

Why Not Start A Silver Circle Group in Your Section?

The term “Silver Circle” originated in 2003 when Past ACS President Eli Pearce used it to designate mature ACS members who are described as “silver” because of their valuable experience and knowledge. Silver circle members can be a great resource to any section.

What is the “Silver Circle”?

Silver Circle members can be a great resource to any section, and it is worthwhile to think about starting such a group and offering them some special activities as well as the normal section meetings. Some of the members may also be willing to volunteer for other section events from time to time.

How does the section know who the Silver Circle members are?

The section secretary receives demographics and mailing lists each month from the ACS staff.

What can the section do to get the group started?

The best way is to ask one or more mature section members who are already active in the section to plan an event and invite all the other potential Silver Circle members that have been identified. The introductory event may be, for example, an informal lunch and can be used as a basis for planning further events. Some local sections already have senior chemists meeting occasionally—this group can be used as a basis for the Silver Circle.

What kind of events can you do?

An excellent source of examples of special events for Silver Circle members is the “Silver Circle Starter Kit”, found on the ACS website www.acs.org/silvercircle.

Some possible activities listed in this web page include social events, mentoring of younger chemists, judging science fairs, National Chemistry Week activities, working as “Chemists in the Classroom”, monthly lunches with or without speakers (in some sections the speaker for the section meeting may attend the Silver Circle lunch if it is on the same day as the section meeting), wine-tastings, etc. Another possibility is to organize a Senior Chemists social event. Steps on how to do this can be found on the above website.

What makes Silver Circle groups successful?

Again the “Silver Circle Starter Kit” gives some useful hints. The most important aspect is to get all the potential members involved in the planning of the activities, or at least inquire what they want so that they share input and can do something that interests them. A survey can be used as a starting point. Some

members may only want to attend daytime events for example. Some may not wish to go out in winter conditions. Some will attend events at a particular time of year only. Some may want technical presentations, and some may prefer social events. Some may want non-chemistry related presentations of interest to senior chemists such as financial planning, healthcare for retirees, etc. Some may want to be involved in other section activities. Some Silver Circle sections like to be useful to their community and act as mentors, science fair judges, etc. A variety of activities are necessary. It is crucial to have a leader or a small group in charge of the planning and arrangements. The local section will probably give the Silver Circle group a small budget if requested. You can use this for advertising, providing snacks or food, travel expenses, giving speaker honorariums, etc. There should be a budget and someone in charge of it; fund-raising events may also be planned. The local section should support the Silver Circle, not only by giving money but also, for example, by giving an award from time to time to a member of the Silver Circle who has helped the section in some way. This kind of recognition is encouraging for the group.

Need ideas?

Who can help at ACS?

The ACS staff contact for Senior Chemists is Cheryl Brown. You may call her at 800-277-5558 ext 4407, or by sending e-mail to silvercircle@acs.org.

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