

Anaheim 2011: Scientific Freedom and Human Rights in Chemistry and Related Sciences

The symposium took place at the 2011 National Meeting in Anaheim.

Science, anti-science, and survival

Sir Harold Kroto, Nobel Laureate

Science and human rights: A bridge towards benefiting humanity

Dr. Jeffrey Toney, Dean, Kean University

How does science fit into Human Rights? What can you do?

Three case studies involving scientists from different disciplines that contribute their expertise to advancing human rights in the US and abroad are discussed. Scientific research can have a greater impact on society if directed towards solving problems relevant to human rights. Progress in science and technology can be abused, leading to violations of human rights, but can also benefit humanity. Scientists have an opportunity to play an active role in preserving human rights.

Human rights, scientific freedom, and our responsibility as a professional society

Presenter: Dr. Nancy Jackson, ACS President 2011

What are the capacities, roles, and responsibilities of a scientific professional society to monitor the welfare of scientists? What are the challenges to the human rights of scientists and scientific freedom?

On advancing science, technology, and human rights

Presenter: Dr. Bassam Shakhshiri, ACS President-Elect 2011

What is the appropriate role for ACS in the realm of human rights?

Increasing public awareness of the role that science and technology play in our daily lives is a major responsibility for ACS. Also, as learned individuals and groups we have major responsibilities in promoting human rights to assure freedom of inquiry and expression, professional conduct, and entrepreneurship in serving society. We should be clear and articulate about our role in the realm of human rights. Basic research in science has greatly increased our understanding of nature, expanded frontiers of inquiry, shown us how little we know, triggered creative waves of invention and innovation, and prompted technological breakthroughs that were inconceivable just a few short decades ago. Yet, many people around the world are still insulated from much of the modern advancements and are thus deprived of their benefits. The wide gap between those of us who flourish because of advances in science and technology and those who do not is deeply disturbing. Our research and our technology can provide clean water and nutritious food, meet energy demands, eradicate disease, reduce poverty and help lead to sustainable development everywhere. We are clear about our role in science and technology, but what should our role be in addressing human rights issues as they relate to science?