

Mission, Vision, Values

I. Mission

The Association for Chemoreception Sciences (AChemS) strives to advance scientific research in the "chemical senses" of smell, taste, chemesthesis, internal chemoreception and related disciplines, and promotes the use of this science for the benefit of all living organisms.

AChemS strives to be a respected source of scientific knowledge about the chemical senses, and the application of this knowledge to policies and practices that will lead to improvements in health and well-being.

AChemS will share this knowledge and educate the public about the nature of scientific discoveries related to the chemical senses, as well as provide a context for how these discoveries can impact living systems.

AChemS will promote professional scientific development, and integrate racial, cultural, economic, and contextual diversity in all aspects of chemoreception science.

II. Scientific Vision

Our vision is to lead as the preeminent scientific organization dedicated to the advancement of chemoreception science, encompassing smell, taste, chemesthesis, internal chemoreception and related disciplines by advancing breakthrough discoveries in these areas and promoting innovative translation of scientific advances to improve the health of people everywhere. We strive to be a primary source of authoritative information for the scientific community, offering essential insights into the fundamental mechanisms underlying these senses and their related disorders, while serving as a trusted provider of reliable knowledge to the public.

To achieve our vision, we aim to attract the active participation of academic, government, professional societies, and industry scientists from various relevant disciplines and career stages and serve as a nexus for their interactions. We are committed to nurturing and supporting the professional growth of aspiring trainees and early career scientists with research interests in the chemoreception sciences.

Furthermore, we aspire to foster a thriving community by encouraging and promoting the active engagement of our members in diverse AChemS activities. We also seek to increase our representation and impact, and to secure the necessary financial support to sustain our current initiatives and drive future development through targeted marketing and outreach, engagement and networking events, as well as enhanced membership growth and support.

III. Organizational Values

Advance scientific excellence and in the chemical senses and related disciplines

ACChemS recognizes, inspires, and enables a robust research ecosystem that drives discovery and innovation and prepares future chemosensory scientists.

Foster equity and inclusion for scientific excellence

ACChemS fosters diverse, equitable, open, and inclusive scientific enterprises that are essential for scientific excellence.

Make chemosensory science accessible to scientists and the public

ACChemS enhances awareness of chemosensation among scientists and makes scientifically accurate information accessible to the public.

Catalyze progress where chemosensory science meets policy

ACChemS provides actionable evidence for public policy that serves society, and promotes policies that enable quality science.

SWOT Analysis

Below we outline a brief SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis for ACChemS, and propose a Strategic Plan to address these issues, the implementation of which will be under the jurisdiction of the Executive Committee (EC). Upon the EC's acceptance of this Strategic Plan, the Strategic Planning Committee will meet at least once annually to review, evaluate and update the Strategic Plan, and report to the EC. An extensive revision of the Strategic Plan will be conducted every five years at a minimum.

Strengths:

- Scientific excellence
- Increased engagement of diverse membership
- Increased scientific training at the annual meeting and through online events throughout the year
- Increased contact between members throughout the year
- Increased attention to clinical issues and public education on chemosensory dysfunction
- Attention to interdisciplinarity

Weaknesses:

- Shrinking membership
- Limited community participation in providing feedback

- Inadequate funding for growth
- Lack of frequent and unified communication outside of the annual meeting
- Insufficient diversity

Opportunities:

- Grow membership
- Increase training opportunities
- Expand the definition of diversity and increase membership diversity
- Improve members' experience of inclusion and belonging
- Increase federal liaisons and support
- Increase advocacy
- Increase financial support for meeting attendance
- Increase and develop new funding avenues and opportunities
- Grow inter-organizational collaborations
- Increase chemosensory education and literacy in the public domain

Threats:

- Lack of funding to achieve sustainability
- Increased attendance at other specialized meetings detracting from AChemS attendance
- Concerns regarding the location of the annual meeting
- Increasing costs associated with the annual meeting
- Lack of adequate support for DEIB goals
- Lack of knowledge and awareness of AChemS beyond the membership

Strategic Plan for AChemS: July 16, 2024

The strategic plan proposed herein provides a roadmap for AChemS to achieve its mission, vision, and values, ensuring continued growth, inclusivity, scientific excellence, and impactful engagement with society.

The implementation of the strategic plan outlined below will be under the supervision of the President and the Executive Committee (EC). Individual areas will be under the direct responsibility of the specific Committees and Chairs as indicated. Overseeing these Committee/Chair appointments will be coordinated and managed by the President and EC.

