Past President's Column

Membership in IUPAC



by Bryan Henry

e are constantly attempting to widen the influence of IUPAC by reaching out to new members. We currently have 51 National Adhering Organizations (NAOs) and 16 Associate National Adhering Organizations (ANAOs). If you look at a map with our members identified, it is clear that we are truly an international organization with impressive membership

representation in North America, Europe, Asia, and the South Pacific. However, there are clear gaps in Africa and South America.

Recently, we revised an existing committee with the aim of providing a new concentration on membership activities. While the Membership Relations Committee will continue to recruit new members, it will also focus on making sure that we are meeting the needs and expectations of our current members. In particular, we need to find ways to improve communication. IUPAC is involved in a number of exciting and worthwhile activities and we need to make our members more

aware of what we are doing. Communication will take on a new urgency as we approach 2011 and the proposed International Year of Chemistry.

Initially, the top priority of the committee will be to address the relatively urgent challenge of soliciting the full membership of all current ANAOs. Associate National Adhering Organizations have observer status in IUPAC. The ANAO program was intended to introduce a national organization representing chemistry in a particular country to IUPAC and its many activities. The dues were set at a very low rate and the hope was that after an introductory period the organization would move to full NAO status. During the 2005 meeting of the Bureau, this policy was endorsed and a four-year limit was imposed on ANAO status. As a result, most of the current ANAOs must become full members by 2010 or they will lose their status. I am glad to report that over this past year, a few ANAOs

have already submitted their applications to become full NAOs in 2010.

A first step in this strategy was to write to all ANAOs reminding them of the existing policy and encouraging them to become NAOs. The letter summarizes some of the benefits of NAO status (see box below). In particular, the opportunity to host IUPAC-sponsored conferences is only open to NAOs. Such conferences generally provide an infusion of resources into the local economy that often outweighs the amount paid for a national subscription. Another initiative was to assign responsibility for each ANAO to a member of the committee so they can follow up the letter with personal contact and a direct source of information.

This same step has been taken with the NAOs; each one has been assigned to a Bureau member. Communications to NAOs are sent out by the

Secretariat to the adhering organizations. The Bureau NAO contacts will provide another more informal channel to discuss any matters arising from these official messages. The overall purpose is to increase communication.

Membership retention and communication with members are matters too important to be left as the sole responsibility of a single committee. All of us within IUPAC should contribute. We welcome your help and invite anyone with specific suggestions to contact the committee.

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Members' Benefits Explained

- "Why on Earth Be(come) an IUPAC Member?" Nov 2007 CI, p. 2 www.iupac.org/publications/ci/2007/2906/oc.html
- Hints 2.2—An Informal Review of IUPAC Members' Benefits, Duties and Functions, and Relevant Programs www.iupac.org/general/hints.html