

# CHEMISTRY of MATERIALS

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## Editorial

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### ***Chemistry of Materials in the Year 2000***

As we enter the year 2000, and *Chemistry of Materials* its 12th year of publication, it may be helpful to iterate a key objective set out for this journal in 1989: "a major objective of *Chemistry of Materials* is to provide a forum for work in materials-related chemistry and to highlight the pivotal role of chemistry as a source of new materials and approaches to materials processing". The growth of interest in this journal over the past 11 years indicates that this objective has been successfully met. During our first year of publication, we received 188 papers, mainly from the United States and published 126 of these in 6 bimonthly issues. A decade later, in January 2000, we have grown to a monthly publication which is receiving over 1000 papers annually from all over the world. In 1999, we published 544 papers, of which 61% were from outside of the United States.

Early in 1999, we added a new editorial office in Ontario, Canada, making a total of five editorial offices, two of which are located outside the United States. This wide distribution of sites recognizes that research in materials chemistry has become an international enterprise and includes scientists and engineers throughout the world. We intend to continue our efforts to draw together research efforts with a common focus on the "chemistry of materials" and to report this work promptly to a growing audience of interested readers worldwide.

Over the past year, several important changes have been made in our editorial staff, our handling of manuscripts, and our instructions to authors that are worthy of mention.

In addition to starting a new office in Canada, during the summer of 1999, our editorial office at Caltech under Mark Davis was replaced by one at the University of Minnesota under Mike Ward. We are grateful to Mark Davis for his outstanding service over his three year tenure as associate editor. We look forward to his

continuing participation as an author and a reviewer. Regardless of the office that shepherds the review and processing of a manuscript, the central receiving point for manuscript submissions continues to be our Troy, NY, office, except for our authors in Europe, who have the option of sending their papers to either the Troy office or to the office of Dr. Hellmut Eckert at the University of Münster in Germany.

Not only where we handle manuscripts, but how we handle manuscripts has changed over the past year. The growth of *Chemistry of Materials* over the past 11 years has provided our readers with an increase in information content; however, a larger size also leads to higher production costs, which must eventually be passed on to the subscribers. In this context, the ACS has established "page budgets" for each of its journals that relate directly to the costs of producing that journal. In response to such page budget limitations, and also to the expectation that our readers would prefer higher quality to greater quantity, we are placing an increased emphasis on the publication of only high-quality papers that report significant advances in materials chemistry. This has resulted in a significantly increased rejection rate for our papers in 1999, amounting to almost one half of the papers submitted.

While applying higher standards for publication, we continue to be committed to providing as rapid an evaluation process as possible and publishing the accepted papers promptly. In 1999, we began to track the time that was required to review a manuscript and report back to the author with a decision and found that our average "response time" with either an acceptance, a request for revision, or a rejection was ~2 months. We will continue to monitor this "response time" and endeavor to reduce it to a minimum, consistent with sound reviewing practices. During 1999, the average

time from receipt of a manuscript to its publication on the WWW was 5.5 months (4.2 for Communications and 5.7 for Articles). We are grateful to our reviewers, Associate Editors, and the ACS Journal Publications staff, for their conscientious efforts, which have made this possible. As we continue to reduce our response time, our overall manuscript processing time should decrease even further.

In response to both page budget limitations and the feeling that shorter papers are more likely to be read and appreciated by our readers than longer ones, we have made an effort over the past year to decrease the average size of our published papers. In the case of Communications, we have had for some time a 1500 word limit. We are now carefully checking submitted Communications for size, counting each figure, table, etc. as equivalent to 100 words, and returning oversize Communications to the authors for shortening before sending them out for review. Last year we also began to identify articles that exceeded 30 double-spaced manuscript pages (~7 journal pages) and to ask for special attention on the part of the reviewers and editors to determine if the paper meets the criterion of utmost conciseness, consistent with clarity and completeness. We recognize that not all papers are equal in terms of their information content and that an arbitrary limit on the size of a paper is unrealistic. But, on the other hand, journal space and our readers' time are limited and we could all do more to insure that our papers are as concise as possible. So far, we have seen only a modest decrease in the average size of published papers; however, an increasing number of authors are responding positively, resulting in significantly more concise papers. We intend to continue this effort during 2000 by asking authors to provide justification for papers that exceed 30 pages (see Notice to Authors).

