

AMERICAN UNION OF CRYSTALLOGRAPHY

IUCr General Assembly Business

A Report from the 2026 IUCr Congress & General Assembly, Calgary, Canada

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This year's General Assembly marked a milestone for the U.S. crystallographic community: the American Union of Crystallography was formally approved as the country's Adhering Body to the International Union of Crystallography, succeeding the National Academy of Sciences–National Research Council. Below, a summary of the Assembly's business, the AUC's activities in Calgary, and reflections from three travel award recipients.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY BUSINESS

The General Assembly conducted the regular business of the Union, taking up adherence, finances, Commission membership, selection of the next Congress site, and election of the Executive Committee.

The Assembly approved the AUC as the Adhering Body representing the United States, succeeding the National Academy of Sciences–National Research Council. The vote formally establishes the AUC as the organization responsible for U.S. representation within the IUCr.



The U.S. delegation for GA3 in Calgary. From left to right. Joe Ferrara, Lisa Keefe, Cora Lind-Kovacs, Allen Oliver and Ilia Guzei.

The Assembly also elected a new IUCr Executive Committee. Thomas Proffen of the United States was elected President; Manfred Weiss of Germany, Vice-President; and Petra Bombicz of Hungary, General Secretary and

Treasurer. Charles Bond of Australia, Louise Dawe of Canada, and Annalisa Guerri of Italy were elected as ordinary members.

Members of the IUCr Commissions were elected as presented, setting the Commission structure and leadership for the coming triennium.

Bids to host the 2032 IUCr Congress and General Assembly were received from Shanghai, China; Mumbai, India; Cape Town, South Africa; and Incheon, South Korea. Following the selection process, Incheon was chosen as the host city.

Financial sustainability remains a priority for the IUCr. Assembly papers projected a General Fund deficit of approximately CHF 415,000 for 2026–2028. The Unit Contribution paid by Adhering Bodies will hold at CHF 1,000 for 2027–2029, with a proposed 10% increase to be taken up at the next General Assembly.

AUC ACTIVITIES AT THE CONGRESS

Beyond formally becoming the U.S. Adhering Body, the AUC maintained a visible presence throughout the Congress. An exhibition booth introduced attendees to the organization, its programs, and the ways the crystallographic community can get involved. Over the course of the week, the AUC also secured corporate sponsorships and individual donations supporting its student and unrestricted funds.



The U.S. delegation, alternates, and new IUCr President Thomas Proffen celebrate the vote making the AUC the U.S. Adhering Body. Left to right: Delegate Allen Oliver, Delegate Ilia Guzei, Delegate Sarah Bowman, Delegate Joe Ferrara, IUCr President Thomas Proffen, Delegate Cora Lind-Kovacs, Alternate Lisa Keefe and Alternate Nicholas Sauter.

With the AUC now serving as the Adhering Body, it has also begun working with the National Academy of Sciences to transfer the former USNC/Cr's private funds to the AUC.

On the evening of Friday, August 14, the AUC hosted a reception at the James Joyce Irish Pub in Calgary, sponsored by Allen Oliver. The gathering gave members of the U.S. delegation, AUC donors, and the broader crystallographic community an informal setting to connect and discuss the AUC's growing role.



AUC delegates, donors, and guests at the James Joyce Irish Pub reception.

Taken together, the Calgary Congress and General Assembly marked an important transition for both the IUCr and the U.S. crystallographic community. The IUCr elected new leadership, sustained continuity across its scientific Commissions, and chose Incheon as the site of the 2032 Congress. At the same time, the AUC formally assumed responsibility for U.S. adherence, expanded its support for early-career crystallographers, engaged the community through its booth and reception, and strengthened the financial footing for its future programs.

AUC TRAVEL AWARDS

The AUC presented three \$1,000 travel awards on August 16. Short reflections from each awardee follow.



