

THE MEETING PROGRAM

Don't copy past meetings—build on them! Take the best parts and add your own innovations.

A regional meeting is made up of the following components:

- Technical Program
- Workshops
- Special Events
- Student Programs
- Poster sessions
- Awards presentations
- Exposition

THE TECHNICAL PROGRAM

The technical program is the heart of the meeting and its principal reason for being. The keys to a good technical program are topics of interest to attendees in your region presented by people involved in the latest research. “Hot Button issues” are also a powerful draw, e.g., what’s happening NOW in chemistry in general or in specific areas, that is affecting the chemical enterprise as a whole, and/or your region in particular. Marketing plans should be formed in conjunction with the development of the program because programming decisions should be based on answering the question: “Is this topic something people in this region will want to know about and participate in?”

Planning the Technical Program

The General Chair should appoint separate Program Chairs for Industry, Academia, and High School Education (if there is to be a “Teacher Day” at the meeting). These Program Chairs should be from those areas professionally. They in turn can form committees of well-established individuals in those representative fields of chemistry as session chairs to create the technical program. This is an ideal opportunity to draw in members of neighboring local sections to expand participation by local sections in the region and getting them vested in the meeting.

Some overall considerations in building a meeting are as follows:

1. Study the demographics for your region provided you by your regional meeting planner.
2. Contact one or more ACS Divisions to contribute to symposia and suggest organizers.
3. Look through “ACS Program Deadlines and Topics”, published in June and December in *C&EN*, for topic suggestions.
4. Identify what programming at the most recent national meeting got people excited. Is it applicable to the region?
5. Attend the regional meetings prior to yours. Analyze them for which symposia drew the greatest attendance. Ask attendees what they liked and didn't like about the meeting.
6. Incorporate student programming into your overall plan. Make them an integral part of the program, not an adjunct.

7. Don't *copy* past meetings—*build on them!* Take the best parts and add your own innovations.

When planning the technical program content, consider the following:

- a. Areas of chemistry present in your region, based on member demographics
- b. Presentation of one or more symposia with renowned speakers as drawing cards
- c. Consider inviting a well-known chemist to chair a plenary session—and not necessarily someone from the region.
- d. Presentation of a symposium in honor of a well-known and respected chemist. Have a luncheon or dinner associated with the symposium. (Consider making the banquet a “roast”.)
- e. Proportion of invited symposia to contributed papers
 - Limit invited symposia to no more than 6—8 topics
 - Extend the coverage of contributed papers to all areas of chemistry
 - Consider a program that focuses extensively on one or two areas of chemistry and explore it in depth
- f. Including non-chemical and/or interdisciplinary topics
- g. Programming for technicians
- h. Incorporating undergraduate and graduate students into more of the programs, perhaps by presenting a more basic introductory session to one or more symposia
- i. Instrumentation seminars/workshops
- j. High school and K – 12 teacher programs
- k. Special programs for industrial chemists
- l. Programs from ACS national office
- m. Panel discussions on “hot topic” items involving regulation issues, homeland security, forensics, making educational opportunities for students more relevant to the workplace, etc. Some of these could be done in a luncheon setting.
- n. Exhibitor workshops and demonstrations of how to use their products
- o. Contacting ACS Divisions to participate through programming and/or financial support
- p. Including ACS national award winners in the programming

Organizing Symposia Sessions

Topical organizers group symposia presentations in half-day sessions. Timing of sessions is an important consideration. It is recommended that morning sessions run from 8:30am to noon, and afternoon sessions from 1:30pm to 5:00 or 5:30 PM. Evening sessions should start no earlier than 6:30 or 7:00pm. Morning sessions should not begin before 8am, and afternoon sessions should run no later than 5:30pm. Allow a minimum of 15 - 20 minutes per oral paper. The ACS Committee on Meetings & Expositions suggests that talks plus related discussion in symposia should not exceed 30 minutes and contributed talks no more than 20 minutes, including discussion.

The Program Committee determines when each half-day session will take place and estimates the attendance for each session. They then coordinate room assignments with the Arrangements Committee. A program grid is an invaluable tool in developing the logistics of the programs.

Poster Sessions

Poster sessions are an ideal venue for involving students in the meeting program. Several past meetings have held joint poster sessions that included students and chemists. One meeting held a three-hour opening reception with over 100 posters contributed by undergraduates, graduate students, and experienced chemists. It was very well attended by attendees of all ages and levels of expertise.

Poster papers are usually displayed for a half-day session, but the program should indicate the hour or specific time when each author will be in the poster area to discuss the work. As an example, each 3-hour poster session may be divided into three segments of one hour each for presentation. See also the *Instructions for Poster Session Authors*, at the end of this section.

Poster sessions can be used as a “lure” to bring attendees to the exhibits area by interspersing the boards among the booths.

Workshops

Workshops offer an opportunity for attendees to interact and become involved in the topic. They are also an excellent means of reaching out to more of the many types of attendees who come to the meetings. They can be presented in a variety of formats: teaching sessions, panel discussions, and group participation led by a facilitator. You can target academics, high school teachers, undergraduate or graduate students, technicians, women, retired chemists, and minorities. You can zero in on issues of concern to these groups in particular, or to chemists in general. You can teach, train, and inform. You can tap into local talent, government representatives, career concerns, personal growth, where chemistry is going. The options are boundless and limited only by your imagination.

