



**The Omaha Section  
of the  
American Chemical Society**

**2015 Annual Report**

## **Local Section overview**

The Omaha Section, section number 517, is in District V, with the focus of its activities in the metropolitan area of Omaha. In December 2015 the total number of members in the Section was 196, with the following breakdown:

Regular Members	123
Emeritus Members	17
Retired members	9
Society Affiliates	4
Regular Student Members	14
Undergraduate Student Members	29

Governance of the Omaha Section is performed entirely by the Executive Committee in accordance to the Bylaws. In 2015 the Omaha Section started with Joe Vetro, Ph.D. as the Chair of the Section, however in September 2015 Dr. Vetro voluntarily resigned as Chair and the Chair-Elect at the time, John Kyndt, Ph.D., took on the position as Chair, as designated in the Bylaws.

As of September 2015 the Executive Committee was composed as follows:

Chair	John Kyndt, Ph.D.
Secretary	Harsh Chauhan, Ph.D.
Treasurer	James Fletcher, Ph.D.
Councilor	Richard Lomneth, Ph.D.
Alternate Councilor	James Carroll, Ph.D.

## **Executive Committee Meetings**

The Executive Committee had a total of five meetings in 2015: on March 26, July 31, September 21, October 1 and November 20. The agendas and recorded minutes of these meetings are included in Appendix A of this document. During these meetings the Executive Committee extensively discussed ways to increase member participation and proposed various activities that could improve member engagement. The activities that were planned and performed by the Executive Committee are summarized in the following sections. Due to the change in leadership during 2015 and the limited activities that were performed in the first part of the year, this report is mainly focused on the activities performed in the second half of 2015. These include a social event, a tour of a government lab, two 'ACS Program-in-a-box' events, and an end-of-year holiday reception.

In addition to the activities listed below the Executive Committee also decided to provide sponsorship to the Midwest Science and Engineering Fair in March 2015 in the form of sponsoring a chemistry student award (of \$ 100) and to the Chemistry Olympiad for high school students in March 2015.

## **Activities**

### **September Social: September 21**

The September meeting was a social event at a local brewery to which all the members were invited. The event was held on September 21<sup>th</sup> at the Upstream Brewing Company in west Omaha from 6h30-8h00 pm. About 15 members attended the event, including the members of the Executive Committee. After a short welcome, the Secretary announced the resignation of Joe Vetro, Ph.D. as Chair and the new Chair for the remainder of 2015. The meeting was continued with an overview of the upcoming events for 2015 (Chair), a financial overview by the Treasurer (James Fletcher, Ph.D.), and an overview of the recent National meeting in Boston by the Councilor (Rich Lomneth, Ph.D).

During the event we also took the opportunity to ask for ideas and feedback from the members on new events or initiatives that the section could organize in the following year. During an open discussion several ideas were brought forward, including a summer social event, potential Science Café's and increased social media presence (e.g. LinkedIn and Facebook). A buffet with hot and cold foods and open bar was provided by the local Omaha section.

### **'Program-in-a-Box' events: October 20 and November 10**

Two ACS 'Program-in-a-box' events were hosted in Fall 2015 to which all the members were invited (flyers are attached in Appendix A). The October 20<sup>th</sup> event was entitled '*Tales of Lab Safety, How to Avoid Rookie Accidents*' and the November 10<sup>th</sup> event was on '*Establishing and Protecting Your Intellectual Property*'. The intent of these events was to increase the visibility of the section and attract interest from students (mainly with the October event) and members working in industry (main focus of the second event).

Both events were organized at 6 PM at Creighton University and about 7-8 people attended each of these events. After taking part in the virtual presentations, the attendees had a brief discussion about the presented topic and a raffle was organized with the prizes provided in the ACS box. The local section provided snacks and drinks for all attendees.

