project Committee budget. There is also a project reserve fund at the discretion of the Secretary General and Treasurer, and this can also be called on as a last resort. The efficient operation of the Project System requires a great deal of cooperation from Divisions and Standing Committees to return frank and balanced responses to project proposal questions. Input from reviewers, both internal and external, is frequently mixed and contradictory, so an overall balance needs to be achieved. It is also important that successful applications are monitored by the leading Division or Standing Committee, so that projects can be completed in a timely manner. Clearly different Divisions and Standing Committees are able to generate different kinds of projects, and there are many opportunities still available to be developed. While there will always be the highly technical areas such as nomenclature and standardization of data, it is important that areas involving the educational promotion of chemistry, and the stimulus of newly emerging fields are not overlooked. As the Vice-President's Critical Assessment has focused extensively on the Project System, it can safely be assumed that this area will receive considerable attention during the next biennium to strengthen its benefit to worldwide chemistry.

Sponsorship of Conferences

Traditionally this is one of IUPAC's most important roles and results in much of its current visibility. It should be immediately clarified that IUPAC sponsorship is not financial, but simply an accreditation of quality. However, the granting of IUPAC sponsorship generally leads to an increase in attendees, and a concomitant increase in the conference revenue accruing to the host country. There are quite clear guidelines relating to both quality and the international character of a conference, but frequently the issues are not entirely clear cut. On the one hand, it is important that the quality remains high, while on the other hand there is value in being reasonably generous in the granting of sponsorship in order to raise the profile and influence of IUPAC. There are different categories of IUPAC conferences, as outlined on the web, in *Chemistry International* articles and in the guidelines on recently revised sponsorship application forms. The Union is seeking to maximize the impact of those conferences (category 1) promoted by Divisions and Standing Committees. These are the core "IUPAC conferences" as

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opposed to other conferences that are just "sponsored by IUPAC". The initiation of prestigious IUPAC Poster Prizes for these core conferences should help to highlight the differentiation. Again, Divisions and Standing Committees can be proactive in promoting a good range of high-profile core conferences. It should also be noted that IUPAC Poster Prizes are also available to National Adhering Organizations for one national conference each year.

Financial Support of Conferences

This aspect of IUPAC support has undergone some change as a result of discussions at the Bureau meeting in October 2004. Typically for IUPAC, quite small amounts of money are involved to add value to a conference already adequately financed. There are two criteria for support, the provision of stimulus for scientifically emerging regions, and for very new developments in chemistry. Applications must be submitted in the first instance to the President of the most relevant Division. This will then be forwarded to the Secretariat for consideration by the Project Committee only if the Division seriously supports it. The Project Committee is currently discussing the suggestion that funding decisions be made only several times each year, so that comparative and competitive evaluations can be made for the allocation of limited funds.

The Company Associates Program

Through the Committee on Chemistry and Industry (COCI), the Union is making a concerted attempt to build stronger connections with the chemical industry. The Company Associates program is actually coordinated by the Secretariat on behalf of the various National Adhering Organizations (NAOs), who benefit directly in the funding provided by the Company Associates. Each Company Associate unit is USD450, of which USD50 go to IUPAC as an administrative fee, and the remaining USD400 are entirely under the control of the NAO. Funds derived in this way can then be used by the NAO to support Young Observer programs, provide support for young chemists to attend IUPAC conferences, or even to offset some or all of the annual dues.

The Affiliate Membership Program

This program has operated since 1986 to serve the needs of individual chemists who wish to be actively connected to the international chemical enterprise. Members come from major chemical nations as well as those which currently might lack strong official links to the rest of the chemical world through IUPAC. In addition to paid Affiliate Members, IUPAC sponsors a limited number of additional Affiliate Members, usually young chemists from scientifically emerging countries. In 2006, the fee will be increased from the current USD16 to USD20. This fee covers the cost of distributing *Chemistry International*, information about projects and recommendations, and a 25% discount on all IUPAC publications. Moreover, Affiliates are entitled to a 10% reduction of registration fees for many IUPAC sponsored conferences. Most countries that are involved in the program charge an extra amount to cover their local expenses.

The Union Advisory Committee

The Union Advisory Committee (UAC) has already been dealt with by the President in his report. However, I simply add that I should be very pleased to hear from any UAC member with any point of view that can help the Union be more effective in promoting worldwide chemistry.