

Annual Meeting of the ACS Committee on Nomenclature, Terminology and Symbols

New Orleans, National Meeting, Spring 2008

Monday, April 7, New Orleans Marriott Convention Center, River Bend 2 Room, 1.30 PM

Report of the ACS Carbohydrate Division Nomenclature Committee

The annual meeting of the IUPAC-IUBMB Joint Commission on Biochemical Nomenclature (JCBN) was held in Chevy Chase, MD, May 5--6, 2007 and I hosted the meeting. Following are items from that meeting concerning carbohydrate nomenclature, developing from the report I delivered last year.

Revision of the 1996 Recommendations (2-Carb)

Schomburg (JCBN chairman) asked for the status of the revision of the carbohydrate nomenclature. Horton said that the 1996 document is over ten years old, but has had small corrections incorporated in the web version. He said that there was no urgent reason to do a major revision as it covers all areas, including synthetic organic chemistry. Biochemists do not need such a detailed document. Instead, they require a more simplified document that addresses rapidly developing areas of biochemical interest, such as glycolipids, glycoproteins, and glycosaminoglycans. Horton has started the process of producing a carbohydrate document for biochemists by removing all material that would be of interest primarily to organic chemists. He said that there may still be more information in the document than biochemists would need. He suggested that some permitted biochemical usages be included and that the area of polysaccharides and glycoproteins may need some amplification by adding examples. The document is still at a preliminary stage, but he would appreciate comments and suggestions of areas where biochemists do need the information currently contained in the document.

Moss asked if this work comprises two projects rather than one, with the first being a concise document for biochemists and the second an update of the carbohydrate document. He pointed out that corrections to the 1996 version has been made to the web version but that they need to be published. Moss said that he was most concerned with polysaccharides, where the rules for naming them are not given and this makes it difficult to name all but the simplest polysaccharides. The document also lacks guidance on naming repeating monosaccharides. The second document should be covered by a supplement to the 1996 document rather than a complete rewrite. Horton, Vliegthart, McNaught, Dixon and Moss are working on the supplement to the 1996 carbohydrate document. This is still underway, and will be discussed further at the next JCBN meeting in Copenhagen May 15--16, 2008.

The attention of the meeting was drawn to the Ligraph tool to convert a sugar graph to ASCII IUPAC sugar nomenclature. This is available from <http://www.glycosciences.de/toolsLiGraph/>.

Respectfully submitted,

Derek Horton
Chairman, Carbohydrate Division Committee on Nomenclature