

American Chemical Society

Summit on ACS Committee Structure



Final Report

**July 6 - 8, 2007
Baltimore, MD**

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Executive Summary

Fifteen ACS committee leaders and key staff convened in Baltimore July 6-8, 2007, to examine the charges of ACS committees, eliminate undesirable duplication of efforts and, where committees' interests converge, to propose means to link their efforts for more productive outcomes. This "Summit on ACS Committee Structure" arose from a recommendation of the Governance Review Task Force and was commissioned by the ACS Board of Directors and Council Policy Committee (CPC). The participants collectively possessed a very broad knowledge of the Society's committee structure. They engaged in detailed consideration of the many aspects of how ACS committees function, and how the committee structure provides an unrivaled opportunity for member participation in governance. They also identified areas where changes would lead to even stronger effectiveness.

The summit arrived at consensus on recommendations that will be presented to committee chairs, to liaisons between committees, to the Committee on Committees (ConC), to the Board of Directors, CPC, and to specific other committees.

The summit assessed the charges and activities of all committees and recommends that ConC and the Board address specific instances where the charge or activities should be refocused. In general, committee charges were seen as appropriate, though there is a tendency to overly specify committees' charges in the ACS Bylaws. As a consequence, the ability of the governance structure to be most effective in a changing environment is unduly limited.

Improving communication and the relationships between committees was a major focus of the summit. Broad recommendations on the roles of, and best practices for, liaisons between committees were developed. In those cases where greater interaction is called for than individual liaisons can provide, joint subcommittees and coalitions should be formed. Recommendations for establishing clear, well understood goals, more effective liaison reporting, and liaison activity outside meetings are presented. In addition, specific areas in the committee structure where communication seemed to be insufficient were identified.

The summit also focused on suggested improvements to the training ConC organizes for incoming committee chairs. Well-prepared committee chairs are key elements of a successful committee structure, and specific best practices are recommended for inclusion in the training curriculum.

Finally, significant time was spent on consideration of how the committee structure can best support the strategic priorities of the Society. A gap analysis revealed critical issues where no committee or group of committees currently has taken sufficient interest. Areas such as multi-disciplinarity, addressing global scientific challenges, graduate education, and online collaboration among chemical scientists will be recommended to specific committees for greater focus and attention. The summit recommends that the Planning Committee, ConC, the Board, and CPC regularly monitor the alignment of the committee structure with the ACS strategic plan and make assignments and adjustments as necessary to respond to key issues.

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Background:

At their Spring 2007 meetings, the ACS Board of Directors and the Council Policy Committee concurred with the ACS Governance Review Task Force that a face-to-face meeting should be convened to examine the charges of ACS committees in order to eliminate undesirable duplication of efforts and, where committees' interests converge, to propose means to link their efforts for more productive outcomes. According to the joint resolution, the attendees at this meeting would include key stakeholders. The Chairs of the Governance Review Task Force and the Committee on Committees were to organize the summit.

This recommendation was based upon the governance review talking points that suggested that ACS clarify committee roles to eliminate redundancy, maximize their role in policy, improve the effectiveness of committee oversight for programs, explore different models for committee structure, and critically review and revitalize the Committee on Chemical Abstracts Service and the Committee on Publications to increase committee member involvement and communication with the membership at large.

Therefore, the workshop was designed to accomplish these objectives:

1. Examine the charges of ACS committees
2. Recommend ways to eliminate undesirable duplication of efforts.
3. Where committees' interests converge, to propose means to link their efforts for more productive outcomes.

The summit took place from July 6-8 in Baltimore, MD at the Intercontinental Harbor Court Hotel. The following members participated:

Jim Burke (GRTF, B&F) – Co-Chair
Neil Jespersen (GRTF, ConC) – Co-Chair
Ann Nalley (GRTF, Board, CPC, SOCED, G&A, Executive Committee, P&MR, Compensation Committee, Planning Committee) – Co-Chair
Grace Baysinger (JBCCP)
Bonnie Charpentier (GRTF, Board, B&F, Executive Committee, PA&PR)
Patricia Dedert (CCAS)
Milagros Delgado (ConC)
Janan Hayes (CPC, Planning Committee, Committee on National Historic Chemical Landmarks)
Malika Jeffries-EL (YCC)
Wayne Jones (LSAC)
Les McQuire (ConC, Committee on Corporation Associates)
Halley Merrell (GRTF, CMA)
Joe Peterson (GRTF, MAC, BOT)
Chuck Rowell (ConC)
Linette Watkins (CMA)
Ralph Domenick (Staff)
Martha Lester (Staff)
Flint Lewis (Staff)
Robert Rich (Staff)
Dean Smith (Staff)

