LOCAL SECTION ADMINISTRATION

Efficient operation of a local section depends on understanding. What is to be done? Who is responsible for specific tasks? How and when should assignments be completed? To answer these questions for section officers and committee chairs, every ACS local section should have and use a job manual.

A job manual is an efficient means of passing on the accumulated experience of previous officers and committees and can facilitate the work of those presently or soon-to-be charged with the section's operations. An effective job manual provides sufficient detail to guide section leaders, but its structure is loose to avoid limiting the resourcefulness and creative abilities of those it is intended to serve.

Local Section Job Manual: Responsibilities of Local Section Officers

The exact job descriptions for the section's officers will vary considerably from section to section, depending on section size, bylaws, professional composition, and location. However, some responsibilities for each office are common to all groups; outlined below are standard duties for chair, chair-elect, secretary, and treasurer.

Chair
The supervision, coordination, and overall direction of section activities are the primary and ongoing functions of the section chair. A chair should provide leadership for the section officers and committee chairs and delegate authority and responsibility as broadly as possible.

The chair presides at all section meetings and, in most cases, at all sessions of the executive committee, which should be convened frequently to monitor and assess the progress of current activities. Assuring the timely filing of the section's annual report is another important duty of the office.

In most cases, the chair makes all section standing committee appointments, preferably in advance of taking office. From the chair the appointees should receive guidance, supervision, and assistance, especially with respect to specific committee assignments.

Chair-Elect
In nearly all sections, the chair-elect serves as program chair and has the principal responsibility for planning and arranging the section's meeting programs for the year during which he or she will be chair. In addition, the chair-elect often serves as the primary speaker planner for the section and has access to the ACS Online Speaker Directory (www.speakers.acs.org).

In addition to program planning, the section chair-elect may have other duties, as assigned by the chair and executive committee. Also, the chair-elect is invited each year to attend the ACS Leadership Institute. The three-day conference provides training as well as ideas about programs and activities for new section officers.

Secretary
The section secretary has a broad range of responsibilities, among the most essential being those of maintaining the membership list and other section records. The secretary can download the section’s membership roster from the ACS website, which includes a complete alphabetical list of members’ names and addresses as well as separate addenda pages detailing address changes, new members, and other section roster amendments to the previous edition.
On or before December 1 of each year, the section secretary must certify to the ACS Executive Director the names and terms of office of all section councilors and alternate councilors [ACS Bylaw III, Section 1 (a-4 and e-2)]. This certification is required for both newly elected councilors and alternates and those continuing to serve unexpired terms. The December 1 deadline is necessary to ensure that the complete list of councilors is available for consideration by the incoming ACS president in making committee appointments. The committee selection process is conducted in mid-December, and only certified councilors are eligible for appointment to Council committees. A section that delays its report may be deprived of the recognition that comes from such an appointment, and a committee may lose a member who could offer much to the Society and to the profession.

To assist the president in making Council committee appointments, forms for certification and information on how to submit biographies are sent in October to each local section secretary. The secretary should return the completed certification forms to the national office, and facilitate the submission of biographies. All newly-elected councilors should email their completed biography to the national office. Reelected and continuing councilors should be reminded to review and update their biographical information through the Website https://www.yellowbook.acs.org. The ACS Records Office can supply additional forms or information upon request. (see Governance tab)

The section secretary is also charged with certifying the credentials of alternate councilors and/or temporary substitute councilors chosen to represent the section at ACS Council meetings in the absence of the elected councilor(s). Detailed instructions on the procedures for this certification are sent with the Council agenda to section secretaries approximately six weeks prior to each Council meeting.

As soon as possible after section elections, the secretary should notify the ACS Executive Director of newly elected local section officers and committee chairs appointments. Prompt reporting of the names and addresses of these individuals ensures that all official correspondence and other communications from the national office staff are directed to the proper local section personnel.

Each local section possesses documents of permanent importance. The charter and list of original members, and historic documents with increasing value, should be properly labeled and preserved with care. In addition, the set of local section bylaws bearing the signed stamp of the ACS Secretary, i.e., the official approved bylaws, should be maintained in a readily retrievable file. These duties, in the case of many sections, should be added to those of the elected secretary. Larger sections, which have relatively larger collections of records, are urged to appoint archivists to assist in maintaining and preserving the units' documents in a logical, methodical manner.

The secretary is depended upon for other aspects of section administration as well, including recording and maintaining a complete file of minutes of all general membership and executive committee meetings, and writing regular section correspondence. In smaller sections, the secretary may be responsible for mailing meeting notices, preparing and distributing the section's newsletter, and compiling the section's annual report.

