



2020

Annual Report

American Chemical Society



ACS
Chemistry for Life®

In Service to Society

2020 was a year of extraordinary challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic reshaped our world through its devastating impact on public health, the economy and daily life. Then, shortly after the arrival of the pandemic, the tragic killing of George Floyd, along with other people of color, prompted a reexamination of social justice and racism across the U.S. and internationally.

In responding to these watershed events, the [American Chemical Society](#) (ACS) redoubled its commitment to diversity and inclusion, enhanced services for members and the public, and adapted processes to the virtual environment while remaining true to its vision: Improving all people's lives through the transforming power of chemistry.

In March 2020, as the scope of the pandemic became more apparent in the U.S., we temporarily closed the ACS offices in Washington and Columbus (and as of this writing, a date to reopen has not been determined) and transitioned our staff to working remotely. Thanks to the information technology team, that conversion proceeded smoothly.

We terminated the spring national meeting that had been scheduled for March in Philadelphia. As an alternative, we gave people the opportunity to present their science through online poster sessions and the open-access [SciMeetings](#) repository. Next, we converted the Green Chemistry & Engineering Conference into a fully virtual meeting in June. We offered it at no charge because we had never done a large-scale virtual meeting before. We were surprised to have almost 5,000 attendees — as opposed to the usual 500 to 600 when held in person — with over half from outside the U.S. This clearly illustrated that there is a larger potential audience for our work in green and sustainable chemistry.

By mid-2020, it became clear we would need to terminate the in-person component of the fall national meeting that had been scheduled for August in San Francisco. We shifted it to a fully virtual event, our first-ever virtual national meeting. Beyond our national meetings, we hosted or participated in a number of other virtual events, including the [U.S. National](#) and [International](#) Chemistry Olympiads, [ChemLuminary Awards](#) ceremony, [Project](#)



Thomas Connelly Jr., Ph.D., ACS CEO

Credit: Peter Cutts/DS Photo

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CEO's Message

[SEED](#) virtual summer camp and a Chief Technology Officer Summit. All of these successful activities persuaded us to incorporate some virtual sessions even after we return to in-person events.

We responded to the pandemic in a number of other ways. We made our employee assistance program resources (including counseling on work-life balance, financial guidance and legal assistance) and LinkedIn Learning content available to members at no charge. We collected ACS and CAS COVID-19-related materials and resources in an online [hub](#) and made relevant education resources, journal publications and data freely available to everyone. Our CAS scientists put together four overview articles related to the pandemic and published them in ACS journals. We highlighted the topic in our expanded [webinar series](#) and in [Reactions](#) videos, including ones about wearing masks and developing vaccines. Our intent was to offer information not just to researchers, but to educators, policy-makers and the general public as well.

We also recognized that K-12 teachers were faced with a new challenge of teaching remotely and needed materials that could allow them to do that — exactly the kind of resources that we provide through the [American Association of Chemistry Teachers](#). One unexpected, but welcome, consequence was that the Association's membership jumped to 8,000, up 20% from the prior year.

With the help of science, we remain optimistic that the grip of the pandemic will ease over the course of 2021, but the other grand challenge of the past year — racism and social injustice — is more deeply rooted and will take much longer to meaningfully affect.

ACS' governing documents and activities have supported diversity and inclusion for years, but after the shocking events of 2020, we knew we needed to do more within our staff, across ACS as a society and across the chemistry enterprise as a whole.

We reached out to volunteer committees and boards related to diversity. We looked at our staff demographics. We examined our practices around hiring and advancement, and all policies and practices that might subtly create barriers and prevent people from participating fully in ACS. We had an outside audit firm look at how we were doing things and what we could do differently. We also held listening sessions with staff, and we talked about experiences and emotions not typically discussed in the office.

After collecting as much input as possible, we came up with an action plan. While it will require long-term dedication, we took some initial steps in 2020.

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The ACS Board of Directors updated the Society's [strategic plan](#) by adding a fifth goal that centers around achieving inclusion in the chemistry enterprise. They also added the word "equity" to our core value on diversity, inclusion and respect, and they enhanced our mission, vision and other strategic planning documents in light of our commitment to these principles.