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Before the summit, participants reviewed staff-compiled data on committee charters and committee interactions, information from committee chairs, from committee-committee liaisons, and from staff liaisons, and completed a pre-work survey on key dimensions of the ACS committee structure. These data, along with the other information collected about ACS committees, formed a resource book used by participants throughout the summit. The agenda for the summit, as well as abbreviations used in this report, are attached as appendices.

At the conclusion of the summit, participants arrived at consensus on a number of recommendations based on the available information. These recommendations are directed to:

- A. The Committee on Committees
- B. The Board of Directors
- C. The Council Policy Committee
- D. Committee chairs, in general
- E. Committee-Committee liaisons
- F. Several specific committees

Recognizing that full implementation of these recommendations will require continued discussions across the Society's governance structure, the recommendations of the Summit on ACS Committee Structure are as follows:

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Recommendations of the Summit on ACS Committee Structure

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| Recommendations to ConC |
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Committee Charges

1. The summit recommends that committee charges for several committees be refined. Because too much specificity in the Bylaws would detract from responsiveness and flexibility, it is suggested that, where more specificity is desired, ConC communicate supplemental instructions to the committee on where to focus within its Bylaw charge.

Specific charges to be refined:

- A. DAC: The charge does not address national meeting programming, which is a large part of DAC activities.
 - B. M&E: There should be increased focus on meeting attendee satisfaction, program coordination, and creating an improved meeting experience. The current charge doesn't mention logistics, which is a key part of M&E's activities.
 - C. B&F: The committee should continue its Bylaw-directed focus on "studying all activities supported by the budget and recommending to the Board of Directors and Council, as appropriate, an order of priorities, including termination of programs, based upon determination of costs and effectiveness." Doing so will require continued work to integrate the findings of the Program Review Advisory Group into the committee's budget recommendations.
 - D. CEI: Strengthen the relationship with the ACS Green Chemistry Institute Governing Board.
 - E. CTA: Supporting and strengthening the Division of Chemical Technicians by encouraging and assisting the formation of Technician Affiliate Groups in Local Sections seems to be very narrow in scope. While CTA depends on the local Technician Affiliate Groups to get its job done, perhaps that responsibility can be refocused or rephrased in the Bylaws.
2. COMSCI's Bylaw charge needs to be refocused and sharpened or the Committee should be disbanded.
 - A. COMSCI should include focus on global scientific challenges (e.g., sustainability).
 - B. COMSCI should host a joint subcommittee on multi-disciplinarity and themes at National Meetings.
 - C. COMSCI should focus on mega and emerging scientific issues and appropriate responses.
 - D. The committee's name should be changed to reflect COMSCI's new purpose.
 3. ConC and the Board should simplify the category names of committees, streamline the categories, clarify and communicate their remaining differences, and improve consistency among similar committees.

Communication and relationships between committees

4. Explore redundancies and overlap and, as appropriate, improve communication between PA&PR and CCPA and CPRC and CCA.

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5. In areas where committee interests converge, coordination should take place, and a lead committee established for as long as the overlap exists. Such an assignment could rotate between the overlapping committees.
6. Make the Admissions Committee a subcommittee of MAC.
7. ConC should establish resource materials and instructions for committee-committee liaisons, including procedural guidelines and expectations.
8. At the New Leadership Training, the chairs should be made aware of the roles of, and opportunities available through, committee-committee liaisons.

Systemic improvements

9. Encourage the use of the existing committee structure for new projects instead of establishing task forces. ConC can help to assign new tasks to appropriate committees.
10. Training of new committee chairs should include explaining the extent of the committee's authority, including related staff units and budgets, and the committee's ability to act and innovate.
11. ConC should conduct an exit survey of lessons learned by departing committee chairs of Council-related committees.

