I am privileged to be a candidate for President of the ACS. Our Society is a diverse collection of more than 150,000 members united by a desire to see the beauty and power of chemistry used to better humanity and our environment. This simple, elegant goal leads to utterly complex questions about education, sustainability, quality of life, employment, and legislation.

The President has a small window of time to make a difference in the lives of students and professionals in the chemical sciences. As President of the ACS, I would focus on two key areas, namely education and communication. These are hardly original foci, but I hope to use my experience as an educator, researcher, and communicator, along with the strength of our Society, to make more than incremental progress in these areas. We need to utilize our strong voice as effectively as possible to keep pressing on these issues.

**Education: The Bond to Our Past and Key to Our Future**

I have spent my career in chemistry as a teacher, researcher, and academic administrator. My roles in academia have been endlessly satisfying, mainly because educators have such a capacity to make a difference. We have the opportunity to convey chemistry’s value to Society, to excite students about their careers, and to develop the next generation of researchers. What a privilege!

The role that you have in the Division of the History of Chemistry is one that resonates deeply with me as a chemist and a teacher. Like most of you, a large part of my initial fascination with chemistry originated with the wonderfully rich history of how our field developed. The astounding significance of Mendeleev’s early studies, the elegance of Emil Fischer’s resolution of sugars, and the development of quantum mechanics were among my most vivid memories of college chemistry. Our sense of pride in our heritage is something I still impart to students whenever I can. I am proud that the textbook I coauthor, *Chemistry: The Central Science*, contains far more of our history than do most of its counterparts. As an author, it is a thrill to realize that my efforts to convey the history of our science have an impact beyond my own classrooms.

Nevertheless, those of us who teach have noticed disturbing trends in our students—and not just their lack of interest in history! They are weaker in math than students used to be. They memorize many facts about chemistry, but have few skills in critical thinking. Many are obsessed with grades for new reasons, such as grade-point-restricted state scholarships. Consequently, we are producing a smaller number of U.S. science students at a time when the need for well-trained scientists is critically great. The recent NAS report, *Rising Above the Gathering Storm*, highlights the crisis in K-12 science education in the U.S.
The ACS needs to use its prominent voice to translate these concerns into actions at all levels of the science education enterprise. As President of ACS, I would make science educational reform, especially in K-12 education, one of my key goals.

*The Centrality of Chemistry*

The title of our textbook reflects the message that my coauthors and I convey throughout, namely that chemistry is central to nearly all scientific discoveries, including those in new disciplines, such as nanotechnology and systems biology. Our Society needs to be a strong communicator of this message to our stakeholders at all levels, from elementary school students and teachers to the legislators who control and prioritize funding for basic and applied research.

The ACS can be much more effective at communicating the excitement and relevance of chemistry. We are fairly good at communicating among ourselves, but we simply do not do a good enough job of taking our message elsewhere. We need positive and educational campaigns, like the wonderful essential2 campaign by the American Chemistry Council, and the ACS needs to have a more prominent role in producing them. Stimulating new communication efforts will be the other key initiative I will undertake if elected.

*Closing Comments*

I thank you for the opportunity to convey these thoughts to you. The above items do not address other important issues to ACS members, such as employment and globalization. These are obviously critical issues, and ones that I would address as President. Nevertheless, I think that education and communication are the foundations of progress for our Society, and I hope that our efforts in other areas will be built on these dual pillars. Both will depend on our past history, and our efforts will help to build the future heritage of our beloved field.