

# Southern Arizona Section, American Chemical Society (SAZACS) Long Range Plan Calendar Years 2008-2012 (5 years)

December 10, 2007

## **Introduction**

This long-range plan for the Southern Arizonan Section of the American Chemistry Society (ACS) provides a framework for guiding Section activities over the next 3-5 years; it is not a prescription for detailed actions. General guidelines are included as well as examples of goals and activities. The plan should be reviewed by the Section Executive Committee every three years and revised if needed.

## **Section Purpose**

- To provide opportunities for members in personal and professional growth and networking while being part of a large organization.
- To promote chemistry, and its role in society, to the local community and its leaders.
- To promote the National ACS resources and activities.

## **Coordination with American Chemical Society**

The Section will coordinate its activities with ACS on strategic directions and relevant information and advice. The ACS recently developed the 1-page “Strategic Directions 2007 and Beyond” that provide some guidance on overall directions, with additional guidance for local sections. The ACS directions include:

ACS Vision -- Improving people's lives through the transforming power of chemistry.

ACS Mission -- To advance the broader chemistry enterprise and its practitioners for the benefit of Earth and its people.

- External Value – Enabling scientific progress, fostering community, transforming the world.
- Internal Value – Science, profession, public.
- Member Value – Information, programs/products/services, connection, community.
- Foundation – People, financial resources, systems/processes/technology, organizational structure.

Vision and Six ACS Focal Areas for Local Sections (new categories for Section annual report questionnaire).

For more information see <http://www.acs.org/membership/lc> and select “what are local sections?”

*ACS Vision for Local Sections – ACS Local Sections connect chemistry and the community*

1. Community building (opportunities through real and virtual networking).
2. Mentoring and leadership (opportunities for younger chemists in establishing their careers in achieving their goals).
3. Professional development (opportunities for members).
4. Continuing education (in both technical and non-technical areas such as career management and development services).
5. Advocates for chemistry (supporting science education and promoting science-friendly government policy).
6. Public outreach (working to increase understanding of and appreciation for the sciences).

In addition, the ACS has relevant planning information on its web pages. Examples include:

- Developing leadership skills.
- Local section information (annual reports, comparative statistics).
- Programming ideas and activities.
- Recognizing and rewarding members and volunteers.
- Improving finances.

## ***Anticipating the Future of the Section Operating Environment***

We are living in a time of significant change. This change is characterized by new views of some understandings of basic science, and new approaches and new products from science and technology. Institutions are also changing – education, industry, small businesses, and the way communication and information is used. Finally, society and the global environment is changing – as some problems are solved others emerge. The five driving forces of change that are most significant for our section to consider during the next five years are:

- ***Science and Technology*** – new discoveries are made frequently, including innovative and fundamentally different types of science, much of which is occurring at the borders of the various disciplines. ***Implication:*** Chemistry is well positioned to participate in the science, the technology, and the interdisciplinary nature of these changes.
- ***Societal Problems*** – global climatic change, cost and availability of water and energy, health and wellness options all raise questions about approaches to sustainability. ***Implication:*** Many solutions, as well as addressing the fundamental understanding of these societal problems, involve chemistry (including green chemistry).
- ***Changes in Southern Arizona*** -- Arizona is undergoing rapid growth and we should expect employment for chemists to grow. ***Implication:*** Our membership may increase and change.
- ***Global Economy and Demographics*** – the world is interdependent but the growth rates are variable (Europe is aging but not growing, many countries are increasing the old and the young, and China and India are growing large). ***Implication:*** Increasing interdependence and changing demographics will change the dynamics of how the world functions.
- ***Communication and Information*** – the “new” communication methods and information sources did not stop with the appearance of internet and cell phones. People can personalize the way they wish to receive information and new devices or approaches will continue to evolve. ***Implication:*** This affects the way our members will work and play and how they may wish to receive information or to participate within the Section.

The Section needs to be alert to changes taking place within the fields of chemistry, within the operating environments of our members and work environments, and in the global environment and our societies at large. We need to be agile in our ability to change and to be innovative in how we make changes. Simply continuing past experiences will not be sufficient to serve our members and the public.

## ***Audiences***

There are three primary audiences (letter code indicates primary goals/activities for each audience):

- **Section Members** - representing a variety of interests and experiences - M
- **Education** - teachers/faculty, students - elementary/middle/high school, college - E
- **Public** - all ages and interests - P

## ***Goals and Activities***

The goals, and activities under each goal, should be considered part of a dynamic list and are used as examples. While the activities are likely to vary over the next 3-5 years, it is likely the six goals would be relatively constant. This list of primary activities provides a framework for program planning, and offers ideas for possible future programs, but does not prescribe everything in detail. The code letters define primary audiences for each goal.

1. **Create Professional Readiness for Section Members and College Students** – M, E  
Career information and support (mentoring, basic information, sharing member wisdom, interview skills, résumé skills), UA Chemistry club financial support, Section member’s speaker’s bureau for college classes.
2. **Provide Learning Opportunities for Section Membership** - M  
Local tours, speakers from ACS and locally, formal or technical discussion opportunities, workshops and short courses, newsletter and web content, recognition/awards, panel discussions, special interest groups such as seniors/women chemists, networking opportunities at all events.