We developed training programs about implicit bias and diversity for the board of directors, the executive leadership team, staff, key committees and ACS journal editors. Also, we updated our processes for selecting committee members and candidates for national office to make sure those practices are free of bias and enable us to actively increase diversity.

As then-ACS President Luis Echegoyen noted in an open [letter](#) in August 2020, these new and existing programs "are just the initial foundation that we will continue to build upon moving forward. We know that tangible and concrete steps involve far more than crafting lofty statements of resolve and instituting quick fixes, so we are working hard to develop efforts for meaningful and sustainable change." Our goal is a more open, equitable and inclusive chemistry enterprise.

Even as we emphasized issues of diversity and public health in 2020, we worked on other important programs. CAS continued to innovate and introduce new products and features, including enhancements to [SciFinder[®]](#). ACS Publications had a milestone year, with announcements of new open-access journals and the launch of [JACS Au](#), (pronounced "JACS Gold"), the fully open-access counterpart of our flagship journal.

We tested a new "community membership" model that provided access to a subset of ACS benefits, and it attracted 13,000 people to the ACS family. And despite the economic downturn, we made it a priority to avoid staff reductions. Thankfully, with strong performance by ACS Publications and CAS and overall cost management throughout the Society, we were able to do that.

Also in 2020, following many years of work with allies in Congress, sustainable chemistry and broad energy research provisions championed by ACS were included in defense and spending bills that have now become law.

Details about these and other successes can be found online in the "[2020 Highlights of ACS Achievements](#)." As we move further into 2021, I look forward to a continued partnership with members and staff to improve all people's lives through chemistry.

Financial Highlights

The American Chemical Society (ACS) ended 2020 with strong [financial results](#), in spite of COVID-19-related challenges. ACS generated a change in net assets without donor restrictions from operations of \$62.5 million on total revenues of \$632.1 million. This strong result was attributable to a combination of robust revenues from the information services divisions and continued expense discipline across all Society program and administrative units. The positive financial results allowed the Society to continue strategic investments in its mission-driven activities and member services.

The Society's financial position strengthened in 2020. Net assets without donor restrictions increased from \$446.2 million at Dec. 31, 2019, to \$588.7 million as of Dec. 31, 2020. This increase resulted primarily from the \$62.5 million operating contribution and net investment gains of \$66.2 million. The Society ended 2020 in full compliance with all of the ACS Board-approved financial guidelines.

The audited financial statements and additional finance-related resources can be accessed on the Society's [financial information](#) website.

ACS is grateful for the generous support provided by donors and sponsors for its programs and awards. The list of 2020 sponsors of ACS national awards can be found on page 7 of the PDF of this annual report.

Allocation of Dues

2020 Allocation of Dues		
	\$ (In Thousands)	Percent
<i>Chemical & Engineering News</i>	\$ 6,985	56%
Member Services	4,258	35%
Local Section Allotments	1,672	13%
Division Allotments	1,259	10%
Support for Society Programs	(1,707)	(14%)
Total	\$ 12,467	100%

This table includes ACS membership dues. Adding dues from the American Association of Chemistry Teachers and excluding the impact of local section and division allotments brings 2020 net dues revenue to \$9,782,000, as reported in the financial statements. Support for Society Programs includes additional one-time funding of \$2,942,000 awarded by the Board of Directors to enhance efforts by local sections and divisions to help the Society achieve its mission and vision.

Sponsors of National Awards

ACS thanks the 2020 sponsors of its [national awards](#):

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ACS Division of Chemical Education
ACS Division of Computers in Chemistry
ACS Division of Environmental Chemistry
ACS Division of Fluorine Chemistry
ACS Division of Industrial and Engineering Chemistry
ACS Division of Nuclear Chemistry and Technology
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The Journal of Chemical Physics
Merck Research Laboratories
Josef Michl Award Endowment
MilliporeSigma

ANNUAL REPORT 2020**Financials**

MilliporeSigma (a business of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany)

Nakanishi Prize Endowment

Newport Corporation

Northeastern Section of the American Chemical Society

George A. Olah Award Endowment

Organic Reactions, Inc.

Organic Syntheses, Inc.

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The Procter & Gamble Company

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Ahmed Zewail Award Endowment funded by Newport Corporation

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Not pictured: Al Horvath, Flint H. Lewis

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