Gap Analysis

12. There are critical emerging external trends and mega issues that the ACS needs to respond to. Several of these fall into gaps where no committee identified the area as an emphasis for their committee. ConC should ask the most related committees to support the Society's efforts in these priority areas.
 - A. Multi-disciplinarity, National Meeting program coordination, and global scientific challenges.

This response should include working with the National Academies, interactions with other national Societies, and establishment of a joint subcommittee to discuss themes for National meetings.
Recommended response committees: DAC, M&E, COMSCI, Corporation Associates, IAC
 - B. Online collaboration, community and social networking.

This item could include support to the ACS Web Presence Team in these areas.
Recommended response committees: LSAC, DAC, M&E, BWAG, P&MR, Governance Review Action Team on 'focused interest groups'.
 - C. Enhancing the public image of chemistry

This objective should include support of the ACS Communications Strategic Plan.
Recommended response committees: PA&PR, Communications Strategic Plan Advisory Group, CPRC, LSAC, YCC, CCA, SOCED
 - D. Participation in, and expansion of, the leadership volunteer pool

This goal should include finding a permanent home for the Leadership Development Initiative.
Recommended response committees: CCPA, CCA, LSAC, DAC, WCC, CMA, YCC, Divisions & Local Sections, ConC, M&E

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- E. Creation of ACS funding agencies (like PRF) in health, environment, materials
This initiative could include activities to catalyze the formation of and solicitation for such new foundations.
Recommended response committees: G&A, PRF Advisory Board, Corporation Associates, Development Task Force

 - F. Long-term financial development
This item could include carrying out activity under the oversight of the Board Task Force on Development.
Recommended response committees: B&F, Planning Committee, Development Task Force

 - G. New business development
This effort should include support for the ACS New Business Development office.
Recommended response committees: B&F, Corporation Associates, New Business Development Advisory Board

 - H. Graduate Education
This work should include promoting best practices and perhaps program approval.
Recommended response committees: SOCED (perhaps through a new subcommittee), CPT, Ethics, Graduate Education Advisory Board, a new committee (if necessary to see action in this area)
13. Long-range planning by each committee should take place, measuring outcomes and impact and alignment with ACS strategic plan. This activity should be encouraged by the Board, ConC, and CPC; and information on each committee's plans should be made available to the other Committees.
14. With the Planning Committee in the lead, ConC, CPC, the Planning Committee and the Board should conduct continuing gap analysis of the committee structure as related to the strategic goals of ACS.

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| Recommendations to the Board of Directors |
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15. The summit recommends that committee charges for several committees be refined. Because too much specificity in the Bylaws would detract from responsiveness and flexibility, it is suggested that the Board communicate supplemental instructions to the committee on where to focus within its Bylaw charge.

Specific charges to be refined:

- A. B&F: The committee should continue its Bylaw-directed focus on “studying all activities supported by the budget and recommending to the Board of Directors and Council, as appropriate, an order of priorities, including termination of programs, based upon determination of costs and effectiveness.” Doing so will require continued work to integrate the findings of the Program Review Advisory Group into the committee’s budget recommendations.
 - B. CEI: Strengthen the relationship with the ACS Green Chemistry Institute Governing Board.
 - C. Planning Committee: The Committee should support substantive long-range planning with an appropriate level of detail.
16. COMSCI’s Bylaw charge needs to be refocused and sharpened or the Committee should be disbanded.
- A. COMSCI should include focus on global scientific challenges (e.g., sustainability).
 - B. COMSCI should host the joint subcommittee on multi-disciplinarity and themes at National Meetings.
 - C. COMSCI should focus on mega and emerging scientific issues and appropriate responses.
 - D. The committee’s name should be changed to reflect COMSCI’s new purpose.
17. Explore redundancies and overlap and, as appropriate, improve communication between PA&PR and CCPA and CPRC and CCA.
18. Make the Admissions Committee a subcommittee of MAC.
19. Explore the dissolution of P&MR, with assignment of nominal co-sponsorships and its other delegated authorities to another body.
20. The Board, Governing Board for Publishing, CCAS, and JBCCP should redefine the role of these Joint Board-Council committees and decide if CCAS and JBCCP are necessary.
21. ConC and the Board should simplify the category names of committees, streamline the categories, clarify and communicate their remaining differences, and improve consistency among similar committees.
22. Encourage the use of the existing committee structure for new projects instead of establishing new task forces. ConC can help with assigning new tasks to appropriate committees.
23. Long-range planning by each committee should take place, measuring outcomes and impact and alignment with ACS strategic plan. This activity should be encouraged by the Board, ConC, and CPC; and information on each committee’s plans should be made available to the other Committees.
24. With the Planning Committee in the lead, ConC, CPC, the Planning Committee and the Board should conduct continuing gap analysis of the committee structure as related to the strategic goals of ACS.
25. The Board should conduct an exit survey of departing chairs of Board-related committees.