### **Tour of Ames Laboratories: October 30**

Ames Laboratory is a government-owned, contractor-operated National Laboratory of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), operated by and located on the campus of Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa. Ames Laboratory performs research on several sustainability topics including green catalysts for biodiesel, rare-earth magnet recycling; ionic liquids for producing phosphors for next-gen lighting, and biofuel based technology development. The tour was a combined effort between the local

Omaha ACS section and Bellevue University. A total of 9 people attended of which 3 were Omaha ACS members. Ames is a 3-hour drive from Omaha, and transportation was provided by a Bellevue University van (operated by the local section Chair). The tour lasted about two hours, but with travel time this was whole day adventure (left Omaha at 9 am and returned around 6pm). Lunch was provided to all attendees by Bellevue University.

### ***December Social: End of Year Reception, December 10***

Our traditional 'End of Year' event was organized on December 10, 2015. The Chair of the Executive Committee presented an overview of the 2015 section events, introduced the newly elected 2015 section officers and provided an overview of the upcoming events for 2016. This event was an opportunity for networking, socializing and holiday celebration amongst ACS members in an informal environment. The local section provided a buffet of hot and cold food, desserts and an open bar in the Harper Center on the campus of Creighton University. Twenty members attended included a few members that had not attended any of other events of the section before.

During this event we also recognized two fifty-year ACS members that are part of our local section, Barton Holmquist, Ph.D. and William Wollenhaupt, Ph.D. Unfortunately they could not attend the event. A certificate of the 50 year membership recognition was received for Dr. Holmquist from the National ACS office, which was mailed to him after the event. (The section is inquiring about the status of the second Certificate for Dr. Wollenhaupt with the National ACS office).

### ***Concluding remarks by the Chair***

Despite the organizational challenges that the local section faced in the first half of the year, we were able to organize several successful events for our members. The ACS Program-in-a-Box events have been extremely helpful in organizing meetings for our local members with minimal effort in preparation. We organized one tour of a DOE government lab and are already planning additional tours to local industries for the next year. Our December Social was one of best attended events of 2015, which is promising for the following year.

There are certainly still challenges that our local section faces as far as limited attendance at our events and membership engagement in general. With an average attendance of less than 10% of our members at our local section meetings over the past years, there seems to be an ongoing problem with apathy amongst our membership. There could be a variety of reasons underlying this and the Executive Committee has started planning several events for 2016 that could potentially help solve this.

One of these is organizing more speaker events, including bringing in speakers from outside the Omaha area. We are already planning to have a 'Chemistry of Wine' talk in collaboration with the Nebraska and Denver sections where we are bringing in Dr. Ernie Simpson as a speaker.

Another issue is our limited social presence that could particularly engage our younger members. The past-Chair, David Smith, Ph.D. has performed great work in establishing a website for the local Omaha section in 2014 and unfortunately we have not used that as a source of information in 2015. The Executive Committee unanimously agrees that we can use this resource to a much greater extent to reach a broader spectrum of our members. This also includes expanding our social presence on LinkedIn and Facebook. I have recently become Administrator for the website and we plan on having a dedicated person in charge of this. One of our new members, James Gibbons, has recently volunteered to help manage the website and social media platforms for the local Omaha Section.

The Executive Committee discussed at several meetings in 2015 the benefit of organizing a career fair or career development event for our members. Despite the extensive discussions on the topic the Executive Committee wasn't able to execute on the planning in 2015. One of my goals is to include such an event in 2016, as I believe it will increase the exposure of the local ACS Section in the Omaha region and benefit both our student and regular members.

We have successfully held our electronic elections in 2015 and have a newly elected Secretary, Andy Zhong, Ph.D. and Chair-Elect, Harsh Chauhan, Ph.D. and re-elected James Fletcher, Ph.D. as Treasurer of the local Omaha Section. This new Executive Committee is very engaged and committed to increasing the local section activities for our members. With our Executive Committee composed of a healthy mix of seasoned and new Committee members and representatives from three different local Universities we are off to a great start for 2016.

Finally I would like to express my gratitude to the 2014 past-Chair of the local Omaha Section, David Smith, Ph.D., who performed excellent work in building a foundation that can help raise the local section to where we ought to be to best benefit our members and the Chemical Society in general. David has been an invaluable resource for feedback and input in the local Omaha Section. Upon David's recommendation I attended the ACS Leadership Institute in Dallas, TX in January 2015, which is a wonderful resource for new officers and local sections and many of the 2015 and future 2016 events are a direct consequence of attending that meeting.

