

REPORT FROM THE ACS NATIONAL MEETING

Denver, CO, March 22-26, 2015



Highlights from the Denver Meeting

It seemed a bit risky to have the spring ACS meeting in Denver, weather wise, but things generally worked out fine, other than some chilly nights and a little snow mixed with rain on Wednesday of the Council meeting. Fortunately, the area around the convention center is quite compact with the hotels only being across the street or a few blocks away, so rarely is there a need for any shuttle buses. The ACS was last in Denver for the summer meeting in 2011 and there seemed to be more hotel options close by the convention center this time.

For the California Local Section, there were two especially significant highlights at this meeting. On Sunday afternoon the James Bryant Conant Award winner for Outstanding High School Teaching, Jenelle Ball from Chico High School, presented her award address. Jenelle was also recognized on stage during the overall ACS Awards banquet on Tuesday evening. CAL-ACS Councilors Eileen Nottoli and Mark Frishberg attended both events and sat at

Jenelle's table at the Awards Banquet, along with her husband, David, members of Thermo Fisher, sponsors of the Conant Award, and Dr. and Mrs. Thomas Lane, an ACS Past President.

The second significant highlight was saved until Wednesday at the Council meeting when one of our Councilors, Dr. Bryan Balazs, was selected by Council from a slate of four nominees as one of the two candidates for President-Elect of the ACS for 2016. Congratulate Bryan when you see him! The other candidate is Dr. Allison Campbell from the Richland Local Section and Pacific Northwest National Laboratory.

Prior to the start of the ACS meeting, a Presidential Public Outreach event: Exploring Our World Through Chemistry, which has become a feature on the Saturday preceding National meetings, was held at the Denver Zoo, with over 600 people attending, including CAL-ACS Councilors Sheila Kanodia and Alex Madonik who are on the organizing committee for these events.

The overall theme of the Denver meeting was "Chemistry of Natural Resources," which was a repeat of the theme of the spring 2011 meeting in Anaheim, but in a place that seemed more appropriate. This time there was an additional modifier of "their extraction, refining, and conservation." As usual a plenary session on Sunday afternoon highlighted and introduced the overall theme, while Division programs related to the theme continued throughout the week. Over 10,000 papers and posters were

presented in Denver. Three Presidential Symposia were held: “Chemistry Without Borders: The Transnational Practice of Chemistry and Allied Sciences and Engineering;” “Nanotechnology: Delivering on the Promise;” and “DOE Nanoscience Research Centers: National Resources for the Nanoscience Community.”

The popular Kavli Foundation Lecture series continued on Monday afternoon, with the Emerging Leader lecture given by Dr. Theodore Betley of Harvard University on “Radical Frontiers in Catalysis” and the main Innovations in Chemistry lecture given by Dr. Laura Kiessling of the University of Wisconsin-Madison entitled “Us Versus Them: Distinguishing Humans from Microbes with Carbohydrate.”

Report from the Council Meeting and other Society governance activities

All CAL-ACS Councilors and our two Past ACS Presidents were present at the Council meeting and participated on National ACS committees. Information on some of the activities of the committees to which they are affiliated can be found below.

The Denver Council meeting was a quiet and efficient one, except where financial issues were concerned. While the escalated member dues renewal rate to \$162 for 2016, per the inflation adjusted bylaws formula, passed without dissention, there was a heated discussion regarding planned increases in future National meeting registration rates. The long range financial plan for meeting registration fees was unveiled and called for a \$15/year increase in fees through 2020, in addition to any inflation based increases, in order for meeting fees to be able to fully cover the technical programming costs... This would make the Early Member Registration for 2016 National meetings increase to \$415. It was explained that meetings over the past few years have experienced a deficit due to increased costs of video/audio expenses, among other rising costs, and the current plan is the method preferred by the Board to reverse this trend. After many opposing comments, Council voted to ask the Board to delay these increases until additional background information could be presented to Council at the next meeting in Boston. In an additional cost containment measure, it was announced that the hardcopy meeting program would no longer be freely distributed at each National meeting after 2015, with members encouraged to use the on-line program or meeting app instead, although hard copies could be ordered in advance for \$10 and picked up at the meeting, or for \$20 at the meeting without an advance order.

The new meeting abstracts submission system (MAPS), which replaces PACS and was initiated for the Denver meeting, was roundly panned as being not user friendly, and causing extensive extra work for Division Program Chairs. Improvements were promised for Boston and beyond.

In other actions of note, Council voted to approve petitions to charter the India International Chemical Sciences Chapter and the Taiwan International Chemical Sciences Chapter. This adds to the current chapters in Hong Kong, Hungary, Malaysia, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Shanghai, South Africa, South Korea, and Thailand. New chapter applications have been initiated by members in Brail, Nigeria, Peru, and the United Arab Emirates.