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| Recommendations to CPC |
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26. Encourage the use of the existing committee structure for new projects instead of establishing new task forces. ConC can help with assigning new tasks to appropriate committees.
27. Long-range planning by each committee should take place, measuring outcomes and impact and alignment with ACS strategic plan. This activity should be encouraged by the Board, ConC, and CPC; and information on each committee's plans should be made available to the other Committees.
28. With the Planning Committee in the lead, ConC, CPC, the Planning Committee and the Board should conduct continuing gap analysis of the committee structure as related to the strategic goals of ACS.

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| Recommendations for Committee Chairs |
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29. Long-range planning by each committee should take place, measuring outcomes and impact and alignment with ACS strategic plan.
30. Committee chairs should consider the following factors in establishing and supporting liaisons between their committee and other governance bodies.
 - A. There should be specific goals as to why there is a liaison, and there should be agreement on these goals between the chairs of the committees.
 - B. Committee chairs should become familiar with charges of other committees. In areas where committee interests converge, coordination should take place, and a lead committee established for as long as the overlap exists. Such an assignment could rotate between the overlapping committees.
 - C. Committee chairs should establish liaisons with outcomes in mind, but not be too prescriptive.
 - D. Committees should consider establishing a ‘liaison coordinator’ within the committee to examine the mission and goals of the committees and review other committees’ agendas for areas of common interest.
 - E. The committee’s staff liaison can assist in identifying committees where there may be need for a liaison.
 - F. There are multiple types of possible liaisons. The chairs should select the one that best fits the common interest:
 - i. Sharing areas of mutual interest liaison (classic to and from)
 - ii. Information gathering liaison (e.g., B&F and MAC)
 - iii. Succession planning liaison (e.g., ConC, N&E, etc.)
 - iv. Joint sub-committees or collaborative working groups (with members from two or more committees) could be a useful tool in areas with large overlap. (e.g., CCWG)
 - v. Short-term liaison to achieve specific goals
 - G. There should be an ongoing evaluation of the need for existing liaisons to determine if they are necessary to continue. Chairs should set an interval for periodic reviews, which can be formal or informal, and conducted by the chairs, the committees, or by sub-committees. Liaisons that are not adding value should be eliminated. Existing liaisons should be asked for their perspective in these reviews.
 - H. Traditional liaisons (i.e., where one person visits another committee’s meeting) should only be established if the person’s physical presence is necessary to communicate. Otherwise, communication could happen via email or some other method.
 - I. Committee or sub-committee chairs should communicate (Webex, phone, email, etc.) with their liaisons before each meeting to discuss meeting objectives and topics.
 - J. Relevant liaisons should be included in committee discussions related to their mutual interests, whether they take place by email, Webex, electronic discussions, or over the phone.
 - K. The expectations of the Chair should be that there is no oral liaison report UNLESS something important is to be said, and a written report would be inadequate.

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- L. Each committee chair should identify approximately five goals for the year and share them with other committees or committee chairs to assist with establishment of appropriate liaison relationships.
- M. Provide an annotated agenda and/or talking points for each meeting to support discussion with liaisons and other committees.
- N. In establishing a committee agenda, schedule liaison reports together with related action items, possibly linked to a sub-committee report. Don't cluster liaison reports out of context at the very end of the meeting.

- 31. Committees should focus on what they can do best; they don't need to do everything in one year.
- 32. Departing Chairs should participate in an exit survey conducted by the appropriate governing bodies.

