

The American Chemical Society and its Activities in Latin America

The mission of the American Chemical Society is to encourage in the broadest and most liberal manner the advancement of the chemical enterprise and its practitioners. Toward that end, the American Chemical Society advances scholarly knowledge; provides professional services and support; communicates with varied audiences; and is actively involved in the science, education and public policy.

There are international components in virtually all of the American Chemical Society's major activities. These include publishing of Chemical Abstracts and 36 journals and magazines; enhancing communications with the general public and public policymakers; producing publications and projects in science education; and serving a membership of nearly 159,000 chemical scientists and engineers worldwide.

Over the last three decades through its governance, members and staff, the American Chemical Society has actively engaged communities of chemical scientists in Latin America to further its partnerships and collaborations.

The purpose of this article is to provide information about and examples of ACS activities in Latin America, notably those which have taken place in partnership with the Federation of Latin American Chemical Associations (FLAQ) and its member-
nation chemical societies.

ACS and FLAQ

Established in 1924, FLAQ is a federation of national chemical societies in Latin America, and in recent years ACS International Activities has worked cooperatively with the FLAQ secretariat in Peru and the chemical societies of hosting nations to help promote participation and contribute to the success of FLAQ meetings: 1998 (Puerto Rico), 2000 (Peru), 2002 (Mexico), and 2004 (Brazil).

FLAQ 2004

The 26th Latin American Chemistry Congress (Congreso FLAQ 2004) was held May 30 - June 2, 2004 in Salvador, Brazil's third largest city located in the country's northeast.

The Brazilian Chemical Society (SBQ) hosted this year's congress and co-convened the 27th Annual Meeting of the SBQ.

At FLAQ 2004, there were over 2,600 presentations (including 26 plenary lectures, 18 symposia, 3 workshops, and 13 short courses), and more than 3,000 chemical scientists from all over Latin America attended the event, including national chemical society presidents or their representatives from FLAQ-member nations of Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Puerto Rico, Mexico, and Uruguay. This year, the ACS participated in the FLAQ 2004 Congress through the organization of and participation in a number of events, constituting the most in ACS history of engagement with Latin America.

The ACS Division of Environmental Chemistry worked in alliance with the Environmental Chemistry Division of the Brazilian Chemical Society to organize and deliver a two-day environmental workshop addressing water pollution, agricultural chemistry and pollution, biodiesel fuel and the environment, preventing pollution through green chemistry, indoor / outdoor air quality, and laboratory safety. This event subsequently has led to another SBQ / ACS Environmental Division workshop on Atmospheric Aerosol Chemistry in December in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. These two events illustrate that cooperation can occur successfully at the level of technical divisions of a chemical society.

Also at FLAQ 2004 Dr. Edel Wasserman, of DuPont and ACS Past President organized an ACS/SBQ Workshop on «Modern Science and Its Potential for Biotechnology in Latin America» with U.S. and Brazilian speakers from industry and higher education highlighting examples of modern chemical sciences applications for conversion of Latin American plants or their components into higher value products. Technical session content which ties in industrial and academic perspectives on chemistry are of increasing interest.

Dr. Zafra M. Lerman, Columbia College, Chicago, ACS member and chair of the International Activities Subcommittee on Scientific Freedom and Human Rights organized an ACS/SBQ Symposium on «Visualization and New Methodologies in Chemical Education» which featured different methods of teaching and visualizing chemistry through the use of «no-tech» and «high-tech» methods. The presentations included new methodologies from the U.S., Israel, and Mexico. Multilateral presentations illustrate the international nature of

chemistry and provide a broad base for networks among chemists.

Dr. Ernest Eliel, former ACS President and Chairman of the Board of Directors organized an ACS / SBQ Symposium on "Exciting Adventures in the Chemical Sciences" that featured a panel of prominent chemists including Daniel F. Veber, speaking on "Molecular Properties that Influence the Oral Bioavailability of Drugs"; Joseph M. DeSimone, University of North Carolina and North Carolina State University, "Green Chemistry as Applied to the Manufacture and Processing of Polymers and Microelectronic Devices"; James R. Heath, California Institute of Technology, Title: "Nanosecond Biology."

ACS's Chemical Abstracts Service (CAS) and the ACS Publications Division participated in FLAQ 2004 as exhibitors and provided a key opportunity for conference attendees to learn more about CAS and ACS Publications products. In turn, conference attendees provided ACS with input on the issues facing research and the development of future chemists in Latin America. Coming out the FLAQ 2004 meeting ACS Publications has developed special electronic-only national license subscriptions to Latin American and Caribbean countries for academic, educational, public, and state-run institutions as well as non-profit research organizations and foundations for the year 2005. For one negotiated cost, ACS Publications will provide nationwide unlimited, full text access to all of the ACS 32 journal titles covering all the 125+ years of publication, 1879-2005.

FLAQ meetings constitute an important venue for chemists from throughout the Americas to interact and view the region's excellence in chemistry. The president of the Brazilian Chemical Society and now newly elected president of FLAQ, Dr. Paulo Cezar Vieira, commented on the topic in this way: "Chemistry is increasingly unencumbered by national boundaries. At the FLAQ 2004 meeting in Salvador, Brazil this was in particular evidence as Latin American chemical scientists gathered to share information and build on regional networks. The strengthened bonds that came from these activities will serve the discipline of chemistry throughout Latin America for many years to come."

The Cuban Chemical Society will host FLAQ 2006 16-20 October. Complete information on this event will be announced in January 2005 and will be available at <http://www.loseventos.cu/scq2006>

For more information on ACS and its programs related to Latin America and the Caribbean:

<http://chemistry.org/international>

Research, Training, Education and Exchange Opportunities – Latin America and the Caribbean

1. American Chemical Society International Initiatives Program

The goal of the 2005 ACS International Initiatives program is to provide professional development opportunities for chemical scientists (chemists, biochemists, materials scientists, etc.) and chemical engineers, either in-country or in the United States, and build ACS's relationships with chemically related organizations in selected developing countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. This year the ACS International Initiatives program will highlight the following countries: Bahamas, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Jamaica, Panama, Trinidad & Tobago, Venezuela, Uruguay. For more information: <http://www.chemistry.org/portal/a/c/s/1/acsdisplay.html?DOC=international%5Cinitiatives.html>

2. PITTCON Visits

In 2006 ACS in cooperation with PITTCON will provide assistance for chemical scientists from South America to attend the 57th Pittsburgh Conference and Exposition on Analytical Chemistry and Applied Spectroscopy 12-17 March 2006 in Orlando, Florida.

For more information (available in 2005): <http://chemistry.org/international>

3. International Programme in the Chemical Sciences

This program supports a broad range of chemical research; organic, inorganic and biological; analytical, physical, synthetic and structural; basic and more applied research with and in Latin America. For more information: <http://www.isp.uu.se/IPICS.htm>

4. Fogarty International Center – U.S. National Institutes of Health

FIC provides funding for a number of scientific exchange programs and links to other providing agencies in the US. For more information: <http://www.fic.nih.gov/regional/americas.html>

Elaborado por: Dr. Bradley D. Miller
The American Chemical Society
b_miller@acs.org