

Foreword

Special topics have come to represent a familiar albeit irregular feature of *Pure and Applied Chemistry* (PAC) in recent years, and were originally conceived as a way of promoting occasional and sometimes extraordinary IUPAC projects. The concept has served to publicize new initiatives, and promote the role of chemistry in multidisciplinary activities and collaboration. For example, the proceedings of two successive Workshops on Advanced Materials featured prominently as special topic issues, and the series has now been assimilated into the program of established IUPAC events, whilst projects arising from close collaboration with fellow international bodies have enjoyed similar coverage, with special topic issues on “Natural and Anthropogenic Environmental Estrogens” and “Implications of Endocrine Active Substances for Humans and Wildlife”.

Publication policy has also been evolving to ensure that the Journal continues to occupy a unique and indispensable niche in the primary chemistry literature, and recent changes have been influenced by the distinctive features of special topic projects. Most notably, a prerequisite for publication coverage of IUPAC-sponsored events is prior editorial agreement on the desirability and scope of Journal coverage, as is acceptance of centrally coordinated peer review of all manuscripts. The policy recognizes that the core business of the Journal is to promote representative coverage of the established series of IUPAC-sponsored international conferences, for the good reason that they serve the topical mainstream of the subject with distinction.

It is therefore logical to seek out and promote certain events in these established series as “special topics”, and thus offer readers more in-depth coverage of the scientific proceedings. The recent history of special topics drawn from established series has vindicated this approach, and early citation statistics reveal an encouraging trend toward high recognition of such coverage. Conversely, above-average citation statistics provide valuable clues to established events that merit coverage as special topics. Organic synthesis is one such topic—the series has a 30-year history of immensely popular and well-supported international conferences that have witnessed some of the epochal disclosures of the discipline. Although earlier proceedings were sometimes published as monographs, PAC now enjoys the privilege of featuring proceedings from this series regularly, thanks to the enthusiastic support of conference organizers and presenters alike. It is a pleasure to introduce this issue, devoted to a fine selection of works arising from the scientific proceedings of the 15th International Conference on Organic Synthesis, held in Nagoya, Japan on 1–6 August 2004. The papers capture the vitality and ongoing promise of organic synthesis, and offer readers an opportunity to participate vicariously in another milestone in its advancement.

Special topic issues will feature more regularly in the future, as a deliberate initiative to showcase some of the most prominent and enduring disciplinary themes on offer in the calendar of established IUPAC-sponsored conferences.

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