The Project Place

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NMR Chemical Shifts: Updated Conventions

The recent IUPAC document on conventions for chemical shifts (*Pure and Applied Chemistry* **73**, 2001, 1795), which has been well received by the nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) community, left a number of outstanding issues for later debate. These include (i) temperature variation of the signals for the standards, (ii) the use of magic-angle spinning for both solutions and solids, (iii) solvent effects, (iv) susceptibility measurements/corrections, and (v) conventions for shielding tensors. These matters will now be taken up by a Task Group including R. K. Harris (chairman), E. D. Becker, S. M. Cabral de Menezes, P. Granger, and K. W. Zilm. An evening "open forum" has been arranged during the 16th International NMR Meeting on NMR Spectroscopy at the University of Cambridge, 29 June to 3 July 2003, to discuss the relevant questions.

Anyone with views or information about these issues should contact either <r.k.harris@durham.ac.uk> or <tbecker@nih.gov>.

www.iupac.org/projects/2003/2003-006-1-100.html

Terminology for Radical Polymerizations with Minimal Termination

About 10 years ago it was discovered that the addition of certain compounds—e.g., nitroxides or complexes of Cu(I)—had a profound effect on the course of a radical polymerization. The radicals formed are then able to persist for long periods, consequently the molecular weight of the polymer produced increases with conversion, resulting in low polydispersity. In their enthusiasm for novel reactions of this kind, the authors of papers describing their results developed individual types of nomenclature without any coordination.

The frenzy of activity on the part of individuals outside IUPAC to attempt to define terms, or to call for regulated terminology, demonstrates the urgent need for an appropriate IUPAC body to quickly provide an internationally agreed set of terms in this field of the so-called "living" and/or "controlled" radical polymerization. The IUPAC Subcommittee on Macromolecular Terminology wishes to resolve these issues with a minimum of delay.

For more information contact the Task Group Chairman Aubrey D. Jenkins at <adjjj@jjadj.u-net.com>.

www.iupac.org/projects/2002/2002-006-2-400.html

Toward a Core Organic Chemistry Curriculum for Latin American Universities

The Committee on Chemistry Education (CCE) and the Organic and Biomolecular Chemistry Division have jointly endorsed a project with the following objectives:

- to propose general recommendations for up-to-date university curricula in organic chemistry without interfering with instructors' freedom
- to contribute to the public understanding of chemistry by introducing fundamental concepts that demonstrate how organic chemistry is important to most aspects of common life
- to facilitate communication, transferability of courses, and exchange of students, as well as insertion of graduates into transnational industries

CCE proposes that this be a pilot project focused on Latin America. The goal is not to unify curricula worldwide, but instead to concentrate on a region where there is a demonstrable interest. If successful, the project might be extended to other developing countries and/or regions.

The Task Group proposes to develop recommendations for curricula in organic chemistry, including a set of required and recommended topics to be covered at each educational level in a university. One goal is to ensure that students reach an acceptable level of knowledge by the end of their course of studies, without undue gaps. There is no intention of imposing a uniform curriculum; the aim is to define what new material should be introduced and what can be deleted or reduced. A similar project was recently undertaken in Europe, in which more than 200 universities have been developing the European Chemistry Thematic Network <www.cpe.fr/ectn>.

The initial Task Group, which included members from Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Mexico, and Europe, have exchanged information and classified topics as essential, desirable, or non-essential. Since the project began in the summer of 2002, the Task Group has made good progress, in part because it has grown to include new members. An informal meeting was first held in August 2002 in conjunction with the 16th IUPAC Conference on Physical Organic Chemistry (ICPOC16), San Diego, California, USA. The participation of other conference attendees resulted in very stimulating discussions and suggestions and valuable input from a number of organic chemists. The project was later presented as a