THE NONTECHNICAL PROGRAM

Awards Presentations

The regional meeting is an ideal venue to honor local talent at a regional level. The ACS Office of Awards and Industry Programs has developed a regional award for industrial chemists who have developed a product that benefits the community and has improved the quality of life. The presentation should be included in the technical program. Ideally, it should be scheduled while students are in attendance as the presentations are not quite as technical as other sessions, and therefore of interest to the students.

Regional meetings have also served as a setting to honor a high school teacher with the Regional Award for Teaching High School Chemistry.

On occasion, local sections within a region will acknowledge members for their contributions at the local section level, or to recognize an esteemed member of the chemical community within the region.

Regions might also wish to establish an award for volunteers in the region.

These honors can be bestowed at a single awards banquet or at separate events during the meeting.

ACS PROGRAMS FOR REGIONAL MEETINGS

The staffs of several departments of the ACS are ready and willing to present their programs at your meeting. Your meeting planner can put you in contact with the staff from these offices. Participating offices include the following:

Department of Career Management and Development—DCM can assist at several levels. They have valuable workshops on many career-enhancing topics. They will do resume reviews one-on-one with attendees, and they will match resumes to potential employers.

Office of Community Activities—OCA sponsors National Chemistry Week (NCW), and they are willing to present workshops on how to hold an event, provide sample demonstrations for use with children, and suggest public events to promote NCW in the community. The target audience is educators and volunteers who want to volunteer to visit school classrooms and/or participate in community activities such as National Chemistry Week, to promote chemistry. Their programs fit in very well with the Student Affiliates programming, Education Day, or in tandem with programs from the ACS Education Division.

ACS Education Division—The Education Division has many fine programs available. *Kids & Chemistry*, one of the most popular, was developed to teach chemists who wish to volunteer to visit schools how to best present chemistry at the elementary level. Staff of the ACS Education Division also presents workshops on their other programs, e.g., Project SEED, chemistry for nonchemists at the high school and college level, Chemagination, and the Chemistry Olympiad program.

Office of Undergraduate Programs—Part of the Education Division, the office works with the undergraduate Student Affiliate chapters at colleges and universities in the region. They currently offer a grant of up to \$2,800 for student programming at regional meetings, with the caveat that the students must prepare a proposal with their plan for their programming at the meeting. The committee should have a Program Chair or Undergraduate Program Chair to coordinate with the student affiliates to assist them in their planning, and to include a student representative on the committee.

Petroleum Research Fund—Not only does the PRF offer a grant of up to \$5,000.00 to bring in international programming to regional meetings, they conduct workshops on how to get grants funding.

Office of Diversity Programs—The ODP has many programs to offer to regional meeting attendees. The Younger Chemists Committee, Women Chemists Committee, and Minority Programs are based there. The WCC frequently presents a luncheon program at regional meetings with speakers on topics of interest and concern to women chemists. The YCC is interested in holding workshops, panel discussions, or other form of presentation, usually on the topic of career growth possibilities for younger chemists. Additionally, the office offers workshops on mentoring, developing leadership skills, and career opportunities for minorities underrepresented in chemistry.

Office of Awards and Industry Member Programs—This office focuses on programs to encourage active participation by ACS industry members. They have developed a program called the Industrial Innovation Awards and Symposium to honor industrial chemists in the region who have been nominated by their companies. An awards panel selects winners. The purpose of the awards is to recognize contributions by industry members to the betterment of everyday life. The winners present papers on their projects, which should be included in the technical program. The awards are presented in conjunction with a regional meeting's combined awards ceremony.

This office also handles the selection and presentation of ACS national awards. They can provide you with information on winners should you wish to include them in your meeting.

Educational/Teacher Programming—Regional Meetings offer an invaluable opportunity to provide programming for precollege teachers at an affordable cost. A day is often set aside, preferably a weekend, with workshops and presentations for teachers involved in chemistry from elementary grades through college. Sometimes these programs incorporate student programming and/or volunteer training. Many of the aforementioned ACS offices have programming available to help build your schedule. Your meeting planner can assist you in identifying those that would work well for your meeting.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Regional meetings should be fun, also. When considering special events, planners often think of the awards venues—a luncheon or dinner banquet, a welcoming reception, a poster session/exhibition/reception. And these are valid “special events”. However, they can extend beyond the traditional to the exceptional. Work with your local convention and visitors bureau and find out what special events will be taking place in the community during the time of your meeting (i.e., a science exhibit, festival, celebration, etc.) that might be of interest to attendees, and consider incorporating that into your meeting. Or look at the opportunities available in your community for a tour or a setting for your banquet or reception. Talk with the meeting site coordinator to see if they can dress up the banquet area with table decorations or colored tablecloths. Consider getting balloon arrangements for receptions or the exhibits area. They are inexpensive, very eye-catching, and add a festive air. (They must be firmly tied down, however, as meeting sites frown upon free-floating balloons.