In conclusion, I believe that in the second half of 2015 we have laid a foundation that will support growth and prosperity of the local Omaha Section in the future.

John Kyndt, Ph.D.  
2015 Chair (ad interim)  
2016 Chair,  
Omaha Section of the American Chemical Society

**Appendix A:**

**Meeting Agendas, Minutes and Activity Announcements**

# American Chemical Society – Omaha Section Executive Committee Meeting

March 26, 2015

Room 3001, College of Pharmacy Building, UNMC, Omaha, NE  
5:30 p.m.

## 1. Introductions

Meeting started at 5:30 PM.

Present: Joe Vetro (Chair), Rich Lomneth (Councilor), James Fletcher (Treasurer), Harsh Chauhan (Secretary), John Kyndt (Chair-Elect), David Smith (Past Chair), Jim Carroll (Alternate Councilor)

Excused: none

Absent: none

## 2. Report from the Spring 2015 ACS National Meeting (Rich Lomneth)

-CPT meeting said polymer chemistry is now a required topic of instruction for ACS certified departments.

-The cost of national meeting registration will increase greater than inflation by \$15 annually until the full cost of the meeting is met by registration fees apart from the vendor fees. Denver was \$390. Boston will be \$415. There was a 2:1 vote against this policy held by the councilors.

-The Omaha section was mentioned as having updated its bylaws last year.

-140 of 180 sections (including Omaha) had completed their annual reports.

-The unemployment rate for chemists was 2.9%; for new graduates it was 12.4%. Each number is up significantly from one decade ago. It was discussed what the local section can do to help new chemists find employment. Ideas included posting information on the section website, connecting students to headhunters, encouraging students to utilize services at the MWRM and to organize a career fair (see below).

-24,000 new members joined ACS last year but overall membership dropped 2%. This is due to aging population and high turnover of 1-5 year members.

-The High School Chemistry Teachers Association already has 1800 members. There are \$200 stipends available to support high school teachers to attend a regional meeting. ACS is looking for help acquiring the contact information of high school teachers. The contact list from Field Day (at UNO in 2015) could be a resource to share with ACS for teacher contact info.

-December 1 is the deadline for reporting the certified election results to ACS. The Omaha section reported shortly after this date in 2014. The election timeline should be pushed up a couple of weeks in 2015 to meet this Dec 1 deadline.

### 3. Financial Report (James Fletcher)

Omaha Section has a current balance of \$45,014. There are a few upcoming expenses not yet incurred (spring travel of councilor, leadership course of chair-elect) and the annual deposit from local member dues has not yet been received/deposited. The local section supported the Metro Science and Engineering fair March 21 with a \$100 donation to support awards for outstanding chemistry presentations. James Fletcher now has signing power for the account and Jan Dunker (past Treasurer) has been removed. James Fletcher signed up for online account access with Bank of the West.

### 4. Suggestions for 2015 Section New Activities

In response to the news from ACS that new chemistry graduates have a 12.4% unemployment rate (vs. 2.9% for all chemists), the group discussed whether a job fair could be organized by the Omaha Section to allow local or regional employers to connect with local or regional chemistry students (bachelors, masters, Ph.D.) and professional chemists. The group brainstormed ideas for what such an event might look like, which included:

