

Centennial Campaign

Supporting ECS Meetings

by Troy M. Miller

This is the fifth in a series of articles highlighting the goals of the ECS Centennial Campaign based on the ECS Case for Support. The first article highlighted education; the second highlighted the membership objectives of the Case for Support; the third discussed objectives that enhance the Society's relationship with industry, while the fourth dealt with enabling participation. To view the Case in its entirety, or to get more information about the Centennial Campaign, please visit the ECS website at www.electrochem.org.

Three of the many important strengths of The Electrochemical Society are encapsulated in its semi-annual meetings: diversity, relevance, and technological exchange. Meetings are a place where the constant flow of communication and collaboration among 13 Divisions; academia, industry, and government; and members and constituents from over 75 countries can take place. The New Technology Subcommittee investigates technical topics not adequately covered by current symposia and invests in these rapidly evolving subjects where immediate support is critical. Finally, meetings held worldwide in the spring and fall of each year further ECS's objective of dissemination of knowledge. Each meeting serves as a major forum for the discussion of interdisciplinary research from around the world.

What makes ECS unique is the extraordinary synergy created by the interaction of Society members in their work. The Society's diversity is supported by the tremendous opportunities for these diverse groups to partner and optimize their resources. ECS creates an environment conducive to collaboration. One way it does this is through its meetings.

The Electrochemical Society's Case for Support includes seven quantifiable objectives to improve ECS meetings based on member survey responses. These seven objectives include: increasing support to ECS student chapters; increasing funding for the New Technology Subcommittee; improving attendee satisfaction; supplementing the ECS plenary lecture series with improved audio/visual and creating an honorarium to support speakers; providing networked presentation equipment for technical symposia; increasing support to Divisions for travel grants; and enhancing the ECS Short Course Program.

Student Chapters

ECS understands the importance of students to its future. Streamlining the process students and their advisors must

execute to become a student chapter, and supporting new student chapters with a substantial stipend, is an objective of the Case for Support. Student Chapters help with the initial recruitment, stewardship, and fulfillment of student needs. For example, the University of Central Florida (UCF) student chapter received a \$1,000 check at the ECS meeting in Orlando this past fall. The support was used to assist UCF students in attending the meeting.

As a student chapter at the University of Central Florida, a quickly growing research incubator with the inclusion of Research Park and the High Tech Corridor, it is of consequence to provide a method for the dissemination of information of the Society and promote the younger members to be involved in the society's mission of practicing the research that is on the cutting edge of technology. The Electrochemical Society has shown great initiative and support with the recent program that would grant each student chapter a stipend for the intended use of student chapter development, membership recruitment, and international conference registration. By promoting fellowship and conference attendance through this financial support, the fundamental building blocks of a younger membership are being assembled for a bright and fresh opportunity of the Society.

—Keith E. Rea, President, ECS Student Chapter, UCF

New Technology Subcommittee

As previously discussed, the New Technology Subcommittee (NTS) is essential to ECS retaining the relevance that has kept it on the cutting edge of the field for over 100 years. Recent examples of NTS topics include: biological electron transfer, diamond synthesis, high temperature superconductors, micromachining, quantum confinement, and fullerenes.

The ECS Case for Support calls for increased funding for the New Technology Subcommittee so they can better investigate and support new and exciting topics. Currently, the subcommittee can support two symposia per year. With the additional support from the Centennial Campaign, the funding to the New Technology Subcommittee will double to \$20,000.

Improve Meeting Satisfaction

Beginning in earnest at the spring 2002 meeting in Philadelphia, ECS has been surveying meeting attendees to determine a baseline for improving overall meeting satisfaction. Based on these results, the current level of satisfaction is very good, but recommendations on how overall satisfaction can be improved were provided and the Case for Support acts on these recommendations.

For example, the plenary lecture, the technical commencement of the semi-annual meetings, will be upgraded. ECS plans on enhancing the audio/visual component of the lecture and supporting a plenary lecture honorarium that will help ensure the continuation of the quality speakers meeting attendees have come to expect. In a similar fashion, additional support will be provided to the Honors and Awards session, the Sunday and Monday Evening Mixers, and the daily coffee breaks.

In addition, funds from the ECS Centennial Campaign will support networked presentation equipment and procedures for meeting technical symposia. This will lessen the time allotment between presentations and will be much more convenient for presenters and the symposia audience.

Finally, Centennial funds will help support an additional ECS meetings staff person to help current staff assist organizers, scout locations, and arrange semi-annual meetings. This additional staff person will greatly enhance the customer service capacity for members and constituents involved in organizing and attending meetings, and will allow for the additional meeting improvements within the Case for Support.

Meeting Travel Grants

Traditionally, ECS Divisions have depended on corporate support and sales of proceedings volumes to subsidize important travel grants essential to the success of their technical symposia. Divisions have done a wonderful job in distributing travel grants as they organize their symposia, unfortunately, corporate support is difficult to secure, and sales of proceedings volumes has declined for some; however, the need for travel grants remains constant if symposium organizers are to attract top people to present and support attendees with special circumstances that make it difficult to afford attendance.

Through the Centennial Campaign, ECS will lessen the pressure exerted on Divisions and organizers to find corporate support and publish proceedings volumes by funding travel

grants. In addition, the presence of a Director of Development at ECS headquarters with experience in acquiring corporate support will help organizers in attracting corporate sponsorship.

Short Courses

Since the 1996 spring meeting in Los Angeles, ECS has provided an opportunity for meeting attendees to acquire additional training necessary to remain technologically current through the ECS Short Course Program. Since the advent of this program, over 700 individuals have attended ECS short courses, and evaluations consistently demonstrate the high technical quality of the courses. Experts in the field give a comprehensive one-day course that attendees use to update their current skills, or learn more about a field in which they are not currently working.

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The ECS Centennial Campaign will upgrade the courses in several ways. First, it will provide the funding necessary to continuously survey ECS members to determine the most suitable and relevant courses. In addition, support will increase the remuneration of short course instructors so ECS can continue to provide top-notch training opportunities. Finally, the ECS Education Committee is currently investigating the option of online training opportunities and onsite training opportunities through the short course program.

Conclusion

Semi-annual meetings are essential to meeting the objectives of The Electrochemical Society. They advance the science, increase the dissemination of information, and help ensure the availability of adequate training in the fields of electrochemistry and solid-state science. They are arguably the most visible arenas for all of the Society’s diverse groups to come together—providing a tangible platform for collaboration and networking.

The Electrochemical Society Centennial Campaign will provide essential funding needed to upgrade semi-annual meetings and improve meeting attendee satisfaction. In addition, increased marketing will draw more people to the meetings, which will, in turn, enhance the meeting experience for all attendees. With your support, ECS will invest almost \$350,000 of campaign funds into understanding and responding to the changing needs of our meeting constituency. ■

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