

Virginia Local Section Needs Assessment

The Virginia Local Section requested a needs assessment be conducted to inform the Committee's strategic planning. In August of 2016, a survey was conducted, which was completed by 131¹ Virginia Local Section members.

KEY FINDINGS:

- More than half of respondents have been members of the Local Section for more than ten years.
- 1 in 10 has been a member for less than one year.
- Half of respondents say they have not been involved at all in their Local Section.
 - Inconvenient meeting times and distance to travel were cited as reasons why members have not been involved.
 - Others have commented that Local Section programming is not geared towards their specific field.
- Most respondents say that representing the field to the public is an important function of ACS Local Sections.
 - More than one-third however rated the Local Section's performance as fair, poor or terrible in representing the field to the public.
- Networking opportunities were ranked as being the most important activity for the Local Section to continue by nearly half of respondents.
- Local Section sponsored events at ACS National Meetings were ranked as the least important.
- Networking opportunities and expanding involvement of younger members were cited by many as the most important activity for the Local Section to develop more.
- Nearly two-thirds would be at least moderately interested in attending a section meeting in webinar or webex format.
- Three-quarters would be interested in a research seminar by a renowned scientist. Two-thirds would be interested in a tour of an industrial facility.
- Other popular options included a technical seminar by a local chemist, technical short course, and a tour of research facilities at a local university.
- Half are interested in a mentoring event with students or a joint meeting in Northern Virginia with the Washington, DC section.
- Three-quarters would be interested in a tour of a winery or brewery.
- Over one-quarter would probably or definitely attend technical symposia sponsored by the local section at an ACS National Meeting.
- Nearly all would prefer to be informed about topics and activities via email.

¹ Margin of Error 7.1%

ANNOTATED QUESTIONNAIRE:

1. Generally speaking, how would you rate your overall satisfaction with the American Chemical Society?

Response	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%	Frequency
Very dissatisfied						5%
Somewhat dissatisfied						2%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied						17%
Somewhat satisfied						39%
Very satisfied						38%

2. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement: I feel very loyal to the ACS

Response	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%	Frequency
Strongly disagree						2%
Somewhat disagree						2%
Neither agree nor disagree						16%
Somewhat agree						40%
Strongly agree						40%

3. How likely are you to do the following?

	Definitely would not	Probably would not	Might or might not	Probably would	Definitely would
Recommend ACS	0%	3%	6%	45%	47%
Join/renew membership in ACS	0%	0%	2%	32%	66%

4. Approximately how long have you been a member of your Local Section?

Response	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%	Frequency
Less than 1 year						10%
1 to 5 years						23%
6 to 10 years						16%
More than 10 years						52%

5. How would you rate your level of involvement in your Local Section in the past year?

Response	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%	Frequency
Not involved at all						50%
Not very involved						26%
Somewhat involved						11%
Very involved						10%
Extremely involved						3%

6. You indicated that you have not been involved in your Local Section this past year. Please explain why you have not been involved.

Response
Company travel to New York State.
I have two young children and a long commute so very little time outside of work to dedicate.
Local section has only one or two meeting per year. It would be better if they can arrange a conference or workshop where more people can participate.
new to area, time restraints, long distance to events
I am a high school teacher. Meetings aren't geared to high school education. Times are inconvenient.
Family & personal issues primarily, but I am planning greater activity in National, Division, and Regional meetings. Further, when I was first appointed to the Point Executive Committee 30+ years ago, I was the second woman in n the EC Now there are a dozen, with women in most leadership roles & heavy participation of industry chemists. Mission accomplished.
New to the area
Retired and meetings at night on Fridays. It is no longer convenient to attend.
Making time to participate
The local section is based out of Richmond and I am in Charlottesville. With events typically during the week, it is extremely difficult for me to attend.
Travel, lack of interest, late announcements of local meetings ("There's a great speaker today, 100 miles away")
Events aren't usually local to my home and work, and other responsibilities prevent me from making the trip to those that are closest
Event dates have conflicted with other activities; too much travel to further meeting sites; generally withdrawn from most of life and do not feel needed.
I am retired after 50 years of service
I am retired and no longer active in the area of chemistry/biochemistry.