Since many sections traditionally elect secretaries for several consecutive terms, this office provides continuity within the section and between the section and the ACS national office. For this reason, the secretary usually receives a copy of all official correspondence directed by the ACS national office to the section. Secretaries should be sure that copies of all correspondence are directed to appropriate officers and committee chairs.

**Treasurer**

First and foremost, the treasurer receives and disburses the section’s operating funds and is responsible for accounting for all section moneys, including annual ACS allotments, local membership dues, and program revenues and expenses. The treasurer is expected to maintain accurate financial records for the section and prepare periodic and annual reports on the section’s fiscal condition. The treasurer is also responsible for filing Internal Revenue Service Forms.

The ACS provides annual allocations of funds from members’ national dues for the operation of the local sections. However, the ACS bylaws require that the section treasurer make a formal request to the Society for
payment of funds. To facilitate this procedure, a formal request form indicating the allotment amount for the succeeding year is sent to each section treasurer in mid-November to be signed and returned to the national office by **December 15**.

The section's treasurer is responsible for preparing the annual financial report. The appropriate forms are sent to treasurers in mid-November and must be returned to the national office by **February 15**. A local section's operating procedures and bylaws may also require the section treasurer to prepare an annual report for review by the section and its executive committee.

Any local section that collects dues from its members and national affiliates may elect to participate in the local section dues collection program, a dual billing service for national and local dues, free to local sections. In February each section treasurer receives details of the service; the deadline for requesting the service for the succeeding year is **April 1**.

Further information about these and other responsibilities of a local section treasurer is outlined in the *Handbook for ACS Local Section Treasurers*, available on request from the ACS Office of Local Section Activities.

**Local Section Committees**

The number, function, and size of section committees will vary considerably with the size, composition, and interest of the respective sections. In establishing a committee structure, each section should review its aims and priorities and ensure that the structure can accommodate the desired and planned activities. Another important consideration is that committees should provide the maximum opportunity for involvement by both old and new section members.

The following is a list of typical section committees and their general duties:

**Awards.** Administers all awards activities, such as nominations for local, regional, and national ACS awards and special section awards.

**Chemistry Olympiad.** Coordinates the U.S. National Chemistry Olympiad, a national competition for talented high school students, sponsored by the ACS.

**Education.** Plans and implements activities to assist area precollege and college teachers, students, and student affiliate chapters, including scholarship programs, competitive examinations, science fairs, teacher/student nights, and journal subscriptions. Also host special activities such as short courses and satellite courses, for the benefit of section members.

**Employment/Career Assistance.** Plans and implements activities to provide members with access to career assistance, direct contact with employers, and information on employment data, trends and issues to aid in career decision making.

**Long-Range Planning.** Considers and proposes long-range goals and objectives and suggests programs and activities to other section committees for future realization. (Past chairs may be especially helpful on this committee.)

**Membership/Member retention.** Recruits new ACS members and submits applications for membership to national ACS. Plans activities to increase member retention.

**Mentoring.** Develops programs and activities to increase the participation of women and underrepresented minorities in local section activities.

**Minority Affairs.** Develops programs and activities that encourage and support minority participation in the chemical sciences.
**National Chemistry Week.** Plans activities and arranges events to highlight the importance of chemistry to the general public during National Chemistry Week.

**Newsletter/Publications/Website.** Oversees editorial and financial policies of the section’s regular newsletter, website, and/or other publications.

**Nominations.** Identifies and recruits candidates for section offices and conducts local elections.

**Professional Relations.** Plans and implements activities related to the members’ employer/employee relationships, such as job-seeking assistance and layoff investigations.

**Program.** Handles arrangements pertaining to the planning and execution of local section meeting programs, including the selection of speakers.

**Project SEED.** Designs local activities to aid disadvantaged students.

**Public Affairs.** Develops assurances for scientific and technical input into local public policy considerations involving chemistry, including matters related to the environment, energy, health, education, and research funding.

**Public Relations.** Develops and implements a program using local media contacts and members to publicize section programs and activities and to enhance the visibility and the public image of the section, Society, and profession.

**Retired Chemists.** Survey retired chemists to determine how they, as a group, can provide special services to the section such as judging science fairs, hosting tour speakers, volunteering for weekday events during National Chemistry Week, mentoring younger chemists.

**Safety.** Promotes safe laboratory practices through the presentation of safety symposia for teachers and students and provides advice to local officials on safety-related issues.

**Women Chemists.** Develops a stronger network for women, benefiting individual women chemists as well as the local community and chemical profession, making the local section more effective in serving its members.

**Younger Chemists.** Identifies the needs and concerns of younger chemists and develop programs responsive to their needs; facilitates professional networking among younger chemists.