

## COMMENT

# Looking to lead? ACS offers oppor for younger chemists

by **Kristin Nuzzio**, Chair, ACS Younger Chemists Committee

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**Y**ou don't need to have a certain title to be a leader. Chances are you have already had experiences throughout your chemistry training that have allowed you to build your problem-solving, decision-making, and team-building skills. If you are interested in further developing your leadership skills, the American Chemical Society is here to help.

The ACS Younger Chemists Committee (YCC) advocates for, develops, and supports rising chemists to positively impact their careers, ACS, and the future of chemistry. Younger chemists have a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences, from undergraduate and graduate research through early-career positions. YCC provides a supportive environment throughout these stages for younger chemists to gain knowledge and build their leadership capabilities. Personally, I have benefited greatly from both formal and informal leadership experiences through ACS. These have shaped who I am as a volunteer leader and a leader in my workplace.

Here are four ways to develop your leadership skills:

**Explore your values.** It's helpful to first reflect on what you think makes a great leader and what leadership qualities are most important to you. Are they empathy and inclusivity, communication and delegation, agility and accountability, or a combination of these? Check out **ACS's ChemIDP**, which is a career-planning tool that allows students and postdoctoral scholars in the chemical sciences to assess values and create an action plan toward exploring career options. Great leaders also realize the limitations of their own knowledge and understand when to partner with others for different perspectives. Identify what skills you may not possess, and ask colleagues to share their strengths with you to create a complementary team that uses everyone's competencies. Seek out leaders that you admire, and ask them about the paths they took to arrive at their current roles, what skills they found useful in their development, and what other advice they might have for you.

**“To transform the world through chemistry, we need to hear your voice.”**

**Expand your leadership toolbox.** To develop as an inclusive leader, watch the recent ACS webinar coproduced with ACS Diversity Programs and the ACS Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Respect Advisory Board, **“Leading and Living Inclusively,”** presented by La'Wana Harris. During this webinar, you will learn more about how to be intentional in advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion, and how to empower yourself and others. Through the **Leadership Development System**, ACS also offers courses, including Leading without Authority, Collaborating across Boundaries, Engaging



Credit: Courtesy of Kristin Nuzzio

Kristin Nuzzio

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Colleagues in Dialogue, and Leading Change. The strategies discussed in these courses are widely applicable in both professional and personal settings. I am also looking forward to exploring the **ACS Institute**, which is a comprehensive competency-based learning platform for professional and leadership development, launching this month.

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**Get inspired.** Recognizing the accomplishments of diverse younger chemists is critical to building the pipeline of future leaders in the chemical enterprise. Get inspired by **C&EN's Talented 12**, an annual selection of 12 early-career rising stars who are making an impact on the world through their research. Look out for the announcement of the 2021 cohort later this year. YCC also sponsors several awards specifically designed to facilitate younger chemists' attendance at the ACS Leadership Institute or to help them present research at their first ACS meeting. You can find available opportunities on our website: [acsycc.org](https://acsycc.org). Another great opportunity to consider applying for is the upcoming **ACS LEADS (Lasting Encounters between Aspiring and Distinguished Scientists) Conference**. This 3-day conference aims to bring together future leaders and distinguished chemical professionals for networking and career development sessions.

**Get involved.** To transform the world through chemistry, we need to hear your voice. Participation in ACS governance is a great place for younger chemists to develop and demonstrate leadership skills. Attend a local section YCC meeting and assist with planning and leading events in your community. You can serve on a team to organize a science outreach event, host your own symposium, or create a communications plan to broaden the impact of your local section's activities. ACS technical and professional divisions also offer opportunities to volunteer and make a difference.



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The national YCC serves as a resource to enable younger chemists at the local, regional, national, and international levels to be effective leaders in ACS and beyond. We **provide grants** to start or revitalize local section YCCs or for them to host outreach, professional development, and social events.

Whether you're just getting started or are a seasoned leader, YCC and ACS are here to support you on your leadership journey. Contact YCC at [info@acsycc.org](mailto:info@acsycc.org) and connect with us on LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter.

Views expressed are those of the author and not necessarily those of C&EN or ACS.

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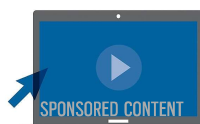
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