

## ACS Presidential Election

# Chemistry and Commitment

by Howard M. Peters

I am honored to be a candidate for ACS President. As an “industry” candidate, I am pleased to provide this statement, because I have been a member of the Division of Chemical Education for some years. For me chemical education is very personal and has made my entire working career possible. I have no deep family academic, or scientific background to draw upon. My grades 1–6 were spent in one-room country schools, and I was the first in my family to complete high school. This is a personal statement.



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My planned initiatives as ACS President include: Innovation, Inclusion, and Internationalization.

Education programs in chemistry take many important forms:

- Education of the public to appreciate the value of chemists and chemistry in their daily lives;
- Education and support for the K–12 programs;
- Education concerning undergraduate teaching and research programs;
- Education concerning our post graduate teaching and research programs; and
- Life long learning for all professional chemists and chemical engineers who daily improve people’s lives by the transforming power of chemistry.

I have supported, been involved with, and committed to chemistry education for years.

At the K–12 level for the past several years, I have written about and supported science fair competitions at the local and international levels. I have been a volunteer judge in local science fairs in the Silicon Valley and an invited judge for the INTEL International Science and Engineering Fair, 2001–2007. I support my wife Sally, a long term member of the ACS Council and active in our Santa Clara Valley Local Section, who for the past several years has organized the United Nations-sponsored Chemistry Olympiad in the Silicon Valley. I have prepared and given ACS talks based on our experiences: “Teaching Innovation and Invention to K–12”. We volunteer for our local section’s “Teach the Teachers” day. We need more chemists to commit to these activities.

Concerning undergraduate teaching and research, in 1998 Sally and I organized a novel program at Geneva College (where we met) to recognize 40 years of ACS approval. Later we were asked to be the cochairs (as Geneva’s only husband-and-wife chemistry graduates—read: poster children) for Geneva’s capital campaign to raise \$5 million for a new chemistry center. We organized one dinner program on campus featuring the late H. C. Brown and raised \$500,000 in pledges. The funds were raised

and the new Roy Adams Chemistry Center was dedicated in October 2003.

I support effective teaching and research at the graduate level. I am a chemical patent attorney for a number of universities, which makes me familiar with the situation at teaching and research institutions.

I advocate life-long learning for chemists. It is only when we innovate and stay involved and current in our fields that we remain competitive personally and do our part to enhance the competitive edge for science and technology in the US.

Finally, we need within ACS more personal member involvement to persuade the public that our chemical sciences need attention and support—now. Sally and I created our fun talk, “Chocolate—Food of the Gods”, as another part of teaching the public to appreciate the world around them through chemistry. The NAS report on competitiveness, “Rising Above the Gathering Storm”, is finally being taken seriously by our major decision-makers.

We need 160,000 committed ACS members to step up to be advocates and ambassadors for chemistry—now. We need the commitment—and then we can do it. But if history is any guide, then this ACS Presidential election will be won by a few thousand votes from about 30,000 votes cast. Where are our other 130,000 committed chemists? And exactly WHAT are they thinking and doing?

A great strength we need to draw upon is the diversity of our more than 160,000 members. Each of us brings our particular talents to this profession. It important to be as inclusive as possible as we work in harmony to advance chemistry as the central science and to improve the well-being of our individual members and society.

If elected, I will be a tireless public voice and face for chemistry, education, diversity, innovation, sustainability, and competitiveness as we live in interesting times. First, we learn, then earn, and finally return. I ask for your vote to continue to return and to work cooperatively in the unique capacity as ACS President. With our members, the Board, Council, and staff we can accomplish these important goals. Failure is not an option. Finally:

**(For me) Chemistry = ACS = OPPORTUNITY!**

**(And I know) CHEMISTS MAKE A DIFFERENCE.**

### Literature Cited

1. Committee on Prospering in the Global Economy of the 21st Century. *Rising Above the Gathering Storm: Energizing and Employing America for a Brighter Economic Future*; National Academies Press: Washington, DC, 2006. Available at <http://www.nap.edu/catalog/11463.html> (accessed Jul 2007).

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