

Email from Professor Dieter Richter to Cecilia Jarlskog
20 October

Dear Prof. Jarlskog,

Thank you very much for your recent e-mail with respect to a possible new commission for soft matter within IUPAP. I must apologize for only answering now but for this task I need the support of our board of directors – you may know I am working in the largest German government research center – which I got today. I think, the idea to have a soft matter commission within IUPAP will advance a research area that is interdisciplinary in nature, however, in its basic foundations is underpinned by physics. The foundation of soft matter science lies within the statistical physics and therefore the argument that soft matter is basically chemistry is wrong. The beauty of soft matter science is that it brings together chemistry, theoretical and experimental physics and computer simulation as well as aspects of biophysics. Since the underpinning science for soft matter is physics, a soft matter commission would be well placed within IUPAP.

I think, it is worth the setup such a commission and I would be willing to chair a working group that should lead to a IUPAP commission for soft matter.

Coming from a solid state institute, the rather well known IFF in Juelich, I know well how to distinguish hard matter science (classical solid state physics) from soft matter. The soft matter branch in Juelich developed within the condensed matter institute and became a few years ago a separate division called “Institute for Complex Systems” where under the roof of physics soft matter and biophysics research is brought together.

I would have to learn what IUPAP commissions are all about and what I should do in this frame. But again, I think as separate soft matter area that promotes the field, would be worth the effort (you may know that the APS just recently created a topical group on soft matter).

With very best regards

Dieter Richter

Note added by CJ:

You may find information about Professor Richter in

http://www.fz-juelich.de/ics/ics-1/DE/UeberUns/Mitarbeiter/Richter_D/D_Richter_res.html?nn=804732