- Creighton University would be a possible location. Rooms are available at no charge with convenient parking. We would need to arrange food/beverages through the university.
- A weekday evening or a Saturday afternoon are possible times for such an event. The initial opinion of the room was that Saturday afternoon would likely attract more attendees.
- This event should be held in September.
- This event would likely last approximately 3 hours.
- This event should include food.
- This event should include a featured speaker, whether live or virtual.
- The Omaha section should fully sponsor the event its first year. This would allow the full expenses to be measured. If successful, such information could be used in subsequent years to charge employers a small sponsorship fee to attend.
- Funds might be available through ACS grants to help support this event (IPG grant).
- The geographical reach of invitees was discussed. In addition to all Omaha section members, people from Midland University (Fremont), UNL and NE Wesleyan (Lincoln) should be notified. In addition to employers from the Omaha section region, we could explore employers from Souix City, Western Iowa, Lincoln and central Nebraska and the Kansas City area.
- Rich Lomneth said his department has a list of local employers that hire chemists. In addition to committee members exploring their own contacts, this is a good place to start to gauge employer interest in this event.
- Internships should be included.
- Steps to organize going forward: (1) identify companies who are interested, (2) identify student interest from local universities, (3) identify Omaha section member interest by emailing out a survey (ask general interest, time/day interest, job/internship interest).

## 5. Other Meetings and Tours for 2015

-Tour locations discussed last year include Evonik and the MUD water plant treatment center. Rich Lomneth had already made contact with each. It was decided to try to organize a spring (early May) tour of Evonik and a Fall tour of the water treatment plant. John Kyndt said his class plans a trip to Green Plains Energy plant in Iowa at some point this year, this could be combined with Omaha section members if interested.

-It was suggested that one additional social meeting be held in the spring to allow for member discussion regarding the Job Fair. 50 year member(s) could also be recognized at this meeting.

-One additional social meeting should be planned for the late summer/early fall to support the process of 2016 elections.

-Interest in hosting an outside speaker continues, although identifying such a speaker has not been done. The ACS speaker list could be used. Last year it was suggested to invite someone to speak regarding the Keystone XL pipeline. It was suggested we consider using a Science Café format for such gatherings.

-ACS is now providing "Program in a Box" materials to support local section meetings. Two are scheduled to take place in the spring and two in the fall. There was interest in this from the committee and one or more may be organized in the fall.

## 6. Other Business

-ACS is providing teaching materials for grade school and middle school to support classroom learning. Any ACS member can request a kit (serves approx 30 students) and donate it to a teacher of their choice. John Kyndt will forward the contact info to the committee. This may be something worth disseminating to the local section using an email blast.

-The section should make an effort to nominate Omaha section members for the MWRM annual awards this year (Midwest Award, HS teacher award).

-The Nebraska section is planning to hold a Kitchen Chemistry activity this year. The Omaha section should consider working together on this effort. This might be something that could be supported by an IPG grant from ACS.

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 7:05 PM.

**American Chemical Society – Omaha Section Executive Committee Meeting**

**July 31, 2015**

**Room 3001, College of Pharmacy Building, UNMC, Omaha, NE**

**5:00 p.m.**

1. Introductions

Meeting started at 5:00 PM.

Present: Joe Vetro (Chair), Rich Lomneth (Councilor), James Fletcher (Treasurer), Harsh Chauhan (Secretary), John Kyndt (Chair-Elect), , Jim Carroll (Alternate Councilor)

Excused: none

Absent: Rich Lomneth (Councilor); David Smith (Past Chair)

2. Committee discussed about the possibility of doing career fair in the coming months of the year. Since it requires a lot of planning, committee agreed on postponing the career fair for next year.

3. Committee agreed on having an annual calendar for the ACS Omaha section to plan the year round activities. The goal of the annual calendar is to “Develop a standard calendar for any year that will be followed by revolving leadership. The executive committee can focus on filling the standard calendar with activities instead of creating the calendar from scratch every year.” Suggested Annual Calendar activities will include: Social Meeting, Tours, Program in a Box, Speaker presentation, Holiday Party etc. Committee discussed about sending a survey to the members about these different types of events. However, it was decided that it can be discussed in the next social event (August end).

4. Committee looked at the ACS site for the list of speakers and their presentation titles for the feasibility of an event in the upcoming months. Joe volunteered to do the search and get back to the committee with the list of 3-5 potential speakers.

5. Everyone agreed that we need to have at least 2 event (1 invited speakers and program in a box/ Science Cafe) along with a social event by the end of the year. John volunteered to look at the ACS program in a box/ Science Café. Harsh volunteered to reserve Upstream for the August social event.

