



Dear Environmental Division members,

I began my tenure as Chair of the Environmental Division with the start of the New Year and I would like to ring in 2015 by saying I hope each and every one of you had a fantastic 2014 and an equally joyous holiday season!

Before jumping into the New Year and embarking upon my tenure in earnest I want to thank our previous Chair, Nick Hutson, for all his hard work and leadership. I would also like to spend some time to reflect upon 2014. We accomplished many things. I would like to share some of those with you now.

Highlights from 2014 include:

- We recognized Professor Peter Smirniotis of the University of Cincinnati as the recipient of the Environmental Division's Lawrence K. Cecil Award, our most prestigious honor. Many of you were present at the 2014 National Meeting in Atlanta when Dr. Smirniotis presented his lecture, entitled, "*Protecting our Environment with Catalysis and Reaction Engineering*", during the annual Cecil Award Lecture (I hope you will all participate again at the 2015 Cecil Award Lecture when this year's awardee presents at the National Meeting in Salt Lake City).
- We also presented a unique award in 2014. The Executive Committee was approached with a proposal and nomination to recognize Professor Robert (Bob) Peters of the University of Alabama at Birmingham as a recipient of an Environmental Division Service Award for his many years of hard work and outstanding contributions to the Division in the field of environmental chemical engineering. Service Awards are not given yearly; rather, only when deserving candidates are nominated. The committee was very pleased to bestow this honor on Bob. Please join me in congratulating him!
- We teamed with the Air & Waste Management Association (AWMA) to sponsor a series of webinars that are of interest to both organizations. Additional Web Conferences are being planned throughout 2015.
- Under the leadership of our Programming Chair and Vice Chairs (Alessandra Carreon, Debalina Sengupta, Dick Siegel, and Tapas Das; respectively) and with support from dozens of area and session chairs, the Environmental Division developed an incredibly robust compilation of technical programming at the two largest AIChE meetings: the Spring Meeting in New Orleans and the National Meeting in Atlanta. Programming highlights included:

- Sponsorship of 25 sessions, including the Environmental Division poster session, and collaboration with several other AIChE divisions and forums to cosponsor another 15 sessions between the two meetings;
 - Co-sponsorship of a topical conference titled, *“Environmental Aspects, Applications, and Implications of Nanomaterials and Nanotechnology”*;
 - Organization of a new topical, titled, *“Sustainable Food Production”*;
 - Honored recipients of the annual Graduate Student Paper Award
 - First place: Qiang Dai, University of Michigan
 - Second place: Olasehinde Owoseni, Tulane University
 - Third place: Sayalee Mahajan, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
 - Worked with the Institute’s Young Professionals (YPs) group to participate in student workshops held on the Saturday prior to the National Meeting. An assembled panel, with representatives from industry, academia, government, and private consulting, spoke to students and shared experiences and anecdotes of what it means to be a chemical engineer with an environmental focus in the workplace; and,
 - Socialized, enjoyed good food and drink, and networked at our annual Division dinner.
- We worked with AIChE to complete the transition of our previous Website to the new, standardized format used by all AIChE divisions and forums. Please visit the new site at: <http://www.aiche.org/community/sites/divisions-forums/environmental-division> and provide feedback.
 - We wrapped up 2014 by holding an election and announcing the new slate of officers for 2015. The new leadership (as elected by all of you – the Environmental Division membership) include:
 - Second Vice Chair: Peter Smirniotis
 - Director: Sunil Hangal
 - Director: Nga Lee (Sally) Ng
 - Treasurer: Larry Erickson

We also have some other changes in Division leadership for 2015. In addition to the aforementioned, newly-elected officers we have new leads for:

- Past Chair: Nick Hutson. Per our bylaws, the chair remains a formal officer of the Executive Committee, serving a one-year term as Past Chair.
- First Vice Chair: Vivian (Faye) McNeil. Faye will spend 2015 as First Vice Chair and will succeed me as Chair in 2016.
- Programming Chair: Debalina Sengupta, succeeding Alessandra Carreon (thank you Ale for all the hard work!)

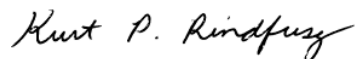
Enough of the past. Now a quick look into the future. My personal goals for 2015 as Division Chair include:

1. Increasing the visibility of our division throughout AIChE. Environmental aspects of chemical engineering are included in, if not critical to, the thought processes associated with all AIChE divisions and forums. It only makes sense to work collaboratively with our sister AIChE groups to maximize efficiency of our efforts. The Executive Committee is investigating ways to accomplish this through proactive “marketing” within and outside the Institute.
2. Increase new/young member participation. We recognize that today’s students and recent graduates are likely to be tomorrow’s Division leaders. Therefore, the Executive Committee is striving to reach out to Young Professionals and identify mechanisms to engage them.
3. Engage industrial constituents. I hope to work closely with industrial members to identify projects and benefits that will be of greater interest to this subset of our membership.
4. Create a new award to recognize contributions of environmental chemical engineers who are in the early stages of their career.
5. Re-invigorate the World Congress on Sustainable Engineering (more on this as the year progresses).

Although the Division leadership has begun steps toward accomplishing these goals, the specific paths forward have not been fully determined. We can use your help! If interested, please feel free to contact me or any of the Division Officers (see the *Leadership* link on the division Website for contact information).

That’s it. Once again, I hope your holiday season lived up to (actually exceeded) expectations and everyone had a very HAPPY NEW YEAR. Here’s to a successful 2015!

Sincerely,



Kurt Rindfusz

Environmental Division Chair, 2015