Time constraints
Just moved to the area; Haven't found the time to get involved; Also have not had time to find events held by the local section and plan to attend them
It's a lower priority on my long list
Retired
Busy with other stuff.
As a chemical engineer, I am mostly involved with two AIChE local sections. I am a 50-year member of ACS and AIChE.
Illness
My job is very far away from Richmond and am basically exhausted by the weekend.
Work Schedule and long drive to meetings
Most of the local section activities are far removed from my location. I know that the section covers a large area, and the meetings move around throughout the section, but I have not found the time to spend travelling to attend the meeting to be the best use of my limited time
Many of the activities take place in the Richmond area, which is a hub for many chemical industries and several academic institutions. Granted, I could offer to host my own events in the western part of the state, but just to be able to show up and participate is difficult when you are over 2 hours away.
Generally topics associated with the section are not relevant to my work or science.
I have transferred from another section where I had close contacts with members, and I have not been able to establish similar contacts here.
Don't have as much interest as I once did.
I am a recent graduate. I have been trying to get established in my career.
Limited time
Just join and then moved, don't know how to get involved.
Not able to attend meetings on Friday evenings. I reserve that time for family. If the meetings would move to another weeknight, I would be more likely to attend. perhaps they could be offered on different weeknights each month to give more people the opportunity to attend as their schedules allow.
My Local Section spans a fairly large geographic area. I am located on the edge of this area, so travel to local events is not fast/easy. I also feel so full of professional events where I work that it is hard to justify additional activities on nights/weekends.
Busy schedule
I do not have the time to actively participate.
It seems like the local chapter is more for academics and not industrial chemists.
I was an Undergraduate member until this past May without a campus chapter.

Involvement with a house sale and family events.
There has been very little communication about opportunities and outreach events.
I don't feel like I'm in the loop enough or with enough advance notice to join events or be involved in other ways. I'm not even 100% sure I'm signed up properly to get communications, notices of events, etc...
Local section meetings are in Richmond or further away. I live in Prince William County and work in Arlington, so meetings are really too far away to attend often.
Everything happens two hours away and is based on industry scheduling not academics
Pressure of work
Meetings too faraway
I just joined ACS Virginia local section in 2016. Look forward to joining its event this fall and afterwards..
Schedules never seem to work out inspite of occasional real interest.
Am retired and not that interested in local programming and travel to meetings
Not many activities I am aware of and it seems like they send out notices very close to the events they do have so I cannot attend due to previous plans.
So little time after dealing with work and family.
I've been extremely busy and the local section meetings rotate throughout the state, which makes it difficult to attend during the week.
I have retired this year.
schedule
I am recently relocated into a new local section. The meeting announcements I have seen are not geographically convenient to my home/work.
I am not a scientific politician.
Meetings are on Friday evenings. What a strange time for a professional association meeting!
Being retired, it is not on my list of things to do at this time.
I usually attend one meeting a year, but because of time I have trouble attending much more.
Just at a point in life where other things (esp. family) take priority.
I often cannot make it to the monthly meetings because of the time required to travel after work. I also haven't made much effort to volunteer for things but I might change that soon.
Most meetings for the local section are 2 hours away. Because I do not live in Richmond, it's hard to get involved or feel invested because everything is so far away. I don't feel that there is much value for traveling 2 hours each way to do things with meetings.
I am a lab tech in a local corporation and not in academia. The meeting topics are not of interest to me as they mostly revolve around academic issues. Also, the meeting places are often not convenient

for me to travel to.		
Very retired		
The demands of my day job and the DC commute leave little free time.		
The meetings do not cover relevant information to my field. I am in the industrial water treatment field and am more interested in controlled crystal growth, corrosion inhibition, and trace analyte detection.		
Too busy with work.		
Very busy with work and family. Hope to return to local section activities in the future.		
I just moved to the area.		
Age and sloth - night meetings call for a long drive at night.		
Busy with graduate school		
I am a patent attorney and do not involve myself in local chemistry events.		
Most local section meetings would require a drive and a friday night, which is family time for me.		
The timing of local section meetings and events. I live and work in northern Virginia, and the drive time can get prohibitive given my schedule.		
no time		
Lack of available time.		
Most of the meetings are too far away. Meetings mostly cover topics of academic interest.		
Have not seen anything for chemistry teachers locally		
It is time issue. I have not had time to be involved with my Local Section.		
Events are far away and not of interest		
		Valid Responses
		79