**Meeting adjourned at 6: 15 PM.**

John Kyndt  
(Chair)  
D. David Smith  
(Past Chair)



American Chemical Society  
Omaha Section

Rich Lomneth  
(Councilor)  
Jim Carroll  
(Alt. Councilor)  
Harsh Chauhan  
(Secretary)  
James Fletcher  
(Treasurer)

## Agenda

Monday, September 21, 2015  
6:30 PM – 9:00 PM

Time	Activity
6:30-6:45 PM	Arrival and Socialization
6:45 PM- 6:50 PM	Updates by secretary: Joe Vetro resignation, John as chair
6:50 PM- 7:00 PM	Update by Chair (John): Future activities/planning
7:00 PM- 7:05 PM	Updates by Treasurer: Financial
6:05 PM- 7:30 PM	Other updates: Open to everyone.
7:30 – 7: 40 PM	Councilor's report to the members about the recent National ACS meeting in Boston

## American Chemical Society – Omaha Section Executive Committee Meeting

104 Hixon Lied Building, School of Pharmacy, Creighton University, Omaha, NE  
October 1<sup>st</sup>, 6:00 p.m.

Agenda topics:

- Approve minutes July meeting
- Discuss feedback from ‘Social Meeting’ in September
- Discuss and plan elections process for local elections
- Overview of planned activities in following months
  - **October:**
    - 1. Tales of Lab Safety, How to Avoid Rookie Accidents  
“ACS Program in a Box”  
10/20 (Tuesday), 6 PM
    - 2. Tour of Ames Laboratories (Ames, Iowa)  
10/23 (Friday), 9am-5:30 pm  
(transportation provided from Omaha; limited seating)
    - 3. Midwest Regional meeting  
10/21 to 10/24  
*Education, Innovation, Discovery*  
St. Joseph, MO
  - **November:**
    - Establishing and Protecting Your Intellectual Property
    - “ACS Program in a Box”
    - 11/10 (Tuesday), 6 PM
    - Creighton University, room TBA
  - **December:**
    - Holiday Party
    - (Week of December 7<sup>th</sup>)
    - Creighton University, Harper Center
- Flyer for Ames Lab tour in October
- Plan following executive meeting

**American Chemical Society**  
**Omaha Section Executive Committee Meeting**

**104 Hixon Lied Building, School of Pharmacy, Creighton University, Omaha, NE**  
**November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015, 4:00 – 5:00 p.m.**

1. Activities Updates: We discussed about the activities carried out by the section, ACS in a box on November 10 and October 10. Committee agreed that we should continue these activities in the following year.
2. Election: We discussed about the election results in lieu of Ganesh and Andy contesting for the position of secretary. James updated about the election results. 35 people voted. Andy Zhong was elected as new Secretary for 2016 and Harsh Chauhan was elected as new Chair-Elect. James Fletcher was re-elected as Treasurer.
3. Future activities/Year end meeting: We discussed about the future activities with majority of time spent in planning the December year of the end party. Reservation regarding conference hall, food etc., expected number of attendee etc. were discussed and finalized. We decided on 30 counts and scheduled the time at 6:30 PM for better attendance.
4. ACS leadership retreat: Chair updated about the participation of chair elect in upcoming ACS leadership retreat (January 2016).
5. Finances: Brief update about finances was given by James.
6. ACS LinkedIn page: Forming an ACS LinkedIn page was discussed. It was decided that it would be best to identify a designated person that can maintain the website and social media pages for the local section. Initially the Chair and Secretary will start until a designated individual is identified (potentially from members and not necessarily from Executive Committee).
7. Additional Comments: none.