Tim Boznon

Baylor University

One of the things I learned at IUCr 2026 is that crystallography is an elegant science. Posters and talks alike are full of crystals — some grown large under extreme conditions, others coaxed out of solution at the scale of micrometers, many of them strikingly beautiful. At its core, it's an elegant experimental platform for asking deep questions. The first talks I attended were in a materials science workshop on modeling diffuse scatter in inorganic crystals with molecular dynamics. As a protein crystallographer I was well outside my depth, yet the underlying questions were the same as in my own field: What is happening inside the crystal? How do we model it? What experiments can we run? I found that true across every discipline — I might not follow the background or the

analysis, but I can always understand the crystal and the question being asked of it. One of my favorite talks was Dr. Doeke Hekstra's work on electric-field-stimulated protein crystallography, the first work I'd seen aimed at directly measuring the forces acting on protein atoms — a deep question paired with an elegant experiment, crystallography at its best.

My time at IUCr broadened my sense of where crystallography sits within the wider sciences. I sat in on talks from materials scientists, protein biochemists, XFEL staff scientists, and computational chemists, and met people whose tools I've relied on throughout graduate school, including Dr. David Case and Dr. Doeke Hekstra. Prominent researchers in my own field, such as Dr. John Helliwell, took a genuine interest in my work and offered valuable feedback. These conversations gave me new ideas for my research, renewed motivation to keep asking deep questions of my crystals, and confidence that crystallography is as deep a science as it is wide. I'm only beginning to see the benefits of attending IUCr 2026 — benefits I expect to carry through my career. Thank you to the AUC for the opportunity; your investment in early-career scientists will keep paying dividends for the field. See you all in Berlin!



Gabriella Ruiz

UCLA

I had an amazing time at IUCr 2026 in Calgary. Getting to attend a conference so relevant to my own interests and research is a real privilege. My first ACA conference was Baltimore in 2023, and I remember arriving nervous, worried I wouldn't be able to break into the space or make meaningful connections — I'm glad to say I was wrong. I felt welcomed from day one, and since then I've made it a personal goal to attend every year. This year felt especially special: I reconnected with people I see annually, but also met newcomers who don't typically attend ACA. I'm also deeply involved in the electron diffraction community, and every year I look forward to seeing what people from across the country — and, this time, the world — are doing to push MicroED forward. This year I was fortunate to present in the small-molecule MicroED session alongside many excellent talks.

It's no secret that funding cuts have taken a real toll on the scientific community, including work-related travel. Despite my goal of attending every year, I likely wouldn't have made it to IUCr this time without the AUC Travel Scholarship. I'm looking forward to attending more conferences and building my career so that, before long, I can help fund awards like this one and support others the way I've consistently been supported.



Jitendra Singh

University at Buffalo

What the Congress gave me most was access. As a graduate student at a single institution, my scientific world has been fairly small — my advisors, my committee, the people who pass through our department. IUCr put me in contact with researchers from a far wider range of backgrounds than I encounter at home, letting me survey techniques well outside my own and share a method from my recent paper with people who hadn't seen it before. The pre-Congress small-angle scattering workshop offered the same kind of access in a narrower, more useful direction: I work in a lab that develops SAXS methods, so the real value was spending a day with the beamline scientists on the other side of that work — exchanging ideas, learning which problems are live at the national light sources, and understanding what beamlines need from the users and developers who depend on them. Across both settings I reconnected with mentors I hadn't seen in years and met several people who could become mentors going forward — an entry into the field that's hard to manufacture on your own, and likely the part of the meeting I'll remember longest.

The meeting also clarified where I want to go next. I'm finishing my dissertation and applying for postdoctoral and industry positions this year, with interests in protein design and integrative structural biology — combining experimental structural methods with computational modeling to answer questions neither can address alone. I spent much of the week in the protein design and biotechnology sessions for exactly that reason, and it was useful to see how quickly the field is moving and who's driving it. Talking directly with the people working these problems gave me a far clearer sense of where my own training fits and which directions are worth pursuing — a perspective that's hard to get from papers or job postings alone. My thanks to the AUC for the Student Scholarship, which made this trip possible and has shaped how I'm thinking about the next stage of my career.



GEORGE M. SHELDRIK PRIZE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO STRUCTURAL SCIENCE

The inaugural George M. Sheldrick Prize for Contributions to Structural Science was presented on August 18 to Stephanie Wankowicz of Vanderbilt University, in conjunction with her keynote lecture. The Prize recognizes outstanding contributions by non-tenured, early-career researchers who advance molecular structure determination through innovative methods, algorithms, or software.

Stephanie Wankowicz (Vanderbilt University) receives the inaugural George M. Sheldrick Prize.