

ACS COUNCIL REPORT FOR AUGUST 13, 2014

Nomenclature, Terminology, and Symbols

NTS is monitoring developments associated with a proposed reorganization of the SI (Le Système International d'Unités) system of measurements. Recent proposals involve basing the new system on “explicit constant”, rather than the existing “explicit unit” definitions. Under the proposed system, the seven base units will be referenced to seven constants, which are referred to as “invariants of nature”. These constants will have their numerical values specified exactly. Of particular interest to chemists are the re-definitions of the mole and kilogram. In order to allow ACS members to understand the implications of a new SI, and to support input from ACS to the recommending agencies, NTS has planned a symposium at the San Francisco ACS meeting. This symposium has as co-sponsors the Division of Analytical Chemistry and the International Activities Committee. The half-day symposium, titled “Redefinition of Mole and Kilogram: Implications for Chemists,” will be presented on Monday, August 11, 8:30 a.m. –noon. Five international experts will participate in the symposium and panel discussion in the Moscone Center, North Bldg., Room 133.

Maintaining currency on nomenclature-related issues of potential concern to ACS is essential for NTS to fulfill its duties. A program of “current awareness” to educate and inform scientists on today’s important issues is in force.

In commerce, there is an important substance class for which traditional nomenclature is not directly applicable. These industrial chemicals are complex mixtures of variable composition, known as UVCB – substances of unknown or variable composition and biological materials. Further NTS potential collaborative action on these international regulations is being pursued.

The Committee discussed recent developments of the IUPAC International Chemical Identifier (InChi) – a variable-length code which serves as a molecular identifier in some chemical databases.

The Committee has expanded on its recently re-defined set of duties and responsibilities. NTS serves as a resource for items pertaining to nomenclature and terminology throughout the Society. Further communication on items of mutual interest between NTS and other Society units is being done by providing a short PowerPoint presentation highlighting key NTS capabilities and expertise. A letter was sent to Chairs of ACS Committees and Divisions, offering to present this at an upcoming meeting, for the purpose of showing how NTS might be able to support or enhance ongoing programs. NTS has scheduled four such presentations for the San Francisco meeting. Additional presentations are being planned for the Spring meeting in Denver.

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