**ACS Strategy Café: Let’s Hear from ALL!**

***An opportunity to engage ACS members in an interactive discussion.***



Looking for ways to hear from your membership about the types of activities they would like to see within their Local Sections, Divisions, or committees while at the same time promoting their participation and commitment? The **Strategy Café** is a new tool that can encourage this type of engagement. It provides a two-fold opportunity to directly hear members’ needs and a venue for members to share their ideas openly and interactively. The **Strategy Café** centers on how Local Sections, Divisions, Committees, Student Chapters, other ACS groups and their members can each contribute to the ACS Vision of “Improving people’s lives through the transforming power of chemistry.” More importantly, it also presents a model for how engagement might be generated in response to a strategic plan of any kind.

**Why host a Strategy Café?**

Participation in a Strategy Café can be ideal for many members. It could include a selected or self-selected group of members, the executive committee, or some other group of interested members. It is a quick and an effective way to gather member feedback about where there is enthusiasm for getting involved and specific issues that need to be addressed for any governance group. The more diverse the group is the more insights that will be shared. It is also an optimal time to bring awareness about the ACS Strategic Plan, and how your activities can contribute to the fulfillment of our plan.

**How do we make it productive and enjoyable for participants?**

To increase collegiality and connectivity among members, a Strategy Café is designed to break down barriers and to encourage discussions among colleagues in an organized and productive approach and is entirely suited to a virtual environment. It is an ideal way to network with other members and foster conversations.

Here is a selection of ideas on how to make it enjoyable for participants:

* Host a table that is “off-topic” from the strategy theme (e.g., trivia “About ACS”)
* Have a contest among participants (e.g., scribes at each table decide who shared the most meaningful ideas)
* Have members call out the best suggestion/idea that was heard at a table
* Reiterate that the activity is meant to be interactive and fun
* Offer innovative ways to implement an idea

**How much time is needed?** A Strategy Café could take place as a stand-alone event or in connection with another meeting. It can be as short as 30 minutes or longer than an hour, depending on how much time is allowed at each table. The following is a sample outline of the Strategy Café:

Introduction (3 minutes)

Explain concept (3 minutes)

Move into groups (4 minutes)

Group Discussion (7 – 10 minutes) x number of goals (currently 4)

Group Results (3 minutes for each group)

Conclusion (5 minutes)

Many have called this method similar to **“speed dating”,** since participants are encouraged to share their thoughts in a given amount of time before they move on to another table or discussion topic.

**What and who is needed?**

The Strategy Café is easy to run!

1. You need a main facilitator to introduce the concept and explain what is expected from the participants.
2. There are four tables, each representing a goal, with a maximum of 7 – 8 participants at each. For larger groups, there can be multiple tables for each goal.
3. There should be copies of the relevant goal on each table for reference, and there should be a sign so that people can identify each table.
4. Each table is assigned a scribe (or table volunteer) to help write down ideas that the group shares. The scribe can also help to facilitate the discussion, or a separate facilitator can be selected.
5. After 7 – 10 minutes (recommended), the scribe (and facilitator) moves on to the next table with his or her goal; participants are encouraged to remain at their original tables. Each participant is known as an “ambassador of strategy.” They are expected to take the ideas presented at their table each goal and apply it (if applicable) to the other goals, or to share what they learned.
6. After 3 – 4 rounds, the main facilitator calls on the table scribes (facilitators) to report out the top three ideas or issues that were shared on the strategic goals they led.

**What should be discussed?**

Questions to be addressed by participants at each table are as follows:

*Based upon the objectives for each goal within the ACS Strategic Plan (see below), what contributions can be made by your Local Section (or any group), and you as an individual volunteer, to help fulfill the objectives? What additional objectives should be set in support of the Society’s Mission, Vision, Core Values, and goals?*

**Goals from the ACS Strategic Plan**

**Provide Information Solutions**

Deliver indispensable chemistry-related information solutions to address global challenges and other issues facing the world’s scientific community.

**Empower Members and Member Communities**

Provide access to opportunities, resources, skills training, and networks to empower our members and member communities to thrive in the global economy.

**Support Excellence in Education**

Foster the development of innovative, relevant, and effective chemistry and chemistry- related education.

**Communicate Chemistry's Value**

Communicate — to the public and to policymakers — the vital role of chemical professionals and chemistry in addressing the world’s challenges.

**More information about the strategic plan can be found at** [**http://strategy.acs.org**](http://strategy.acs.org/)

**What should be done with the information collected at each of the tables?**

Successful Strategy Cafés help Local Sections, Divisions, committees, and other ACS groups identify the unmet needs of their members and provide a framework on how to fulfill these needs, all in support of the ACS Vision, Mission, Core Values, and Strategic Plan. The information gathered will need to be thoroughly examined by the Local Section (or group) in order to develop objectives and action plans and to help formulate or modify current activities or programs that is received for each goal. Perhaps there are some ideas raised in the Strategy Café that would be useful to other Local Sections (or groups). You can share such ideas online in the (Local Section or Councilor) ACS Network group.

ACS leadership welcomes any suggestions for the Society as a whole to pursue**. If you have ideas or suggestions that you would like to share, or if you have questions, you may send an email to** [strategicplan@acs.org](mailto:strategicplan@acs.org)**.**

**Enjoy the Café!**