Affiliations/comments from our Councilor and Past ACS Presidents

Bryan Balazs – Committee on Committees (ConC), Undergraduate Program Advisory Board,
ACS Career Consultant – Career Fair

ConC developed its recommendations for chairs of ACS governance committees for 2016.

The Undergraduate Program Advisory Board reviewed the undergraduate events for Denver and those planned for the Fall National Meeting in Boston.

In ACS Career Fair activities, Balazs taught a fully packed “Acing the Interview” workshop.

Mark Frishberg – Divisional Activities Committee (DAC), ACS Career Consultant – Career Fair

Ten new Innovative Project Grants were funded totaling \$54,000, with the maximum grant set at \$7500. More proposals will be considered at the Boston meeting in August, with a July 1st deadline for submissions. Discussions continue on how to best enforce the rules against the copying and potential dissemination of copyrighted meeting content from paper and poster sessions, an issue that has been made more complex by the profusion of available camera and recording devices. A joint working group between DAC and the International Activities Committee is exploring how to grow ACS Division membership among International Chapters and share best practices between Divisions, and will prepare a report before the Boston meeting.

In ACS Career Fair related activities, the four-hour workshop on Finding Your Path was taught, as well as four hours of mock interviews.

Sheila Kanodia – Committee on Community Activities (CCA)

In addition to the successful public outreach event at the Denver Zoo, CCA also conducted an outreach workshop for undergraduates on Monday and participated in the open meeting with LSAC on Tuesday. The theme teams for National Chemistry Week for 2015 and 2016 met, as did the team for Chemists Celebrate Earth Day 2016.

Lee Latimer – Council Policy Committee (CPC)

Following the ACS By-Laws, CPC set the divisors to be used to determine how many Councilors will be allotted to each Local Section and Division. This divisor is revisited every four years and will be applied for 2016-2019. The divisor is set to adjust to changing membership numbers in Local Sections and Divisions so that the same proportion of Councilors are allotted, while maintaining Council at its current size. While the divisor will not be announced for a few weeks, it is anticipated that CAL-ACS will retain its current eight Councilors. Latimer was chair of the task force that worked on the divisors. CPC is also heavily involved with the petitions noted in Vartanian’s report below.

Alex Madonik – Committee on Community Affairs (CCA)

CCA turned out in force at the Denver Zoo for one of our most successful public outreach events to date, assisted by the enthusiastic student volunteers from Cal State University Fresno, Colorado State University Fort Collins, the University of Colorado, Denver, Metropolitan State University of Denver, and the University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras. CCA member and Fresno Section Councilor Missy Golden and the CSU Fresno Chem Club stole the show with Nick L. Mole, the giant mole who greeted visitors as they arrived at the Zoo. Kids could participate in up to eight hands-on activities on topics such as surface tension, pH and CO₂, and the ever-popular lather printing, and afterward collected a goody-bag that included Earth Day 2015 edition Celebrating Chemistry, with the theme, "Climate Science: It's More Than Just A Weather Report."

The NCW 2015 theme will be "Chemistry Colors Our World." Madonik is chairing the Earth Day 2016 Theme Team, with the theme "The Great Indoors – Your Home's Ecosystem." This event will look at air and water quality – what comes in, what goes out, and what we do to keep the indoor environment clean and safe.

Also, in the planning stages is the public outreach event at the Boston National Meeting in August – stay tuned!

Eileen Nottoli – Committee on Environmental Improvement (CEI)

CEI sponsored several programs including Citizens First Symposium (co-sponsored by the Chemical Education Division) where various Local Sections presented their work on developing demonstrations and curriculum and communicating climate science to the public and students. CEI also sponsored the Award for Incorporation of Sustainability into Chemical Education and the Symposium in which the award was presented, and co-sponsored, with the Society Committee on Education, the Environmental Film shown at the meeting. Submitted proposals for sustainability mini-grants were evaluated and three local sections were funded, along with selecting three finalists and the winning local section for sustainability. The draft policy on fracking was approved and writing teams for the Energy, Endocrine Disruption, and Inherently Safer Technology policies were selected.

Attila Pavlath – Committee on Public Relations and Communications (CPRC)

Paul Vartanian – Committee on Constitution and By-Laws (C&B)

C&B reviewed two petitions to be presented to the Council. One was on Election procedures to be taken out of the Society Bylaws and continued as procedures by the Committee on Nominations and Elections (N&E), and the other is on the Expulsion of Members. Vartanian is now a subcommittee chair for C&B.