7. How important are the following ACS Local Section functions to you?

	Very unimportant	Somewhat unimportant	Neither important nor unimportant	Somewhat important	Very important
Provide opportunities for an exchange of technical information (meetings, symposiums, etc.)	13%	6%	10%	44%	27%
Provide networking opportunities	7%	11%	13%	35%	34%
Represent the field within the industry or discipline	11%	6%	18%	39%	26%
Represent the field to the public	7%	5%	11%	40%	37%
Provide training/professional development specific to the field	11%	10%	21%	38%	21%
Provide awards or recognition for excellence in the field	11%	5%	21%	45%	17%

8. How would you rate Local Section's performance in each of the following?

	Terrible	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Provide opportunities for an exchange of technical information (meetings, symposiums, etc.)	0%	5%	15%	55%	25%
Provide networking opportunities	0%	6%	21%	38%	35%
Represent the field within the industry or discipline	0%	5%	23%	57%	15%
Represent the field to the public	2%	10%	25%	49%	14%
Provide training/professional development specific to the field	0%	17%	33%	40%	10%
Provide awards or recognition for excellence in the field	0%	0%	13%	45%	42%

9. What types of activities are most important for your Local Section to continue? Please rank each activity, with 1 being of the highest importance.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Local Section sponsored events at ACS National Meetings	4%	7%	12%	13%	17%	20%	26%
Local Section sponsored events at Regional Meetings	11%	14%	14%	12%	25%	18%	5%
Awards program	7%	16%	15%	15%	9%	21%	17%
Networking opportunities	47%	14%	16%	11%	4%	2%	5%
Sense of community	18%	30%	24%	13%	5%	9%	1%
Promotion of diversity	8%	15%	19%	16%	12%	8%	21%
Divisional webpage	12%	10%	7%	21%	24%	14%	13%

10. What is the single most important activity that your Local Section could develop to help better serve the members?

Response
Reach more high school institutions so more students learn about this valuable field
Getting local members to present material and challenges they face in their industry, in a central location so that I may attend and learn more about other industries in my community.
Networking
career fair for students
Networking opportunities and professional development.
NA
Involve younger members and provide more training and background for those with leadership potential
Schedule better speakers at Section meetings.
Training to improve job performance, whether in academia or industry.
A webpage and a structure of communicating to members in the local/regional group, to even let us know who is there, where people are.
Stimulate more pre-collegiate involvement in Section activities.
More networking opportunities
Having a more humble opinion of itself and the field of chemistry. It is too self-promoting.
No suggestion
I don't feel like I have enough involvement to provide meaningful input.

Facilitated networking opportunity
communication about events/ training/ educational opportunities
I haven't a clue.
Sharing ideas on specific ways/strategies to teach specific topics that will promote student learning.
expand education program opportunities for members
I would personally like to see more meetings and/or events with other nearby local sections.
Not sure
Encourage more graduate student participation around the state; this would diversify the community of members in many ways, including geographically.
include biomedical, biochemical community
Continue, improve interaction between industry and colleges
Networking: Assist with introductions of attendees of local meetings.
Better online presence--draw members in, so they feel like part of the organization
Nothing to suggest
Engagement.
Develop a stronger interest in chemistry at the high school level.
Networking and training/career programs.
better and more clear communication, well in advance of meetings, events, networking ops, etc...
don't know
I'm not sure.
Events to help younger chemists better understand career and grad school paths
The local section is pretty active but could encourage more young/mid professionals to get involved.
Training, communication of national events, representation at national events, more networking/connectedness across the region
Have meeting in colleges close to where members live
To provide career guidance for re-entering the chemical field
Maintain high quality monthly meeting speaker program.
n/a
Volunteering events to get involved with the community while spreading information about ACS.

11. Which of the following types of activities would be most beneficial to improve your Local Section activities? Select all that apply.

Response	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%	Frequency
Social media presence						20%
More active webpage						37%
Awards for junior researchers						34%
More networking resources						56%
Grow programming at meetings						34%
Develop presence at regional ACS meetings						20%
Connections to industry						61%

12. Would you be interested in attending a section meeting in a webinar or webex format?

Response	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%	Frequency
Not interested						18%
Of little interest						20%
Moderately interested						29%
Somewhat interested						22%
Very interested						12%

13. Please rate the importance of the following Local Section activities.

	Very unimportant	Somewhat unimportant	Neither important nor unimportant	Somewhat important	Very important
Networking	8%	7%	5%	35%	44%
Seeing friends	9%	10%	20%	44%	17%
Learning about the section's history	14%	16%	40%	26%	3%
Recognition of past contributions	10%	13%	30%	41%	5%

