

IYCN: A Journey That Has Just Begun

by Christine Dunne and Fernando Gomollón-Bel



International collaboration varies across the world. Your first reaction when hearing those words—international collaboration—may lead you to myriad different thoughts and ideas: research institutions, famous scientists, your own coworkers, or even airports –flying through Tesla International Airport in Serbia, you can't help it! When reading this article, however, IUPAC is probably the first thing that comes to mind. IUPAC has the ability to bring together scientists, crossing nations and borders in the pursuit of knowledge. Early career chemists, however, often do not know how to breach these barriers to start their international scientific journey.

The International Younger Chemists Network (IYCN) is here to educate and mentor young chemists and to help them collaborate and communicate with each other, and, with IUPAC's aid, with the larger community of chemists around the globe. One important aspect of the scientific world is the focus on future generations. What cutting edge ideas can these young chemists bring to the table? What take do they have on established scientific practices and how to improve them? Are we mentoring the next generation properly to become our

The group of young aspiring chemists who met in August 2015 at the 250th American Chemical Society National Meeting in Boston.



future global leaders? How can we answer any of these questions without a platform to connect on?

IYCN hopes to become that platform for chemists around the world to truly share ideas in the name of the advancement of science. As young chemists, we cannot start this journey alone. We need support, ideas, and mentorship from established scientists that want to give back by helping educate the future minds of their craft. It is important for you to understand that this was not an idea that came to us overnight. It is one that we have worked tirelessly towards for weeks, months, and even years. Here is our story.

Back in 2015, at the 250th American Chemical Society National Meeting in Boston, a group of young chemists sat around a table with easels, writing with permanent markers in the hopes that they would produce permanent ideas. The participants were inspired by their own international experiences, including many formed during the 2011 International Year of Chemistry at the International Conference for Young Chemists. As the stars would have it, something aligned in the Younger Chemists Crossing Borders (YCCB) Program between the Younger Chemists Committee of the American Chemical Society, the European Younger Chemists Network of European Association for Chemical and Molecular Sciences (EuCheMS), and the German Exchange Program, hosted by the Northeastern Section of the American Chemical Society and the JungChemikerForum of the German Chemical Society. Chemists from 15 countries formulated an idea that would be known as the International Younger Chemists Network (IYCN).

In 2016, some of the founding participants of IYCN had the opportunity to gather at the ACS National Meeting in Philadelphia (USA) and also at the 6th EuCheMS Chemistry Congress (ECC) in Sevilla (Spain). During the 6th ECC, IYCN hosted a soft launch event in collaboration with the participants of the YCCB Exchange Program. Due to the many countries present in Sevilla, IYCN had the opportunity to lay the groundwork for an expansive international network.

As a group of likeminded young scientists, we are aware of the globalization of chemistry within our societies. While many countries were represented in Boston and Sevilla, we know there is so much more of the world that needs representation. That leads us to today, planning for the official launch of IYCN at the 46th IUPAC World Chemistry Congress in São Paulo, Brazil. During this congress, IYCN will collaborate with local organizers, as well as societies around the world, to host two major symposia that discuss issues of great importance to rising stars in chemistry: Green chemistry practices



In September 2016, some of the founding participants of IYCN gathered at the 6th EuCheMS Chemistry Congress in Seville (Spain). From L to R: Javier García-Martínez (Spain, IUPAC Member), Christine Dunne (USA), Maarten van Sisseren (Netherlands), Ilya Vorotyntsev (Russia), Michael Linden (Germany) and Fernando Gomollón-Bel (Spain).

and intellectual property rights. Along with these symposia, we will also organize a networking poster session highlighting many countries in attendance to show the true breadth of the ways IYCN can unite early career chemists. At this congress IYCN will not only come together for the first official time with IUPAC members, but we will also elect our first board, who will continue our collaborative, international efforts.

Since the beginning, we have pursued a global and inclusive organization for early career chemists, following the model IUPAC has created in its relationship to our countries and mother societies. We believe our vision strongly correlates with IUPAC's long-range goal to "contribute to the enhancement of chemistry education, the career development of young chemical scientists, and the public appreciation of chemistry". We want to do more than just educate and form working collaborative partnerships. It is our hope that these international connections will allow young chemists to become more well-rounded and versatile scientists and people. With ever-advancing social unrest around the globe, young chemists will have a platform for connection that overcomes this global instability. In conjunction with these ideals, the IYCN could support international education endeavors to promote the advancement of chemistry around the globe.

Chemistry is a universal language. By working together, unity amongst the younger generation of chemists can be established. We look forward to expanding to the rest of the world and creating a truly global network of young chemists in which all feel welcomed. While there is much more work to be done, connections to be made, countries to reach out to, and young chemists to

involve, we hope this message will lay the groundwork for people to reach out to us as well. We are confident that chemists throughout the world will benefit from an international networking community for personal, professional, and educational development towards the advancement of chemistry, science, and society.

For more information on IYCN please contact us at IYCN@IUPAC.org. We look forward to seeing you in São Paulo! 🇧🇷

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IUPAC supports IYCN

IUPAC is very pleased to be involved in the development of the IYCN—we see it as vital for the future of the discipline and also as a key pipeline for future IUPAC projects and people. The IYCN is now formally recognised within IUPAC as an Associated Organisation. It provides another mechanism to involve younger chemists in our projects and activities and to gain a younger chemist's perspective on issues vital to Chemistry. We look forward to collaborating further with IYCN at the 2017 General Assembly and beyond.

Richard Hartshorn
IUPAC Secretary General