

## Go Forth and Nominate!

by *David StC. Black*

In February, I wrote to all National Adhering Organizations (NAOs) and members of the Bureau about the elections that will take place at the Council meeting on 3-4 August this year during the General Assembly in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Hopefully, numerous nominations for the various available positions will already have been sent to the Secretariat. However, this is a reminder that nominations can still be accepted until two months before the meeting (i.e., until 3 June). My purpose in writing this column is to encourage as many nominations as possible for the available positions.

IUPAC is the only international organization for the promotion of chemistry, and operates through the provision of a cooperative framework for global networking. It is therefore vital that this global framework is as broadly based as possible, with representatives not only from the large and powerful NAOs, but also from the smaller and less powerful ones. Currently, the Council is comprised of 57 NAOs with a very broad geographic spread and also a wide range of sizes.

Although the major NAOs or chemical societies are strong and regular contributors to IUPAC's international activities, the traditional and rather special IUPAC environment and ethos provide a serious platform for contributions from even the smallest participants. In this way, the stronger groups can be of great assistance to the weaker ones, and at the same time frequently learn from them as well.

NAOs have already focused their attention on nominating individuals for the various division committees, and also, in a less formal sense, for the operational standing committees. But the NAOs also need to seriously consider possible nominations for the Bureau membership: We need strong personal qualities above all



else, and we need members who will proactively contribute ideas and sound judgment to help IUPAC fulfill its global goals. The Statutes and Bylaws contain the statement "Unless exceptional circumstances are established and special permission of the Council is granted, no Adhering Organization shall have more than one elected member on the Bureau, and the principle of fair geographical representation of members shall be taken into account." Consequently some NAOs have already supplied an elected

member of the Bureau, but there is enormous scope for most NAOs to nominate worthy candidates.

In reality, there is another geographical consequence in that all division presidents and operational standing committee chairs are members of the Bureau by virtue of their positions, and while this means that they are on the Bureau to represent their division or standing committee, of course they also come from their respective countries. Pragmatically, this could make it harder—but certainly not impossible—for a nominee from a country already well represented on the Bureau to become an elected member. It should be remembered that the terms of office are not the same, and an elected member could, if re-elected to a second term, serve on the Bureau for a period of eight years, whereas the turnover of division presidents and operational standing committee chairs would lead to considerably shorter periods of Bureau membership.

Again, reference to the Statutes and Bylaws reveals that the principal duties of the Bureau, are as follows:

- to ensure the strict observance of Statutes and Bylaws
- to prepare the agenda for meetings of the Council and in particular to make provision for elections
- to make recommendations thereon to the Council
- to attend the meetings of the Council
- to implement the decisions of the Council and execute the program of the Union as directed by the Council
- to take steps to ensure that International Congresses of Pure and Applied Chemistry are held
- to take decisions about the holding of scientific meetings as proposed by the division and standing committees
- to take all other steps necessary for the good conduct of the affairs of the Union.

These statements are rather bland and unexciting, but the most open-ended one is the last. In this instruction lies the capacity for creative ideas that could lead to the implementation of major programs of great significance to the promotion of chemistry. A very good example is the International Year of Chemistry. Bureau meetings do indeed cover all aspects of the affairs of the Union, and frequently surprise by springing to life from a seemingly dull agenda. Like all committees, the Bureau depends on the dedication of individual

contributions in time and thought and any satisfaction gained from membership would be directly proportional to input. One of the big issues for the Bureau moving into 2012 and beyond will be to capitalize on the momentum of the

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International Year of Chemistry—IYC 2011. President-elect Kazuyuki Tatsumi has indicated that this will be firmly in his mind as he becomes president in 2012. The coming years will be an exciting period to be a Bureau member and have the opportunity to contribute significantly to the global promotion of chemistry.

It is very important that there is a serious election for Bureau members, which requires that there are many more nominees than vacant positions. It reflects badly on an organization if the number of candidates is equal to the number of vacancies. I do not think anyone goes through life being elected to all positions for which they have been nominated, so there should be no feeling of sensitivity or embarrassment involved in losing an election. Quite a high proportion of our IUPAC presidents over the years have not been elected as vice president and president-elect on their first attempt. However, they did not withdraw, but were quite prepared to offer their services again.

This brings me to the vacant officer positions: I also urge NAOs to think about nominations for these officer positions. There will be some excellent potential candidates among the wider IUPAC family, especially for vice president and president-elect, even from outside IUPAC. An elected vice president has two years to immerse themselves in IUPAC issues before taking over as president. No such “luxury” exists for the secretary general, but just as I received good advice and help from my predecessor, I will try to give the same

## What Does the Bureau Do?

The Bureau is established by the Council to act for the Union during intervals between meetings of the Council; it therefore fulfills important functions by ensuring continuity. The Bureau normally meets once a year. It consists of the officers (president, vice president, secretary general, treasurer, immediate past president), the Division presidents and chairs of the Operational Standing Committees, and 10 other members elected by the Council. The elections should also allow for a fair geographical representation. In principle, no member country should have more than one Elected Member on the Bureau.

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- to make recommendations thereon to the Council
- to attend the meetings of the Council
- to implement the decisions of the Council and execute the program of the Union as directed by the Council
- to take steps to ensure that international congresses of pure and applied chemistry are held
- to take decisions about the holding of scientific meetings as proposed by the Division committees
- to take all other steps necessary for the good conduct of the affairs of the Union

See the Bylaws for more details.



[www.iupac.org/web/nt/2011-02-25\\_Bureau\\_Nomination](http://www.iupac.org/web/nt/2011-02-25_Bureau_Nomination)

to my successor. Sometimes, good potential candidates are reluctant to step forward because they feel that they do not have the time or capacity. It is up to our IUPAC membership to encourage these potential nominees, as they can be assured of wide-ranging support if elected.

So let us have a strong election on 4 August and make the ballot tellers work very hard! Let us show everyone that we have a truly vibrant Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry! 

See Call for Nominations on page 19.

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