14. Chemical Interest

Response	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%	Frequency
Research Seminar by renowned scientist						74%
Technical seminar by local chemist						62%
Science Café event						43%
Tour of research facilities at local university						48%
Tour of industrial facility						68%
Presentation on history of chemical research in Virginia						33%
Lab Equipment Vendor show						26%
Chemical lab demonstrations event						33%
Technical short course						53%
Other						1%
Response						
General scientific talks						
					Valid Responses	1

15. Career Development and Networking

Response	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%	Frequency
Resume/Interview workshop						34%
Mentoring event with students						55%
Networking dinner at restaurant						39%
Section Picnic for members and families						39%
Meet up of Section members at National meeting						24%
Joint meeting in Northern Virginia with Washington, D.C. section						48%
Joint meeting in Newport News with Hampton Roads section						26%
Career Discussion Panel event						33%
Presentation or public speaking short course						31%
Other						1%
Response						
Joint meeting with Virginia Blue Ridge Section						
					Valid Responses	1







16. General Interest

Response	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%	Frequency
Tour of winery or brewery						76%
Outing to sporting event						30%
Fall foliage bus tour						20%
Group tour of exhibits at museum						45%
Nature walk with guide						38%
Battlefield tour						23%
Group visit to historical site						42%
Other						4%






SAMPLE PROFILE:

- Two-thirds of respondents are employed full-time.
- About 2 in 5 are employed in academia. A similar proportion is employed in industry.
- One-quarter specialize in Analytical Chemistry.
- The sample was evenly split between men and women.
- More than a quarter of respondents are over the age of 65.

19. Please indicate your current primary employment status.

Response	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%	Frequency
Employed full time						68%
Employed part time						9%
Postdoctoral or other fellowship						0%
Graduate Student						0%
Undergraduate Student						1%
Not employed but actively seeking employment						1%
Not employed and not seeking employment						3%
Fully retired						18%

20. In what sector is your current or most recent primary employment?

Response	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%	Frequency
Industry, manufacturing						27%
Industry, non-manufacturing						15%
Academia						43%
Government						12%
Self-Employed						3%



21. What is your current or most recent work specialty? Select one.

Response	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%	Frequency
Agricultural/food chemistry						1%
Analytical chemistry						25%
Biochemistry						5%
Biotechnology						2%
Chemical education						8%
Chemical engineering						2%
Clinical chemistry						1%
Environmental chemistry						5%
General chemistry						4%
Inorganic chemistry						1%
Materials science						3%
Medicinal/pharmaceutical chemistry						5%
Nanochemistry						1%
Organic chemistry						11%
Physical chemistry						7%
Polymer chemistry						6%
Other chemical science						2%
Business administration						0%
Computer science						0%
Education						3%
Law						1%
Medicine/healthcare						2%
Other non-chemistry						3%











21. What is your current or most recent work specialty?

Response		
Specialty Fuel Additives		
Forensic Sciences		
Intelligence		
Quality and Compliance		
	Valid Responses	4

22. Are you...?

Response	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%	Frequency
Male						49%
Female						51%
Prefer not to answer						

23. What is your age? Select one.

Response	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%	Frequency
Under 18						0%
18 to 25						3%
26 to 30						5%
31 to 35						14%
36 to 40						5%
41 to 45						10%
46 to 50						9%
51 to 55						11%
56 to 60						7%
61 to 65						8%
Over 65						26%

24. If you have any other comments or suggestions for the Local Section, please provide them below.

Response	
	none
	None
	Outstanding Section with great leadership. Keep up the good work!
	I love the ACS, and want to be even better, particularly at the local/regional level!
	we need to attract younger members
	When sending out requests for survey information, please do not use poor grammar. For example: Do not use "To better understand..." Please use: "To understand ...better." It's a rule of grammar called a split infinitive and it's very annoying besides being incorrect. We should be teaching the younger chemists proper grammar for use in their theses and technical papers.
	None
	I live in central Virginia and usually requires traveling distances to attend a local meeting.
	n/a
	See my previous comments about the price of downloaded articles.
	Wow! This was a very long survey.
	I would recommend splitting Richmond and Charlottesville.
	none
	It has provided opportunities for professional activities I never imagined I would have when I joined over 50 years ago.
	The local section might consider something like the "Beer and Biotech" get togethers that VABIO sponsors. These offer networking opportunities with other members. sometimes they are associated with poster sessions at the local university. These events move all over the state, but they provide a networking opportunity in my local area about three times per year.
	Valid Responses
	14