Nanocenter Directors Gather from around the World

Earlier this month—preceding ChinaNano 2013, the largest nanoscience meeting in the world—nanocenter directors from around the world gathered to discuss topics such as the future of nanoscience, the balance between basic and applied research, public perceptions of nanotechnology, public outreach efforts, and how we might share our experiences with our members, partners, governments, and the public.

***ACS Nano* editors at the Nanocenter Directors' Forum in Beijing preceding ChinaNano 2013 on 4 September 2013. Left to right: Profs. Paul S. Weiss, Paul Mulvaney, Andre Nel, and Andrey Rogach.**

One of the leading issues we discussed was the role of nanoscience and nanotechnology in addressing the greatest problems the world faces, including resources, the environment and climate change, energy and energy storage, health care, food, poverty, conflict and terrorism, water, and biodiversity.[1] Tied closely to these topics is the public perception of nanoscience and nanotechnology. While this perception varies greatly around the world, we all reach out to our communities in one way or another. Some of our outreach efforts are receiving national and international attention. We are putting together a showcase of these efforts for an upcoming issue to share with you and with each other. In these and other efforts, we can accelerate progress worldwide by building on each other's best practices and innovations.

> We see important roles for our nanocenters in informing the public, regulators, and legislators so that technological development and commercialization can proceed safely and expeditiously.

As we recently discussed here, there are key differences between nanomaterials and chemicals, including in dispersity, our ability to characterize them, and the safety issues they present.[2] Clarifying those distinctions, as well as differences among even more distinct entities and fields with which nanotechnology is sometimes mistakenly associated in public perception (*e.g.*, genetically modified organisms, GMOs) will be critical to advancing our field. It is essential for us to convey the unique properties and extraordinary opportunities that nanomaterials and nanotechnology present. We see important roles for our nanocenters in informing and providing clear advice to the public, regulators, and legislators so that technological development and commercialization can proceed safely and expeditiously.

While each nanocenter at the forum was established with a different mission and operates with a distinct structure, we found much common ground as well as a great deal

Published online September 24, 2013
10.1021/nn404688p

to learn from each other. As only 30 of the world's leading nanocenters could be represented at what we believe was the first such meeting, we will next share our insights and discussions more broadly, including on these pages in *ACS Nano*. In another first for us, we held our first *ACS Nano* editors' meeting outside of the U.S. during ChinaNano 2013.

The four of us were honored and delighted to be included in these discussions. We are looking forward to the next such forum but also to bringing you and other colleagues what we learn from each other through this international alliance of leaders in nanoscience and nanotechnology.

Disclosure: Views expressed in this editorial are those of the authors and not necessarily the views of the ACS.

Acknowledgment. We would like to thank *ACS Nano* Editorial Advisory Board member Dr. Chunli Bai and his colleagues for organizing and the Chinese Academy of Sciences for supporting the Directors' Forum on Nanotechnology.

Paul Mulvaney
Associate Editor

Andre E. Nel
Associate Editor

Andrey Rogach
Associate Editor

Paul S. Weiss
Editor-in-Chief

REFERENCES AND NOTES

1. Smalley, R. E. Top Ten Problems Facing Humanity over the Next 50 Years. Rice University Professor Lecture Series **2003**. http://cnst.rice.edu/content.aspx?id=246.
2. Nel, A. E.; Nasser, E.; Godwin, H.; Avery, D.; Bahador, T.; Bergeson, L.; Beryt, E.; Bonner, J. C.; Boverhof, D.; Carter, J.; *et al.* Multi-Stakeholder Perspective on the Use of Alternative Test Strategies for Nanomaterial Safety Assessment. *ACS Nano* **2013**, *7*, 6422–6433.