

Committee on Economic and Professional Affairs (CEPA)

246th ACS National Meeting
Indianapolis, IN
September 11, 2013

Madame President, Members of Council and Guests:

[SLIDE 1]

The Committee on Economic and Professional Affairs (CEPA), is happy to report that employment is up and unemployment is down for ACS chemists. The unemployment rate overall has fallen from the all-time high of 4.6% in March 2011, to 3.5% in March 2013. I will share more details shortly, and a more complete review of the Comprehensive Salary Survey will be published Sept 23 in C&EN.

[SLIDE 2]

A proposed revision of the Professional Employment Guidelines is included on page 95 of the Agenda Book. Please review, and send any suggestions for revisions to careers@acs.org by November 1st.

[SLIDE 3]

Statistics for the ACS Career Fair and the Virtual Career Fair are shown. The number of employers on-site is similar to New Orleans. 32 workshops and hundreds of mock interviews and resume reviews were conducted at this meeting.

[SLIDE 4]

From the Comprehensive Salary Survey, the unemployment rate for bachelor level chemists as of March 2013 was 4.6%, for master's level chemists 4.7%, and for PhD chemists 3.0%. Full-time employment overall is 91.1%, the highest rate since 2008. Salaries for PhD chemists rose by 1.4% this year, while bachelor's degree recipient's salaries dropped 2.6%. The percentage of chemical professionals in fulltime employment went up, the percentage in part-time employment went down, while the number post-docs stayed the same, so it appears that conditions are improving. In the month of the survey, 47% of our members worked with someone internationally, mainly to share data, collaborate on research, or jointly design a product, process or program.

[SLIDE 5]

Shortly, you will be asked to provide ideas as to what we, as a society and as individual chemists, can do to help create jobs or demand for chemists. To help make it more concrete, here are stories of real members from CEPA's target populations.

Brad graduated with a bachelor's degree in chemistry from a top 25 university. Even though he spent 2 summers working in a chemistry lab, and has answered many posted ads, he is unable to find a permanent position that uses his scientific education and training. Currently, he works midnight to 8am, answering technical support phone calls for a computer company.

Anne is 1.5 years into her second post-doctoral position, now at a top 10 institution. She has been actively looking for a faculty position, and has had three on-site interviews, but always seems to lose out to a slightly more qualified candidate. The federal grant that funds her salary ends in six months, and she is running out of options.

An analytical chemist who was laid off from his pharmaceutical company over 2 years ago, Bill has 2 children and a wife with a stable career. He does not want to relocate away from his extended family. While he has been steadily looking, and has sent out dozens of customized resumes, he has not had any acceptable job offers. Now, many employers will not even talk to him because of the gap, and he worries that his skills are stale and he may never be able to work at a chemistry lab bench again.

These are the people who need our help. Please consider them, and how you could create demand for their knowledge, skills and abilities.

Madame President this concludes my final report.