

## **Advisory Vote on Fuel Division Preprints**

The Division of Fuel Chemistry Preprints have existed since 1957, and submittal of a preprint has been a divisional requirement for presentation at the National Meeting. The Preprints especially achieved prominence in the areas of synthetic fuels and coal chemistry, which for many years was the focus of the Division. Increasingly, the value of continuing the Preprints is being questioned, for a host of reasons, many of which are listed below. On the other hand, the tradition of the Preprints is a strong one within the Division, and may be considered to be part of its “identity”.

The Executive Committee has decided to poll the members of the Division regarding whether to continue the Preprints in some form (possibly electronically, details of which remain to be worked out), or whether to do away with them altogether. Below are summaries of the two positions (to continue or discontinue the Preprints). Please read them. You are then requested to provide your advisory vote on the included ballot.

### ***Arguments for continuing the Preprints in some form:***

- History. The division of Fuel Chemistry has a long and proud history of submission of a preprint in order to present at a meeting.
- Benefit. Preprints, available to members from the 1957 inception, are an invaluable resource and perhaps the single most tangible benefit of Fuel Division membership. Dropping the preprints would fundamentally change the nature of the Division, and ultimately result in its decline.
- Rapid publication. The Preprints allow a rapid publication of work and informal feedback from the community. They are also a benefit for graduate student education through the writing of the preprint.
- Benefits to non-attending members. The Preprints benefit those members who are unable to attend the conference. This is the bulk of the membership.
- Source of new members. The availability of the Preprints has also traditionally been a source for new member recruitment, gained during the national conferences.

### ***Arguments against continuing the Preprints:***

- Competition. The FUEL Preprints are no longer one of the leading source of the very latest information on the current broad topics of interest to its membership. The number of alternate and competing sources has virtually "exploded." This has considerably reduced the value of the Preprints.
- Changing interests. There is a changing spectrum of interests within the Division membership. This affects the preprints because increasingly people are interested in one end of the spectrum (e.g., fuel cells, photovoltaics, etc.) but are not interested in the other end (e.g., more traditional hydrocarbon fuel chemistry).
- Disincentive. Rather than being a strong inducement to becoming a member of the Division, as the Preprints have for years, preparation of a preprint is now becoming viewed as an increasingly onerous and relatively valueless chore – so much so that some potential contributors now seek alternate venues outside the Division to present their work, almost all of which do not require a preprint in order to present.
- Rising Costs. Greater than one-third (to perhaps as high as 40%, when all the indirect

costs are included) of the operating budget of the Division is consumed by the Preprints. The switch from hard copy to CD format provided some cost savings, but these cost savings are diminishing with time, as costs continue to increase.

- Dwindling Subscriptions. The decreasing value of the Preprints is reflected in the number of its commercial customers. A decade or so ago we had approximately one hundred industrial and library customers for the Preprints. This has steadily dwindled to less than fifty. This revenue stream has now become almost negligible.
- Associated Program Problems. There have been an increasing number of complaints from Symposium Organizers, Session Chairs, and individual invited and contributing speakers about having to do the extra work involved in preparing a preprint, since they do see much value in them. In addition, coercing speakers into submitting a preprint and having to enter it into OASYS on a post-deadline basis has become a growing chore for Program Chairs. Program Chairs and their volunteers are difficult enough to find, without having to burden them with the additional problems related to Preprints.
- Lack of Preprint-Related Volunteers. It is becoming very difficult to find volunteers for the positions of Preprints and Subscriptions Editors.
- Advent of Electronic Dissemination of Meeting Content. The ACS, in cooperation with a company named CMC, is experimenting with electronic dissemination of meeting content, in order to serve the greater than 90% of its members who do not attend the National Meetings. Depending on the success of these experiments, various models for electronic dissemination of meeting content are being discussed – most of them involving direct participation of Divisions. This is viewed as a potential source of additional revenue to support Divisional programming, and could well become a viable successor to the FUEL Preprints.