

Commentary

Scholarships for High School Teachers

by Bryce Hach

Mission of the Hach Scientific Foundation



The Hach Scientific Foundation's mission is very focused and very simple: supporting chemistry education, primarily at the K-12 level. Through the recruitment of new teachers, addressing the issues of existing teacher retention, and supporting the best instruction and assessment strategies in chemistry education, the Foundation has a firm commitment to making the life of the chemistry student and teacher the most positive and educational experience possible. Although the Foundation's charter has its roots firmly planted in chemistry, the outgrowth of Hach Co. cofounder Clifford Hach's love of the "central science", it took more than 20 years before the Foundation announced it would narrow its aim singly on chemistry education.

Why Chemistry Education?

When the Hach Scientific Foundation was still a general chemistry foundation, it became clearly evident that the largest factor, by far, that led its chemistry scholars into their selected field was the initial influence of very solid high school chemistry teacher. From a beginning chemistry student learning the meaning and value of the periodic table to the most sophisticated Nobel laureate in chemistry and the science literacy of all of us in between, the impact of the high school chemistry teacher cannot be overstated. For many, the lessons of these unique individuals are the starting point from which all chemistry understanding and research follows; for most, high school teachers provide almost all the chemistry knowledge they will ever attain.

Yet, despite their inherent necessity to their field, almost three quarters of our high school chemistry teachers do not

have a full degree in chemistry. In fact, fewer than half even have a minor in the subject.

Scholarships Available

The Hach Scientific Foundation is trying to change that. Tapping into the strong research backbone of land grant universities, the Foundation provides \$6000 to chemistry majors pursuing careers in education at each of the land grant universities across the U.S. Undergraduate students interested in these scholarships should seek out the chemistry department at their university to learn more. Additionally, the Hach Scientific Foundation provides scholarships to degreed chemists interested in pursuing teaching certification en route toward a career change. Information about this scholarship can be found on the Hach Scientific Foundation Web site at www.hachscientificfoundation.org (accessed Oct 2007). Applications for the Second Career Chemistry Teacher Scholarship are due on January 31 of each year, for the following academic year.

The Hach Scientific Foundation has also pursued and supported numerous instructional outreach programs that will help transform and enhance the way we learn chemistry.

Great chemistry does not happen without great chemistry education. If you have any questions please feel free to email the Hach Scientific Foundation: Bryce Hach at brycehach@hachscientificfoundation.org.

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