

Professional Affairs and Career Services Committee Annual Report: 2012
Mukund S. Chorghade, Chair

The NESACS Professional Affairs Career Services Committee is dedicated to providing ACS Members with the best and latest tools to manage careers: we offer career guidance and focus on the components of targeting the job market, personal assessment, identifying market trends, credentials, research and networking. We have a comprehensive (lecture, demo and review) program that provides assistance in writing winning resumes and cover letters, learning various techniques and skills needed for a successful job interview and negotiating an attractive job offer.

Mukund Chorghade, as Chair of this committee attended both National Meetings and actively participated in the work of the ACS National Department of Career Services and Professional Development in reviewing resumes and conducting mock interviews. Dr. Daniel Eustace and Patrick Gordon has been a most welcome and effective contributor to these. Special accolades are due to them for helping in redesigning and participating in several innovative ACS presentations and personally leading highly and superbly interactive and novel workshops on interviewing, career development etc. There has been considerable audience participation from employers and interviewees.

The career services job search, resume writing and related workshops program is progressing extremely satisfactorily and is in fact going from strength to strength. Several workshops on “Managing an Effective Job Search”, “Effective Resumes and Cover Letters”, “Finding Jobs in the Biotechnology Sector” were presented. Several new workshops on “Targeting the academic job market”, “To post doc or not to post-doc?” have been prepared and can be offered in our section. In addition a panel discussion on “Overcoming cultural and linguistic barriers in the workplace” was organized and well received. The new booklets covering these topics have been completely revamped and will be unveiled. The resume review and mock interview program is a very popular one. Plans are currently under way to match job seekers with opportunities in the area.

Major symposia that we have delivered in collaboration with the YCC and the Boston University Undergraduate Research are:

Science Careers: We discussed the skills and knowledge that don't necessarily come with a traditional scientific education yet are predictors of success and how a strong grounding in chemistry can be key to a successful scientific career in general.

Working in Biotechnology / Biopharmaceuticals: Promise, Problems, and Potential: New technologies and rapid changes in how and where chemistry is practiced have led to the swift entry of chemistry into the bio-related fields. We examined various characteristics of chemists that work in biotechnology and biopharmaceutical research, how training in academia prepares them for a career in this area and commented on current and future trends in the biotech and pharmaceutical areas in terms of new discovery, fundamental research, and new business opportunities.

A new initiative in collaboration with ERC:

Entrepreneurship: Create Jobs Now!!! Cultivating an entrepreneurial society and providing assistance to entrepreneurs are important for Economic development. ACS Small Chemical Businesses Division (SCHB) is a dedicated element of the small chemical business sector and developing and maintaining resources is crucial for its constituents: existing enterprises, startups, and persons interested in becoming entrepreneurs and business owners. Strategic planning and execution of a plan are an important part of any organization that desires to maintain and grow its position, output, and impact. SCHB recognizes the need to periodically review its structure and activities and find ways to enhance its position.

Mukund Chorghade is the immediate Past-Chair of SCHB was able to cement collaborations with SCHB and the ACS Board Committee on Science (ComSci). In collaboration with SCHB, CEC, BMGT and others, we organized a business plan / business competition wherein entrepreneurs with ideas based on Chemistry were asked to submit plans based on their innovative ideas. Of the 31 business proposals received initially and three subsequent ones, we narrowed down to nine outstanding presentations and six others held over for a subsequent meeting. We organized an event in San Diego wherein the CEOs of these organizations presented their proposals to a broad audience. Subsequently, we had a closed door meeting wherein angel investors, VCs and others were present. This proved to be an outstanding prelude and ‘dress-rehearsal’ for our main event described below:

When Nova Biomedical Corp. in Waltham, MA agreed to host the 926th meeting of the Northeastern Section of the American Chemical Society (NESACS), we asked whether we could add an afternoon symposium to the venue and received an enthusiastic “yes.”

The program included a summary of the ACS programs for Entrepreneurs, programs available from the Massachusetts Small Business Development Center, the startup of Nova in the 1970s, conventional and Small Business Association (SBA) financing. Other subjects included the advantages of executive education for tech entrepreneurs, non-dilutive and dilutive equity funding and an enlightening talk on the advantages of tweeting and other social media for marketing your business.

Madeleine Jacobs, Executive Director & CEO of the American Chemical Society, talked about jobs and ACS programs for entrepreneurs, described at <http://www.acs.org/ei>. We had a number of our NESACS members describe “True Stories of Chemical Entrepreneurs.” The first, by 60-year ACS member, Arthur Obermayer, described how he worked with Senator Kennedy to get government R&D funding for small businesses in the early 80’s. This became the NSF SBIR programs. He then worked with Senators Bayh and Dole on the Bayh-Dole Patent Act. Pam Randhawa of the Movie “21” fame (about MIT entrepreneurs who developed a system to predict the cards in blackjack) and a serial entrepreneur described four of her new ventures in biofuels, drug discovery, etc. The last true story told by NESACS Board Member, Raj Rajur, was about the startup of a contract drug discovery company. We had very lively discussions on financing small companies and how the Nova start up (with no venture capital, just bank financing) in the 1970’s could not be duplicated today. We had several participants at this meeting with 30%

NESACS members, 30% from Universities, 30% small business owners, and a number of patent attorneys. We also had Vivian Walworth, an entrepreneur (90+ years young) and President and CTO of Stereojet, attend the seminar. On Thursday evening she received an award for being a 70-year member of the ACS. She is still very active in NESACS activities as a member of the Board of Publications. This symposium was organized by Dr. Mukund Chorghade, President of Chorghade Enterprises, and Dr. Jack Driscoll, President of PID Analyzers, LLC, and Public Relations Chair of NESACS. The symposium was sponsored by NESACS, the NESACS Government Relations Group, the Small Chemical Business Division of the ACS, and Nova Biomedical.

Several NESACS members have been tapped by ACS President-elect Dr. Marinda Wu to participate in a “piloting” task force she titled “Vision 2025: Helping ACS Members Thrive in the Global Chemistry Enterprise” at the beginning of her electoral term. This recognizes the energy, enthusiasm and the commitment to focus the society’s efforts to be a benefit for members in our fast changing world.

Some of the leading trends identified are:

- Fewer chemistry-related jobs in the U.S. projected in the future; tighter job market and fewer chemistry career jobs
- Chemical enterprise is global; not strictly localized by markets and raw materials with other complicating factors
- Technical leadership in Chemistry is less clear for U.S.; continual need for innovations to achieve progress
- Observed global population increases with attendant earth resource reduction and increased air and water pollution

Goals:

1. Prepare ACS members for traditional chemistry and non-traditional careers advocating business creation, growth and expansion
2. Promote and enhance partnerships and exchanges to increase access to resources and jobs.
3. Non-traditional career paths, patent matters and advocacy for members to be informed to make personal decisions.