1. Membership Growth and Collaboration (Mentoring and Networking Committee, Membership Chair, Resource Development and Fundraising Committee, ad hoc Meeting Venue Planning Committee):

- 1.1: Increase membership by 5%-10% over the next 5 years through targeted outreach campaigns, engaging early-career researchers, and offering tailored membership benefits.
- 1.2: Support increased attendance at the annual meeting through resource development and fundraising, and through careful and continued monitoring of meeting venue selection. We recommend that these duties fall to the Resource Development and Fundraising Committee, and an ad-hoc committee established to investigate meeting venues in the future, as needed.
- 1.3: Support mentorship programs at the AChemS meeting and during the year that connect senior and junior members and actively support the creation of networks to support mentoring beyond the Annual meeting. We recommend that this duty fall to the Mentoring and Networking Committee.
- 1.4: Enhance cross-modality and cross-disciplinary interaction during the annual meeting and within the yearly activities organized by AChemS, such as maintaining the career networking series and adding new initiatives to further collaborative platforms.
- 1.5: Enhance participatory mechanisms throughout the community (participation at the business meeting, in surveys, and in leadership positions), and improve methods to involve the whole membership in voting and policy decisions.
- 1.6: Organize and expand opportunities for workshops and training on new methodologies, techniques and technology at the annual meeting and in online forums.

2. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (Diversity Committee):

- 2.1: Establish and make the membership aware of the formal code of conduct, and impose accountability and responsibility on members to adhere to these guidelines so as to maintain a safe, inclusive and supportive environment. We recommend that a new ad hoc committee be formed to achieve this goal or that implementation fall under the responsibility of the Diversity Committee.
- 2.2: Conduct regular evaluations, beyond the post-meeting survey, to assess members' perception of their safety, welcomeness, and inclusivity in the AChemS community and the local environment of the annual meeting, and open further channels of communication for this dialogue.
- 2.3: Expand definitions of diversity to more equitably accommodate and support members.
- 2.4: Develop connections with minority-serving institutions to increase engagement and encourage attendance and membership from underrepresented groups.
- 2.5: Support early-career scientists with travel and registration funds.
- 2.6: Seek to establish a fund to provide travel support to *any* member who has scientifically vetted and currently active chemosensory research, whose work has been accepted for presentation at the annual meeting, and who demonstrates financial need for engaging in-person at the annual meeting. Financial need and scientific credibility need to be defined. Requests would be newly evaluated for each annual meeting. A limit on the number of times and the amount allocated per person can be imposed.

3. Federal Liaison Development (Federal Liaison Committee):

- 3.1: Support the regular implementation of Hill Day.
- 3.2: Seek training and resources for Federal Liaison Committee members to learn and hone advocacy skills and tools so as to effectively engage with policymakers.
- 3.3: Invite legislative representatives to attend the Annual Meeting and to join AChemS activities and initiatives.

4. Public Outreach and Education (Secretary, Social Media Committee, Public Information and Affairs Committee, Councilors, Membership Chair and Clinical Relations Committee):

- 4.1: Enhance AChemS's social media presence and motivate reporting of the scientific successes of members (e.g., "members in the news").
- 4.2: Actively update and maintain the AChemS website and Wikipedia page with oversight from the Secretary.

- 4.3: Establish relationships with local schools and museums and organize public and educational events during the annual meeting. Historically, this has fallen under the responsibility of the Councilors.
- 4.4: Develop partnerships with other scientific and clinical societies as well as patient advocacy groups to amplify the collective voice of the chemical senses. We suggest that the Membership Chair and Clinical Relations Committees implement these goals.

5. Advance Corporate Relationships (Resource Development Committee, Finance Committee, Industry Liaison Committee):

- 5.1: Provide greater incentives for established corporate partners to become and remain more actively committed to AChemS.
- 5.2: Provide greater incentives to potential new corporate partners to become involved in, and participate in, AChemS.
- 5.3: Identify and pursue potential corporate partners beyond the traditional pool of partners, such as: pharmaceutical, multisensory, and virtual reality industries.
- 5.4: Develop corporate sponsorship opportunities tailored to specific/different corporate interests, including sponsored research events, industry-academic collaborations, and educational initiatives.

6. Monitor Chemosensory Science Misinformation in the Public Domain/News (Public Information and Affairs Committee):

- 6.1: Develop a system where misinformation about the chemical senses in the public domain can be identified.
- 6.2: If appropriate, provide expert opinion to combat misinformation in the chemical senses.
- 6.3: We suggest that a new ad hoc committee may be formed to achieve this goal.

7. Inter-societal Collaboration (Membership Committee, Strategic Planning Committee):

- 7.1: Support the efforts of the Committee on Cross-Society Collaborations (CCSC) to develop, maintain and build interactions and connections with other scientific societies relevant to chemosensory science.
- 7.2: Engage more directly with NIH and other federal scientific organizations.

Implementation and Evaluation of the Strategic Plan

If accepted, the present Strategic Plan will be implemented for five years, with a major review and revision expected at the end of that term, or earlier if needed. The Plan will also be evaluated at least once annually to assess its effectiveness.

Respectively submitted on behalf of the Strategic Planning Committee:

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