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| Recommendations for Committee-Committee Liaisons |
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33. The summit recommends the following practices for members serving as liaisons between committees.
- A. Liaisons should know the goals for their liaison assignment. They must be clear as to their role on that Committee.
 - B. A liaison should be an element of a committee-committee relationship and not a surrogate for that relationship.
 - C. Liaisons should have routine meetings with their chairs and the chairs of the other committee (and communicate outside of these meetings), to identify areas of common interest that can be shared with one or the other of the committees.
 - D. Complementary liaisons should communicate outside meetings to establish common goals by phone, emails, and electronic discussions where both chairs are copied.
 - E. It is often advantageous to include a written report in the Committees' agendas.
 - F. Liaisons may not need to give an oral report at every meeting. The expectations of the liaison should be that there is no oral report UNLESS something mutually important is to be said. Liaisons should report orally only on relevant and timely issues to the host committee. Other information items should be presented in writing only, if at all. 'Advertising' should not be a function of a liaison.
 - G. Liaisons can use electronic means, such as Web sites and email, to deliver information. Some reporting of relevant and timely issues may be best provided electronically at a later date, rather than taking up time to present an oral report.
 - H. Liaisons should read the host committee's agenda in advance and be prepared to participate and report at the most appropriate part of the meeting, possibly at a subcommittee meeting. Reports should be limited to topics of mutual interest.
 - I. Determine the best time to arrive at the Committee meeting.
 - J. Liaisons should try to move out of reporting and move into a more interactive role.
 - K. Be sure to respect intellectual property rights and to assign proper credit when sharing information between committees.
 - L. There should be an ongoing evaluation of the need for existing liaisons to determine if they are necessary to continue. Chairs should set an interval for periodic reviews, which can be formal or informal, and conducted by the Chairs, the committees, or by sub-committees. Liaisons that are not adding value should be eliminated. Existing liaisons should be asked for their perspective in these reviews.

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| Recommendations to Specific Committees |
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34. COMSCI's Bylaw charge needs to be refocused and sharpened or the Committee should be disbanded.
 - A. COMSCI should include focus on global scientific challenges (e.g., sustainability).
 - B. COMSCI should host the joint subcommittee on multi-disciplinarity and themes at National Meetings.
 - C. COMSCI should focus on mega and emerging scientific issues and appropriate responses.
 - D. The committee's name should be changed to reflect COMSCI's new purpose.
35. PA&PR, CCPA, CPRC, and CCA: Explore redundancies and overlap and, as appropriate, improve communication between PA&PR and CCPA and CPRC and CCA.
36. LSAC and DAC: Expand current LSAC and DAC joint subcommittee to include committees such as MAC and M&E, to facilitate and develop interactions for programming and to enhance member services outside national meetings.
37. CCAS and JBCCP: The Board, Governing Board for Publishing, CCAS, and JBCCP should redefine the role of these Joint Board-Council committees and decide if CCAS and JBCCP are necessary.
38. Planning: With the Planning Committee in the lead, ConC, CPC, the Planning Committee and the Board should conduct continuing gap analysis of the committee structure as related to the strategic goals of ACS.

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Appendix – Summit Agenda

**Agenda
Summit on ACS Committee Structure
July 6 – 8, 2007**

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| Friday, July 6, 2007 (4:30 PM – 9:00 PM) | Facilitator: Ann Nalley |
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Summit Kick-off

- 4:30 – 5:00 Review Agenda and Goals for the Summit
1. Determine the purposes of ACS committees individually, and in aggregate, and focus them on better attaining these purposes
 2. Explore and improve how the ACS Committee structure interacts with other governance bodies (Divisions, LS, etc.) and the Society staff
 3. Better communicate the role of committees with members and new committee leadership
 4. Development of an implementation plan to improve the committee structure
- 5:00 – 5:30 History of Committees (by Co-Chairs)
- Differentiation of different types of committees and their roles
 - Board, Council, Other, ...
 - History of their growth and why they were established
 - Committee – committee interactions
 - Details about what committees there are and why some may appear duplicative
 - History of previous governance reviews that pertain to committees
- 5:30 – 6:30 **Dinner**
- Dinner Discussion question: “What are the ‘best practices’ for a Committee to Committee liaison?”
- Establishing Best Practices for Committee to Committee Liaisons**
- 6:30 – 6:45 Review the Committee to Committee Liaison List
- Review the submissions from the Committee-Committee Liaisons
 - Review staff’s analysis of effective and ineffective Committee to Committee interactions
 - Introduce Break-Out topic
- 6:45 – 7:45 Break-Out Session
- o Based on your knowledge and the accumulated data, please draft a list of ‘best practices’ for Committee to Committee Liaisons
- 7:45 – 9:00 Discuss and draft a final ‘best practices’ document for Committee to Committee Liaisons

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| Saturday, July 7, 2007 (8:30 AM – 9:00 PM) | Facilitator: Jim Burke |
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8:00 – 8:30 ***Breakfast Buffet***

Is Each Committee fulfilling its charge?

