

VI-J-2

SAS Regional, Technical, and Student Section Affairs, Report to the Executive Committee August 28, 2015

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Committee Members: Brian Dable, James Patterson

Activity

The Spring 2015 RTSA report described 5 projects that the committee would undertake.

1) *Continue work with reactivating Regional sections.*

There are two sections, Niagara Frontier and Piedmont, where reactivation has not taken place but still seems possible.

As is discussed below in Section 3, SAS was represented at a graduate student symposium at the University of Buffalo, which is the *de facto* seat of the Niagara Frontier region. Also, a new member of the UB Chemistry faculty is an active member in SAS and has expressed interest in helping to make SAS more locally active (once he has settled into his position). Options for revitalizing SAS in this region include exploration of the relationship with southern Ontario (including Toronto) and reaching out to the optics community in Rochester. If a strong student section can be established at UB, that may serve as a seed for reformation of the Regional section.

The prospects for the Piedmont section are brightened by the strong activity of the new South Carolina and Clemson student sections. Those schools, plus the Savannah River National Lab in Augusta/Aiken form a triangle of about 1-2 hours' drive that could be the active center of a revitalized Piedmont section (with I-85 linking Clemson to Atlanta and Athens). With the student sections now off to a good start, and with local enthusiasm at a high, it is a good time to find the leaders for the section within this geographic area.

2) *Develop a path forward for creating new international sections.*

Soon after Pittcon, we were able to develop a starter kit for new sections outside the United States. The only potential complication compared to sections within the US is the establishment of the new section as a non-profit organization according to that country's rules. This step is necessary to facilitate transfer of funds from SAS to the section. As each country will have different rules, there is no set way to recommend how to make this happen.

The path for creating a new section is as follows. Steps 1-5 can be accomplished in parallel.

- 1) Find people willing to serve in the initial leadership roles.
- 2) Create a constitution and by-laws for the section. These will define the roles of the officers.
- 3) Have the organization obtain status as a non-profit.
- 4) Create a statement of intent for the section.
- 5) Get members. (8-10 is a decent number for starters.)
- 6) Submit the following to the SAS Office and the RTSA Chair:
 - a. List of names and membership numbers of section members
 - b. List of officers

- c. Constitution and by-laws
 - d. Statement of intent
 - e. Documentation on non-profit status
- 7) The Executive Committee will vote on the approval of the section's application.

Examples of the constitution, by-laws, and statement of intent should be sent to the section organizers to serve as templates. It is also useful to send a copy of the annual report questionnaire, which not only serves as a reminder that one will need to be submitted at the end of the calendar year, but also to be a guide for suggest what types of activities may be undertaken. As the content on the revamped SAS website continues to develop, more examples can be found there.

Whether in the statement of intent, or in a cover letter, it is appropriate to ask for startup funds. The appropriate amount is something that can be discussed between the RTSA Chair and the new section organizers prior to submittal of the application package.

During and after Pittcon, there was serious consideration of starting a new section in eastern Canada. Unfortunately, the issues of geography (low member density) and existing venues for interaction between spectroscopists (the Canadian Society for Chemistry and the Canadian Society for Analytical Chemistry and Spectroscopy) ultimately prevailed, and the section was not formed. There was also discussion about a section in Austria, and suggestions to consider sections in Asia, but these did not progress further.

3) *Create new student sections.*

Several SAS "at large" student members at the University of Buffalo represented SAS at a Graduate Student Symposium held over the Memorial Day weekend. There were a number of new students who reportedly signed up or took home applications to consider signing up. In the first week of September, the same SAS student members will determine if there is a sufficiently large group of students (6-8 minimum) who could form the core of a new section. A follow up to this item will be given at the Executive Committee meeting at SciX.

One of the committee [JP] has indicated, based on discussions with the conference organizer, that SAS would be welcome at the Pacific Conference on Spectroscopy and Dynamics in California at the end of January. That conference has significant attendance from prominent California universities that are not heavily represented within SAS. He will be attending that conference and has offered to host a table and do some recruiting. There are also different levels of potential sponsorship opportunities. At the EC meeting at SciX (or before by email if necessary), this topic should be discussed further and a path forward determined regarding an investment. Additional information will be available then.

4) *Reinvigorate technical sections.*

Apart from the Chemometrics Section, there has not been much progress in revitalizing inactive technical sections. There is room for the Committee to do more in this direction, and we hope to be able to do that in the coming 6 months and have better news to report at Pittcon.

The Chemometrics Section is becoming active. Its leaders have proposed the sponsorship of several symposia, including one at the 2016 ACS meeting in San Diego. If that symposium comes to pass, it may serve as a good advertisement for the section and for SAS in a venue where a significant part of the audience may not already be SAS members.

5) *Improve section presence and activity on the SAS web site.*

This is another project that requires more work in the coming half year. The Regional, Technical, and Student Sections page lists a number of inactive sections, and with a few exceptions most of the information for active sections does not extend beyond a list of the section officers. Now that the back end of SAS's web presence has been settled, and the Web, Publicity, Membership, and Newsletter Committees are actively creating content, it will be timely for this committee start to shape the content of its corner of the SAS web site.

Recommendations for Committee / Proposed Steps Forward

These actions should be pursued in addition to the regular activities of the Committee.

1. Drive revitalization of the Niagara Frontier and Piedmont sections, follow up on the U. Buffalo student section, and seek out other potential student sections.
2. Provide immediate feedback to the Web Committee on quick changes that would at least remove outdated material and provide links to affiliate home pages. Communicate with section leaders to provide content for their pages.
3. Identify and revitalize at least 1-2 Technical sections that have enough membership for this to be feasible.

Respectfully submitted,
Regional, Technical, and Student Section Affairs Committee