

Past President's Column:

Looking Back on Six Years of Service as an Officer

by Mark Cesa

Photo by Peter Cutts



The Past President has an opportunity to write a column for *Chemistry International* near the end of his or her term, looking back on six years of service as an Officer of the Union and taking stock of the Union's accomplishments during that time. It is a particular pleasure for me to do this because all

of our volunteers, leaders and staff have accomplished an outstanding number of important achievements that have strengthened and vitalized IUPAC in that time. I would like to take a look at what everyone has accomplished during the last six years—we have come a long way—and what lies ahead.

First, our new Strategic Plan has been a success in focusing the Union's activities and emphasizing core values of openness, transparency, inclusiveness, and multi-, inter-, and trans-disciplinarity in our projects and outreach activities. Our mission, as "the global organization that provides objective scientific expertise and develops the essential tools for the application and communication of chemical knowledge for the benefit of humankind and the world," has been taken to heart by our volunteers and is reflected in IUPAC's many new initiatives.

To fulfill our mission, we have fortified the Union's infrastructure. With our Executive Director, Dr. Lynn Soby, we have built a strong, high-functioning Secretariat with improved processes and responsiveness to our members' needs. We have benefited from improved accounting and financial management processes, hiring a full-time financial controller; established a successful partnership between our Finance Committee and an external financial advisor; we are well on the way to establishing a new National Subscription structure that will be fair to all our National Adhering Organizations; and Council has approved the proposal to establish an endowment fund; for all of which we owe thanks to the Secretariat, to our Treasurer, Colin Humphris, and to the Finance Committee, chaired by Prof. John Corish.

We are focusing on recruiting new members of IUPAC and providing excellent service to all our current members: NAO's, Associated Organizations, volunteers, affiliates, and fellows. Our new website is developing continuously and has been well received. The Membership Relations Committee has completed

surveys of our member stakeholders that have helped create new value propositions that will clearly state why they should be members of IUPAC and participate in our success. The surveys reveal that there is strong interest in the Union's main purpose as the provider of "a common language for chemistry," and in contributing to the furtherance of the science. In São Paulo in July, Council has also approved increased benefits for Affiliate Members and Company Associates, including enabling scientists who are IUPAC Affiliates or employed at CAs to have a greater stake in governance.

While IUPAC focuses on service to chemistry and its related sciences, nothing we do excites the general public as much as the discovery of new chemical elements. Six new elements have been added to the periodic table in the last six years, and with President Natalia Tarasova's leadership, IUPAC is now working to establish an International Year of the Periodic Table for 2019. The Evaluation Committee, due to the recommendation of Secretary General Richard Hartshorn, will be developing a process for periodic evaluation of each of the Divisions and Standing Committees toward their objectives. The new Interdivisional Committee on Green Chemistry for Sustainable Development, established in 2017, is the most recent example of IUPAC's focus on its mission to foster sustainable development, through collaborations with all the Divisions and Standing Committees.

The Committee on Publications and Cheminformatics Data Standards has strengthened *Chemistry International* and *Pure and Applied Chemistry*. With Scientific Editor Prof. Hugh Burrows, PAC's impact factor is rising, and CPCDS has worked effectively to maximize the benefits of working with our publishing partner, DeGruyter.

IUPAC has also strengthened its ties with external organizations with which IUPAC shares elements of its mission and goals. With the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), IUPAC now has a Memorandum of Understanding that underpins its collaborative efforts. The Hague Ethical Guidelines, developed from principles outlined in an IUPAC project on guidelines for conduct of chemists; IUPAC has permanent observer status on the OPCW Advisory Board on Education and Outreach; and IUPAC helped to organize a productive workshop in July on innovative technologies for chemical security, papers from which will constitute a special topics issue of *Pure and Applied Chemistry* in 2018. With the International Council for Science (ICSU), IUPAC received a major award for funding of a three-year collaborative project on gender gap issues in science, and IUPAC leaders have provided advice to

ICSU and the International Social Sciences Council regarding their proposal to merge the two organizations. IUPAC's continuing encouragement of younger chemists' participation in the Union was cemented this year with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the International Younger Chemists Network, and the awardees in 2017 of the IUPAC-Solvay Award were selected from one of the strongest sets of applications in many years. Solvay has generously offered to continue its financial support of the Award and has doubled the amount it will contribute for 2019 in recognition of the IUPAC Centenary.

All of these accomplishments—the work of our hundreds of volunteers on project task groups, Division Committees, Standing Committees, the Bureau, the Executive Committee and the officers, with the support of all our Members—have built a foundation for growth of the Union as it approaches its second century. We can be proud of how far IUPAC has come, and we can look forward to substantial growth in membership, influence and scientific contributions.

The past six years have been among the most productive, exciting, difficult, enjoyable, exhausting, and wonderful of my life. I am honored and grateful to be a

part of a succession of past, current and future IUPAC Presidents that includes Leiv Sydhnes, Bryan Henry, Jung-Il Jin, Nicole Moreau, Kazuyuki Tatsumi, Natalia Tarasova, Qi-Feng Zhou, and Christopher Brett; all of whom have advised and encouraged me and helped make IUPAC the vital organization that it is today. It has been a pleasure working with all of the members of the Bureau, Executive Committee, the Committee on Chemistry and Industry, where I started in IUPAC as a young observer, and all of the members of the Divisions and Standing Committees. It is impossible to overestimate how rewarding it is to be a part of a global enterprise in the service of science, and I hope that all of our volunteers will experience the broadening of perspective that comes from working with enthusiastic people from all over the world.

A special thanks to all of my IUPAC friends and colleagues. Thank goodness for volunteers! 🙏🇺🇸

Mark Cesa <mcesa@iupac.org> is past president of IUPAC since January 2016. Previously he served as president in 2014–2015, vice president in 2012–2013, and on the Committee on Chemistry and Industry as secretary (2000–2003), vice chair (2004–2005), and chair (2006–2009). Cesa is a process chemistry consultant with INEOS Nitriles in Naperville, Illinois, USA.

PURE AND APPLIED CHEMISTRY

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Since 1960, the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC) has made available to chemists everywhere a large amount of important chemical information published in the journal *Pure and Applied Chemistry*.

Pure and Applied Chemistry is the official monthly Journal of IUPAC, with responsibility for publishing works arising from those international scientific events and projects that are sponsored and undertaken by the Union. The policy is to publish highly topical and credible works at the forefront of all aspects of pure and applied chemistry, and the attendant goal is to promote widespread acceptance of the Journal as an authoritative and indispensable holding in academic and institutional libraries.

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