

Report

Charting a Course for Chemistry Education

by Mary M. Kirchhoff and Richard N. Zare

What can a professional society with 160,000 members do that can have a special, transformative effect on education in the United States? That is the question posed by the American Chemical Society (ACS) Board of Directors to the newly created Board-Presidential Task Force on Education. The Task Force has these charges:

1. review recommendations contained in national STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education reports released during the past five years;
2. identify specific actions that the Society could undertake in response to these recommendations;
3. create a priority list of actionable items where the Society can have a unique impact on STEM education.

Help Us Find a Solution

Your help is earnestly solicited. You can assist the Task Force in its work by offering your suggestions at educationtaskforce@acs.org. To most influence our deliberations, we need input before the March 22–26, 2009 ACS National Meeting in Salt Lake City. Concise suggestions with plans of implementation would be warmly welcomed. Where do you think the Society can have the greatest impact?

- K–12, undergraduate, or graduate?
- Learners or educators?
- Formal or informal science education?
- Federal, state, or local level?

Your input can help shape the output of our Task Force.

Task Force Members

Chair: Richard N. Zare, Stanford University
 Vice-Chair: Melanie Cooper, Clemson University
 Members: Magid Abou-Gharbia, Temple University
 Norman R. Augustine, Lockheed Martin Corp. (retired)
 Bryan Balazs, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory
 Uma Chowdry, DuPont
 Arthur B. Ellis, University of California San Diego
 Bruce Fuchs, National Institutes of Health
 Joseph A. Heppert, University of Kansas
 Thomas B. Higgins, Harold Washington College
 Steven Long, Rogers High School
 Shirley Malcom, AAAS
 Saundra McGuire, Louisiana State University
 Barbara Sitzman, Granada Hills Charter High School
 Deborah VanSumeren, Lindsay Elementary School
 Ex officio: Judith L. Benham, Chair, ACS Board of Directors
 Bruce E. Bursten, ACS Immediate Past President
 Thomas H. Lane, ACS President
 Staff: Mary M. Kirchhoff, ACS

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Education features prominently in the charter of the ACS, and the Task Force on Education reflects the Board of Directors' commitment to elevating the Society's role in education. In fulfilling its Congressional Charter, the Society has created a number of long-standing education programs, including the ACS approval process, the Student Affiliates program, and Project SEED (Summer Experiences for the Economically Disadvantaged). ACS continually surveys the education landscape to identify new opportunities where the Society and its members can make an impact.

The Task Force will have wide latitude in developing its recommendations in areas ranging from K–16 education through informal science education and continuing professional development. Task Force members (listed below) represent a breadth of experience across the science education spectrum.

Let Us Hear from You

The Task Force is expected to complete its work by August 2009, when it will present its recommendations to the ACS Board of Directors at the ACS National Meeting in Washington, DC. Please help us come up with a few outstanding proposals that the ACS is uniquely qualified to make work. This activity could be one of the most important that the ACS has ever initiated.

More information about the Task Force and its activities will appear on the ACS Web site at <http://www.acs.org/edtaskforce>. To have input to the Task Force, send your suggestions in an email to educationtaskforce@acs.org or participate in the blog at the URL listed below.

Supporting JCE Online Material

<http://www.jce.divched.org/Journal/Issues/2009/Feb/abs145.html>

Abstract and keywords.

Full text (PDF) with links to cited URLs

Blogged at <http://expertvoices.nsdl.org/chemeddl/>

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