Spruce up the social events—perhaps a musician at the reception, a pianist, guitarist, a harpist, to provide a pleasant background. Spend a little extra on decorating at the banquets, or develop a theme that is carried through with the table decorations. If your meeting is near a holiday, or around the time of a well-known event such as Mardi Gras or National Mole Day, incorporate that into the meeting. See if there are local celebrations of that nature you can use. Incorporate the ideas into the other special events with a “theme” meal, or someone dressed as an appropriate character, or offering small give-aways tied into the theme. Create a special drink, or punch, and name it for the event.

Another type of special event banquet would be a luncheon or dinner for an esteemed chemist who is being honored with a symposium in his/her honor. Friends and colleagues are asked to speak, and on occasion, a humorous “roast” has been incorporated into the event.

One region worked with the ACS Office of Chemical Landmarks to plan the unveiling of a designated site in their community. On the last day of the meeting, there was a special luncheon with speakers who focused on the site, its place in chemical history, and its contribution. They then bussed attendees to the site to participate in the dedication ceremony followed by a reception.

Awards Presentations—There are several possible venues for presenting awards at regional meetings. These include:

- Luncheons
- Banquets
- Receptions

The award given by ACS at regional meetings is the Regional Industrial Innovation Award. On occasion, local sections within a region also have awards for members that are presented at regional meetings. At some meetings, regions have scheduled a luncheon, banquet, or reception to honor all award recipients at one time.

It is traditional to present an annual award to the Regional Teacher of the Year in High School Chemistry. A fund has been established for this award that is managed by the Division of Chemical Education. They will work with the Regional Boards to promote this through the regional meetings, and to contribute financially.

The Teacher award is usually presented at a luncheon or dinner in honor of the winner, and is incorporated into the Teacher/Education Day program or the general awards banquet

Anniversaries—If a region or local section within that region is having an anniversary, they may celebrate that occasion at the regional meeting. This event may be commemorated at a reception or incorporated into an awards banquet, or even celebrated at a poster session.

Graduate School Fair—A graduate school fair is an excellent program to include in a region where there are a number of colleges and universities. It is often combined with an undergraduate poster session and/or reception in late afternoon or early evening.

Events for Children—Some meetings invite students from local schools to participate in events such as Kids & Chemistry experiments and/or National Chemistry Week contests or activities.

It is strongly urged that you select which of these programs you wish to include in your meeting no later than one year to 10 months out. The ACS offices involved will publicize their participation in your meeting, giving you additional exposure.

On the following two pages are sets of guidelines—one for session chairs and one for attendees presenting posters. You

may want to copy and distribute them accordingly for use at the meeting.

ONSITE GUIDELINES FOR SESSION CHAIRS

1. Acquaint yourself with the locations of the audiovisual office, the registration area, and the operations office (if there is one). Should you need *any* assistance, personnel at the operations office or registration area will be able to assist you.
2. Check the meeting room at least 15 minutes prior to the start of your session to be sure that projection equipment is set and working. If not, contact the A/V office or the ACS Regional Meeting Planner at the Registration area for help.
3. Introduce each speaker by name and affiliation.
4. At the end of each presentation, be prepared to ask the first question to stimulate discussion.
5. If a paper is cancelled, declare an intermission or a discussion period for its time slot. It is essential to maintain the schedule as published in the program.
6. If a request is made for an audio/video recording of any individual presentation, you must obtain the prior approval of the presenter and the session/symposium organizer.

GUIDELINES FOR POSTER SESSION AUTHORS

- ◆ Each presenter will have a posterboard measuring 4' x 6'. The poster number of the paper will be affixed to the board.
- ◆ All illustrations, charts, and text to be posted must be prepared in advance, as materials for these purposes will not be available at the meeting.
- ◆ All papers must have a heading, with lettering at least 1-1/2" high, giving the title of the paper, the author(s), and affiliation(s).
- ◆ Illustrative material will be read by attendees from a distance of up to 3 feet, so please make lettering on illustrations large and easy-to-read.
- ◆ There should be a logical sequence (introduction, development, and conclusion) to your display. Each sheet should be numbered.
- ◆ Mounting the sheets on heavy, colored paper will improve the visual impact and enhance the effectiveness of your presentation. Simplicity and ease of reading are more important than artistic flair, e.g., certain color combinations, for instance, may look beautiful, but be almost impossible to read—especially in the absence of optimum lighting. Dark lettering on a light background provides the best contrast.
- ◆ Illustrations should NOT be mounted on very heavy stock, as that may prove difficult to mount on the poster boards.
- ◆ Authors are responsible for setting up their presentation at least one-half hour prior to the opening of their respective poster sessions, and for removing it within one-half hour after the close of the session. The meeting does not assume responsibility for materials beyond those time limits.
- ◆ Authors may provide sign-up sheets to record names and addresses of attendees who might wish more information, reprints, etc.
- ◆ Authors may wish to bring copies of their data and conclusions. No duplicating facilities will be available at the meeting.
- ◆ Pushpins will be provided; however, masking tape, felt-tipped pens, staplers, and other tools, if available, will be in limited supply. Please bring your own supplies.