

7. 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

1. Topics of interest to attendees in your region presented by people involved in the latest research.
2. "Hot Button issues" e.g., what's happening NOW in chemistry in general or in specific areas, 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 will want to know about and participate in?"

Planning the Technical Program

Planning the technical program is a huge responsibility. DMES recommends dividing the burden among at least two, preferably three, people: for Industry, Academia, and High School Education (if there is to be a "Teacher Day" at the meeting). These Program Chairs should form committees of well-established individuals in different 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? If so, is it possible to continue the program on that topic?
5. Consider inviting a well-known chemist to chair a plenary session—and not necessarily someone from the region.

6. 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.
7. Incorporate student programming into your overall plan. Make students an integral part of the program, not an adjunct.
8. *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 represented in your region, based on member demographics
- b. Presenting one or more symposia/plenary sessions with well-known speakers
- c. Putting on a symposium in honor of a well-known and respected chemist. Have a luncheon or dinner associated with the symposium.
- d. 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 or
 - Plan a program that focuses on one or two areas and explore them in depth
- e. Including non-chemical and/or interdisciplinary topics
- f. Programming for technicians
- g. Incorporating undergraduate and graduate students into more of the programs, perhaps holding an integrated poster session with students and working chemists
- h. Instrumentation seminars/workshops
- i. High school teacher programs
- j. Special programs for industrial chemists
- k. Programs from ACS departments
- l. 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 as a panel in a luncheon setting.
- m. Exhibitor workshops and demonstrations of how to use their products

Organizing Symposia Sessions

Topical organizers group symposia presentations into half-day sessions and opening and closing of sessions is an important consideration.

- Consider opening morning sessions at 8:00 to 8:30am, ending at noon, and
- Afternoon sessions from 1:30pm to 5:00 or 5:30pm.
- Evening sessions or events should start no earlier than 6:00—7:00pm.
- 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 (see attachment under this tab).

Poster Sessions

Poster sessions are an ideal venue for involving students in the meeting program. Several meetings have held joint poster sessions that included students and working chemists. One meeting held a three-hour opening reception with over 100 posters contributed by undergraduates, graduate students, and working chemists. It was very well received 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 discussion. See also the *Instructions for Poster Session Authors*, at the end of this section.

Poster sessions are also used as a "lure" to bring attendees to the exhibits area, interspersing the boards among the booths.

Workshops

- Workshops offer an opportunity for attendees to interact and become involved in the topic.
- They are a means of reaching out to a broader audience at 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 address 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 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.
- 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.

- These honors can be bestowed at a single awards banquet, or at separate events during the meeting.
- Past President Ann Nalley instituted a Regional Volunteer Award that acknowledges the efforts of those members who can always be counted on to be there.

ACS PROGRAMS FOR REGIONAL MEETINGS

The staff of several departments of the ACS are ready and willing to present their programs at your meeting. Your meeting planner can help you determine the best fit for your program. Participating offices include the following:

Department of Career Services—DCS can assist at several levels. They have valuable workshops on many career-enhancing topics. They will do resume reviews one-on-one with attendees.

Office of Community Activities—OCA sponsors National Chemistry Week (NCW) and Earth Day. They are willing to present workshops on how to hold an event, provide demonstrations for use with children, and suggest public events to promote NCW in the community.

The target audience is volunteers and pre-college educators who want to participate in community activities such as National Chemistry Week.

Their programs fit in very well with a Student Affiliates program, Education Day, or in tandem with programs from the ACS Education Division. The office also sponsors Chemagination, an essay and poster contest for high school students.

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 spend time in classrooms how to best present chemistry at the elementary level. Staff of the ACS Education Division also presents workshops relevant to their other programs, e.g., Project SEED, chemistry for nonchemists at the high school and college level, 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 each region. They also offer a grant to a student affiliates chapter in each region to develop a program-within-a-program at the regional meetings.

They currently offer a grant of up to \$2,800 for student programming at the regional meeting, but the students must prepare a proposal with a plan for what they want to do 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. Your meeting planner can provide the contact information for the student affiliate groups in your region.

Petroleum Research Fund—Not only does the PRF offer a grant of up \$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 meetings: Younger Chemists Committee (YCC), Women Chemists Committee (WCC), and Minority Programs.

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, through Minority Affairs programs, the office offers workshops on mentoring, developing leadership skills, and career opportunities for underrepresented minorities in chemistry.

Office of Industry Member Programs—This office focuses on programs to encourage active participation by ACS industry members. They have initiated a program called the Regional 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.

Office of Division Activities—This office serves as liaison with the ACS technical divisions as they plan the national meetings. Many divisions have appointed a "Regional Meeting Liaison" to help with programming and/or grants.

Educational/Teacher Programming—Regional Meetings offer an invaluable opportunity to provide programming for percolate teachers at an affordable cost. A day is often set aside, preferably a weekend, with workshops and presentations for teachers from elementary grades through college. Sometimes these programs act in tandem with student programming and/or volunteer training. Some meetings have been able to arrange for CEUs for attendees.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Regional meetings should be fun, also. When considering special events, planners often think of the standard awards venues—

- a luncheon or
- dinner banquet,
- welcoming reception,
- poster session/exhibition/reception.

These are valid "special events". However, with a little imagination 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 holding an event there.
- Or look at the opportunities available in your community for a tour or a setting for your banquet or reception.
- Talk with your meeting site coordinator to see if they can "dress up" the banquet area with table decorations and colored linens.
- Consider getting balloon arrangements for receptions or the exhibits area. They are inexpensive, very eye-catching, and add a festive air.

Spruce up the social events—perhaps a musician at the reception, a pianist, guitarist, a harpist, to provide a pleasant background.

1. Spend a little extra on decorating at the banquets, or
2. Develop a theme that is carried through with the table/room decorations.
3. Talk to your AV provider for interesting lighting arrangements.
4. How about providing a disc jockey and opening the event for dancing after the meal?
5. 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.
6. See if there are local celebrations of that nature you can use.
7. Consider holding a "theme" meal, or
8. Present someone dressed as an appropriate character, or
9. Offer 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.

02.05.08 It is traditional to present an annual award to the Regional Teacher of the Year in High School Chemistry. In the past, that service was provided by the national office. Beginning in 2004, that responsibility will be turned over to the regional meeting committee. More information and suggestions about future implementation of this program will be forthcoming.

The Teacher award is usually presented at a luncheon or dinner in honor of the winner, and is sometimes 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.