Marinda Wu – Committee on Budget and Finance (B&F), ACS Career Consultant – Career Fair

Wu serves on the B&F Subcommittee for Program Funding Requests. She has also returned as a Career Consultant and Volunteer at the Career Fair.

As a newly appointed member of ACS President-Elect Donna Nelson's Task Force on Jobs and Careers, she invites any input or suggestions to help members with jobs or careers. Please send any ideas or suggestions to marindawu@gmail.com.

Elaine Yamaguchi – Local Section Activities Committee (LSAC)

Fifteen Innovative Project Grants were awarded for a total of \$38,389. It is expected that sixteen smaller grants with an overall total of \$4000 will be awarded for the Bridging the Gap: Teachers of Chemistry K-12 Nano-Grants. Mini-grants will also be awarded to Local Sections who attended the 2015 Leadership Institute to encourage partnering activities between neighboring local sections.

Looking ahead to Boston – August 16-20, 2015

The overall meeting theme will be “Innovation from discovery to Application” and the primary organizer is Dr. Carston (Rick) Wagner of the University of Minnesota.

News you might use

Abstracts of the papers and posters presented at the meeting are archived at www.acs.org, and those plenary and symposium presentations that were recorded, with sequenced slides, can be found at www.acs.org/meetingcontent.

A Virtual Career Fair will be held in June for ACS members seeking employment. Check C&EN and the ACS website for more information in the coming month. Both an on-site and virtual career fair will be held at the Boston meeting in August.

For members looking ahead to the fall meeting in Philadelphia in 2016, there is a chance that the meeting dates, as presented on our ACS membership cards, could be moved a week later should Philadelphia be awarded the Democratic National Convention, which is in conflict with our current meeting dates. Stay tuned for further updates if you are planning this far ahead.

Any members interested in the latest ACS financial performance can look at www.acs.org, click on the “About ACS” tab at the bottom and then “ACS Financial Information.”

Information regarding grants offered by all ACS committees can be found at www.acs.org/getinvolved.

ACS President, Diane Schmidt is encouraging faculty from Ph.D. granting institutions to give ACS membership as an award for outstanding chemistry students and will match each gift by paying another student's membership from her Presidential funds.

The new 2015 ACS Guidelines for Bachelor's Degree Programs were approved at the winter meeting of the Committee on Professional Training and can be found on the ACS website.

Interesting Statistics

More than 1900 people joined the American Association of Chemistry Teachers (AACT) launched by the ACS last year, of whom 88% are K-12 chemistry teachers. Dow Chemical Company has provided a gift of \$1 Million to become the sole Founding Partner of AACT.

Attendance at the Denver meeting as of Tuesday evening was 13,940, with 7307 regular attendees, 5141 students, 847 exhibitors, 360 Expo only registrants, and 285 guests. This is on par for a Spring meeting, although it represented a greater number of students.

The 2014 New Graduate Survey results show that the unemployment rate for new graduating chemists dropped from 14.9% in the 2013 survey to 12.4%, hopefully ending the three year decline in employment, although still much higher than traditional levels. Unemployment for experienced members dropped from 3.5% to 2.9%. Unfortunately, salaries have been flat.

The ACS Career Fair had 715 job seekers, 27 employers offering 85 positions, and 10 recruitment booths in the Expo. The Virtual Career Fair that was operated for members unable to attend the National meeting had 918 job seekers and 6 employers offering 38 positions. In conjunction with these activities, as a benefit to members on site, 23 Career workshops were held, along with 368 resume reviews and 218 mock interviews. CAL-ACS members, Bryan Balazs, Mark Frishberg, and Marinda Wu, who are ACS Career Consultants, actively participated in these offerings.

The Women Chemists Committee's Fourth Annual WCC Rising Star Awards were given to ten early-to-mid-career women chemists and there were eight WCC/Eli Lilly Travel grants awarded. Merck is working with the WCC to develop a new research award to fund eight women graduate students to present their research at the upcoming Boston meeting in August.

The ACS Scholars program will celebrate its 20th anniversary in 2015. There have been 1500 graduates of the program, with fully 95% earning their baccalaureate degrees within six years, 80% remaining in the chemical sciences, 200 having earned Ph.D. degrees and an additional 200 currently in Ph.D. programs.

ACS membership had a slight decline in 2014. While approx. 24,000 new members were added, approx. 25,000 members did not renew their membership.

There are currently 681 colleges and universities offering ACS-approved bachelor's degree programs in chemistry.

Submitted by Mark Frishberg, CAL-ACS Councilor, with input from our other Councilors and Past ACS Presidents – April 9, 2015