3. **Support K-12 Education - E**  
Science Olympiad, web information for teachers and students, teacher awards, short courses for teachers for professional development credits, make use of SAMEC (Science and Math Education Center) newsletter, chemistry related explanations or vignettes for class, Section member speaker's bureau. Focus on both teachers and students.
4. **Build Collaborative Relationships – M, P**  
Joint meetings, work with other organizations to inform them and their audiences about our activities, learn about their activities, cosponsor events, share information, and coordinate community activities and Section member interests.
5. **Perform Community Outreach – P, E, M**  
National Chemistry Week, Earth Day, Science Café, meetings focus on chemistry in society, girl/boy scout achievement programs, and special programs for new audiences and news media. Combine discussions of historical “how chemistry works” with recent innovations or approaches and new materials-that use chemistry. Discuss how chemistry addresses national problems (e.g., global climate change, hazardous materials, food or water quality, nano-materials, living organisms, energy efficiency and green chemistry). General Section member involvement in community projects such as “adopt a family” (or school, or roadway). Section member's speaker's bureau.
6. **Continually Improve the Section – P, E, M**  
Increase volunteer involvement and provide mentorship for volunteers, provide awards and recognition, assess efforts and member interests annually, provide variety of activity options, survey Section members or specific audiences as needed, be willing and flexible at trying new things, plan sufficiently in advance for successful activities using SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-based - see Section Operating Guidelines for further description). Maintain a web site that serves as a chemistry-related portal to provide relevant information to our varied audiences.

### ***Vehicles to Carry Out These Goals for Meetings and Events***

- **Meeting formats can vary widely.**  
Some meetings may include a dinner (with a formal speaker normally addressing a general topic), some may have finger food (more networking or conversation oriented), and some as facility tours with or without catered meals. Some meetings might be a reception or “get-together” in a private home or rented facility (e.g., private school, museum) and others might follow a theme (e.g. Valentines day or a meeting in a dessert venue while discussing chemistry of chocolate, or meeting in a Brewery when discussing chemistry of beer).
- **Meeting locations can vary widely.**  
Examples include picnics, restaurants, science café venues, Section member's facility, or special area (e.g., Desert Museum, Pima Air Museum, and Tucson Botanical Garden).
- **Make active use of the web pages and electronic and print communication.**  
Focus on effective use of these communication resources for our audiences (including listservs or e-newsletters). Specific web sections might relate to the audiences and activities listed in this plan (e.g., education, careers, other organizations, and links to ACS for specific member related information. More frequent mailings with less material is better than infrequent mailings of more information.
- **Work with other organizations.**  
Make our activities more efficient by cooperating with other organizations for programs, audiences and effective use of each other's communications resources. Establish a liaison person to other key organizations.
- **Involve a variety of people over time and experiment with different approaches.**  
Different portions of the Section membership may prefer certain types of meetings and events. Selecting different options and experimenting with new approaches may reach a broader representation of the membership and also identify relevant activities for the particular time.

## ***Guiding Principles for Section Leadership and Operations***

This long range plan is intended as a basic guide for the Section, but conditions change over time and guiding principles were developed to give flexibility to this plan. These guiding principles are intentionally broad so they remain applicable during an uncertain future.

### **1. We need to manage the section so that it is sustainable.**

This means we need to be aware of member needs, offer programs that address those needs, maintain a pleasant working atmosphere, remain financially secure, and do periodic assessments to determine how well the Executive Committee is accomplishing proper management and leadership of the section.

### **2. Our activities should be value-added to our audiences.**

This would include piloting new activities with some volunteers to assess potential interest for both the members and for those taking a leadership role, rather than beginning the activity and then seeking volunteers before we know the activity will work.

### **3. Our activities should have an advocate.**

The advocate may or may not be a member of the Executive Committee and we should provide appropriate human and financial resources to make the activities successful. Thus our activities should be limited to those we can do well, have an advocate, and have members interest.

### **4. Our activities should offer a variety of choices.**

Activities should be of interest to a range of our members rather than focus on a single type of activity, interest area, or segment of the membership. We should experiment and innovate as appropriate to find an appropriate mix (while recognizing the appropriate mix may change over time).

### **5. We should be continually aware of the need for succession planning.**

Offer a variety of options for attracting volunteers such that some may begin with small efforts and progress to committee chairs or officers. We should avoid relying on the same people in leadership roles on a continuing basis to such an extent that we become inbred. This also has the potential for volunteer burnout and limits new energy and ideas.

### **6. We need to maintain a good records management system (active and archive).**

These systems would include formal documents such as the Section Operating Guidelines and long-range plans, but also routine activities such as newsletters, executive committee minutes, regular meeting summaries, treasurer's reports, self-assessments, feedback results, lessons learned, and other materials that would be useful for future leaders. The archival information should be properly updated, organized, and stored. All electronic records (and web sites) should be saved on DVD's or some other method of backing up this information. Otherwise these records will be lost.

## ***Implementation of This Plan***

This plan provides principles and guidelines as well as example activities for the Section. The plan should be consulted as officers and committee chairs change and as annual plans are formed. The next review should be during calendar year 2010 (if no revision is required, the then current date and next review date should be updated). Several ways of updating exist: 1) a committee of the chair elect, chair, and past chair, 2) a special committee, or 3) the full executive committee – or some combination of these approaches or another method.

## ***Method Used to Develop This Plan***

This is the first Long Range Plan developed by the Section so there was a significant effort to gather information. The first assessment effort (a focus group) was in October 2005, and the final draft was completed in November 2007. Details of how feedback and section needs were identified and used is in the 25-page Long Range Plan Background Document, dated January 7, 2007, and a subsequent survey of other local sections in October 2007. The Executive Committee managed this process (the Long Range Planning Committee was the Executive Committee). The committee met twice in spring 2007 to prepare a draft plan for review by the Section membership (posted on the Section website and described in the Section newsletter). The committee met twice in November and the Executive Committee discussed and approved the plan at two meetings in December 2007.

This plan was approved by the Executive Committee on *December 10, 2007*.