In addition to regular Articles and Communications (see Notice to Authors), we strongly encourage authors to submit short Review papers for publication. These review papers can take two forms, either research- or technology-based. Technology-based reviews are intended to focus on a major area of materials chemistry related to key technologies and to outline the major technical problems for which new materials or improved understanding of materials-related chemistry is needed for future progress. Research-based reviews are intended to provide a concise, but comprehensive, survey of a particular subarea of forefront materials chemistry research. Both types of reviews should take a topical, rather than a personal, view of the area to be covered and should not exceed 50 double-spaced manuscript pages in length. These reviews will be peer-reviewed and must meet the criteria of originality, overall quality, and general significance to the materials chemistry community that we have set for all papers that we publish. Prospective authors should contact the Editor or any of the Associate Editors regarding their interest in preparing a review to determine if the intended subject matter and scope seem appropriate and are not overlapped by other reviews that may be in progress.

This coming year we will continue the practice of using an illustration provided by an author in the issue for the full front cover of the journal. Authors of review papers are given the first opportunity to provide a candidate illustration, but if we have no reviews, we will

select a cover illustration from other papers in that issue. For this reason, all authors are encouraged to submit potential illustrations (preferably in color) for consideration when their paper has been accepted for publication. Please see our Notice to Authors for details regarding the preferred format for such illustrations.

Several important changes have been made in our Notice to Authors for 2000, and we request that all authors look this over carefully before submitting their next paper to *Chemistry of Materials*. Among the changes is a complete revision in the instructions relating to the submission and presentation of crystallographic data. The current version of these instructions has been adapted from the Notice to Authors of *Inorganic Chemistry* and conforms in most respects to the procedures employed by this journal.

Starting in 2000 color reproduction of figures will be provided in all ACS journals (including *Chemistry of Materials*) at no cost to the author as long as it is approved by the Editor as essential for the presentation. The use of color just for visual appeal will not be approved, and the need for the figure, as well as the need for printing the figure in color, must be adequately justified.

A new feature called "reference linking" has been added to the Web Editions of ACS journals. Subscribers to these Web Editions are now able to link from references in journal articles directly to abstract and bibliographic information at Chemical Abstract Service (CAS). Subscribers viewing a reference in the full-text HTML versions of an article can click on the "CAS" tag following the reference and retrieve the corresponding abstract.

Also worthy of mention is a new, free service, called ASAP Alerts. This service features announcements of available ASAP (As Soon As Publishable) articles from each of ACS' 28 Web Editions. Users can sign up to receive e-mail notices on a weekly basis or on the same day the articles are posted on the Web, from any or all of the ACS journal Web Editions. The message contains the title, author, journal name, Web publication date, and direct URL link to the full article on the Web. Subscribers to the Web Edition can then access the full article while nonsubscribers can purchase it via the use of the ACS' Articles on Command service. Registration for ASAP Alerts can be accomplished in a few minutes (at no cost) at <http://pubs.acs.org>.

In past years, we have devoted one of our issues to invited and contributed papers (all peer-reviewed in the usual manner) on a key topic of broad current interest to the materials chemistry community. No such "special issues" are planned for 2000; however, several prospective topics are under consideration for 2001 and will be announced later this year. As always, your suggestions for special issue topics, as well as your opinions regarding the utility of such issues in general, are greatly appreciated. Also, any suggestions regarding topics/authors for review papers as well as your opinions on any of the points raised in this editorial are welcomed at anytime (e-mail: [interl@rpi.edu](mailto:interl@rpi.edu)).

**L. V. Interrante**

*Editor*

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