



A Meeting Full of Firsts

In the run-up to the Spring ACS National Meeting in Denver, Prof. Christopher J. Cramer at the University of Minnesota (@chemprofcramer), probed Twitter's chemistry community as to which was the first ACS National Meeting they recalled attending. Answers ranged from "last year" to 20, 30 years earlier. Remarkably, nearly everyone remembered not only the location, but year and season of their first meeting. That speaks to how singular the ACS National Meeting is in terms of being the preeminent venue for the chemistry community to gather and share our latest findings. And, I suspect, to how many chemists found their first "big break" in the glow of the ACS National Meeting spotlight.

Indeed, I have attended dozens of ACS meetings in my career, but my first as a new Assistant Professor is forever etched in my memory. With brand new and unpublished results of my fledgling lab in hand, I submitted an abstract to the 1996 fall meeting in Orlando, FL and was excited to learn that my intended poster was selected for a short talk. My enthusiasm was uncurbed by my time slot—*last* talk in the *last* session on the *last* day—until, as that day wore on, the audience continually thinned down to a mere five individuals, four of them my own graduate students. But I held my head high and gave my talk as if to a full house in Carnegie Hall, and guess who that fifth listener turned out to be? A staff writer for *Science* magazine who was intrigued by what he heard and chose to [highlight my work](#) in his "news from the ACS meeting" coverage. That was my big break, and it could not have happened without the ACS venue as a showcase for my young lab's research.

At meetings like the recent one in Denver, I am reminded how important that spotlight is for students presenting their work in front of potential employers and for young chemists seeking to build a network of colleagues and mentors. And importantly, that spotlight illuminates our leaders and pioneers through events such as [The Kavli Foundation Lecture Series](#) featuring Prof. Laura Kiessling and Prof. Ted Betley and Prof. Jackie Barton's Priestley Medal award address.

But it was a flashback to 1996 for me, as I found myself once again on the launch pad, this time with *ACS Central Science*. All the content publishing in our first issue went live

during the meeting on Monday, March 23, a day packed with fun events that I actually survived, including yes, a rather infamous [rock wall](#), editor events, [press conferences](#), and meeting many of you. Your feedback has been incredibly positive, thank you.

Importantly, we also held our inaugural Editorial Advisory Board meeting at the ACS Meeting. Nineteen of our advisory board members came in from all over the world to provide their wisdom and guidance. I was gratified that they understood and signed on to our vision. Several have already contributed killer research articles (such as this one on [enzyme engineering](#)), for which I'm grateful, but I am even more excited for contributions from laboratories previously unknown to me, because it tells me we are accomplishing our mission to provide a home for fantastic research throughout the chemical enterprise and beyond.

This second issue brings forth even more diversity, with important new discoveries in [biosynthesis](#) and [cell delivery](#), as well as materials that [light up](#) and [break records](#). The National Meeting gave us the forum to communicate our aspirations; now we enjoy the hard and fulfilling work of bringing them to life. Keep the feedback and the fantastic submissions coming!

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Views expressed in this editorial are those of the author and not necessarily the views of the ACS.

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