## Omaha Section American Chemical Society

### End of Year Party

Dec 10<sup>th</sup> 2015, Creighton University, Harper Center, 7-9pm

#### Agenda:

##### Overview of past events this year:

September Social at Upstream Brewery  
Program-in-a-Box (2) (Oct 20 and Nov10)  
Tour of Ames Laboratories (Oct 30)  
Musical Chemistry show @ Creighton U (Nov12)

##### Election Results:

New Chair-Elect: Dr. Harsh Chauhan

New Secretary: Dr. Andy Zhong

New Treasurer: Dr. James Fletcher

##### Next year local events

Program-in-a-box on Feb 9<sup>th</sup> (Tue) 6pm CT "The role of chemistry in Global Security"

Speaker Dr. Ernie Simpson on 'Chemistry of Wine' (May or September 2016)

Summer Social event (possibly at Omaha Zoo)

Tour of Evonik (Rich) and Green Plain Fuels (Spring and Fall)

Chemistry Career Fair (presumably in September/October)

Website update and LinkedIn page (open up by January 1<sup>st</sup>; post calendar and announcements).

##### Recognition of 50 year ACS members

Dr. Barton Holmquist of Eagle, NE and Dr. William Wollenhaupt of Omaha.

John Kyndt  
Chair  
D. David Smith  
Past Chair  
James Fletcher  
Treasurer



American Chemical Society  
Omaha Section

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Alt. Councilor  
Harsh Chauhan  
Secretary

## October Meeting Announcement

Tuesday, October 20, 2015  
6:00 PM – 7:30 PM

*ACS Program in a Box Series*

# Tales of Lab Safety: How to Avoid Rookie Accidents

Creighton University  
Hixson Lied Science Building  
25<sup>th</sup> and Burt Streets  
Room 244

All members are encouraged to invite any interested students to attend, whether or not they are student ACS members. More information on this event can be found at:

<http://www.acs.org/content/acs/en/acs-webinars/program-in-a-box/pib-on-demand/lab-safety.html>

Parking is available in the lot north of the Hixson Lied Science building. Enter through the open gate at the 25<sup>th</sup> Ave and Cuming light, park anywhere in the faculty lot, and cross Burt St. to arrive at Hixson Lied Building (blue dome). Take elevator or stairs to 2<sup>nd</sup> floor.

See campus map at: <https://www.creighton.edu/maps/>

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Treasurer



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## Announcement

Friday, October 30, 2015

# Tour of Ames Laboratories

Iowa State University  
Technical and Administrative Services Facility,  
#311, Ames, IA 50011

Tour starts at 1:00 pm at Ames Laboratories. Transportation to this event will be provided to interested ACS members. A Bellevue University van will pick up visitors at two locations:  
9 am at Bellevue University and 9h30 am at Creighton University.  
Anticipated return time to Omaha is around 6:00 pm.

This tour can accommodate up to 10 visitors and rsvp is required.

**Please RSVP to John Kyndt  
[[john.kyndt@bellevue.edu](mailto:john.kyndt@bellevue.edu)] by October 26.**

John Kyndt  
Chair  
D. David Smith  
Past Chair  
James Fletcher  
Treasurer



American Chemical Society  
Omaha Section

Rich Lomneth  
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Harsh Chauhan  
Secretary

## November Meeting Announcement

Tuesday, November 10, 2015  
5:30 PM – 7:00 PM

*ACS Program in a Box Series*

# Establishing and Protecting Your Intellectual Property

Creighton University  
Hixson Lied Science Building  
25<sup>th</sup> and Burt Streets  
Room 244

This topic is aimed towards professional ACS members, but any students are also welcome to attend. More information on this event can be found at:

<http://www.acs.org/content/acs/en/acs-webinars/program-in-a-box/pib-on-demand/protect-ip.html>

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## December Meeting Announcement

Thursday, December 10, 2015  
6:30 PM – 9:00 PM

Please RSVP to James Fletcher [jamesfletcher@creighton.edu] by Monday December 7th.

# End of Year Reception

Creighton University  
Harper Center  
20<sup>th</sup> and California Streets  
Room 3023

This event will include a review of 2015 section events, an introduction of the newly elected 2015 section officers, and networking/socializing/holiday merriment amongst ACS members.

All members are encouraged to invite a significant other and/or past section members to attend this event as guests.

Finger food appetizers will be provided, along with a cash bar.

Parking is available adjacent to the Harper Center building.