8:30 – 8:45 Introduce the Break-Out session

8:45 – 9:15 Break-Out session- For your group's assigned committees:

1. Using the Committee Charges as detailed in the Constitution, Bylaws and Regulations and the Committee Objectives as detailed in the Comprehensive Summary of Committees, discuss if each Committee's objectives are consistent with its assigned charge
2. Complete the provided form where there are three potential responses:
 - a. If the committee's objectives and charge are essentially the same, no action required
 - b. If the committee's actions differ from their charge, and the Committee Charge should be modified
 - c. If the committee's actions differ from their charge, and the Committee should be asked to focus more on its charge

9:15 – 10:00 Report back to full group

10:00 – 10:15 ***Break***

Does the ACS have the optimal 'portfolio' of committees?

10:15 – 10:30 Review ACS Strategic Directions Grid and Committee responses
Introduce Break-Out Session

10:30 – 11:00 Break out session:

1. Use the same assigned committees as the early morning exercise
2. In the context of understanding each committee's roles and responsibilities, discuss the committees in support of each of the ACS Strategic Directions
3. Do these distributions of committees make sense?
4. Is it an appropriate mapping of committee effort in support of ACS Strategic Directions?

11:00 – 12:00 Report back to full group

12:00 – 1:00 ***Lunch***

1:00 – 3:30 ***Does the ACS have the optimal 'portfolio' of committees? (continued)***

Recommend suggested 'portfolio re-balancing' (by reviewing clusters of related committees and analyzing strategic 'gaps')

1. Refocusing (re-charging) committees to address under-addressed Directions
2. Combining Committees or establishing Coalitions, if they address similar needs
3. Adding new committees, if there is a significant and worthwhile role that could be filled

3:30 – 3:45 ***Break***

3:45 – 6:00 ***Frame final report:***

1. How do we communicate current committee structure to members and new committee leaders?
2. What should be different in training for new committee chairs?
3. What changes should be made to the existing ACS Committee structure, if any?

6:00 – 7:00 ***Reception***

7:00 – 9:00 ***Dinner***

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| Sunday, July 8, 2007 (8:00 AM – 12:00 PM) | Facilitator: Neil Jespersen |
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8:00 – 8:30 *Breakfast Buffet*

8:30 – 10:30 *Develop an implementation strategy*

10:30 – 10:45 *Break*

10:45 – 12:00 *Finalize summit report*

WORKSHOP CONCLUDES

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Appendix 2 – List of Abbreviations

B&F – Committee on Budget & Finance
BOT – Board of Trustees, Group Insurance Plans for ACS Members
BWAG – Board Web Advisory Group
CCAS – Committee on the Chemical Abstract Service
CCA – Committee on Community Activities
CCPA – Committee on Chemistry & Public Affairs
CCWG – Collaboration of Committees Working Group on Diversity
CEI – Committee on Environmental Improvement
CMA – Committee on Minority Affairs
COMSCI – Committee on Science
ConC – Committee on Committees
CPC – Council Policy Committee
CPRC – Committee on Public Relations & Communications
CPT – Committee on Professional Training
CTA – Committee on Technician Affairs
DAC – Divisional Activities Committee
G&A – Committee on Grants & Awards
GBP – Governing Board for Publishing
GRTF – Governance Review Task Force
IAC – International Activities Committee
JBCCP – Joint Board-Council Committee on Publications
LSAC – Local Section Activities Committee
M&E – Committee on Meetings & Expositions
MAC – Membership Affairs Committee
P&MR – Committee on Professional & Member Relations
PA&PR – Committee on Public Affairs & Public Relations
PRF – ACS Petroleum Research Fund
SOCED – Society Committee on Education
WCC – Women Chemists Committee
YCC – Younger Chemists Committee