



FOR DISTRICT I DIRECTOR, 2019-2021



LAURA E. PENCE

University of Hartford, West Hartford, Connecticut

PENCE, LAURA E. *Connecticut Valley Section.* University of Hartford, West Hartford, Connecticut.

Academic record: Lebanon Valley College, B.S., 1987; Michigan State University, Ph.D., 1992; NIH Postdoc Fellow, MIT, 1992-95.

Honors: ACS Fellow, 2011; ACS/AAAS Congressional Science Policy Fellow, 2012-13; Visiting Scientist Award, Western Connecticut Section, ACS, 2006; Roy E. Larsen Award for Excellence in Teaching, University of Hartford, 2006; Sigma Alpha Pi Excellence in Teaching Award, 2009.

Professional positions (for past 10 years): University of Hartford, Professor of Chemistry, 2009 to date, Associate Professor, 2001-09, Chair, Department of Chemistry, 2002-09; ACS/AAAS Congressional Science Policy Fellow in the office of U.S. Senator Michael Bennet (Colorado) 2012-13.

Service in ACS national offices: Board of Directors, Director District I, 2016-18; Councilor ex officio, 2016-18; Committee on Public Affairs and Public Relations, 2016-18; Committee on Environmental Improvement, 2014-16, 2009-12, (Nonvoting) Chair, 2014, 2012, Committee Associate, 2007-09; ACS Member Insurance Board of Trustees, 2017-19; Advisor, ACS Green Chemistry Institute Governing Board, 2014.

Service in ACS offices: *Connecticut Valley Section:* Councilor, 2015. *Chemical Education Division:* Alternate Councilor, 2012-14, 2003-05, Councilor, 2006-11; Chair, Strategic Planning Committee, 2007; Meeting Program Co-Chair, for ACS National Meetings Fall 1999 and Spring 2003; Long Range Planning Committee, 2009-14; Program Committee Member, 1996-2006; Symposium Organizer, *ACS National Meetings:* Boston, Fall 1998; New Orleans, Spring 2008; Philadelphia, Fall 2008, Washington DC, Fall 2009; Boston, Fall 2010. *Michigan State University Section:* Treasurer, 1990-92.

Member: Member ACS since 1987. Sigma Xi, Association of Women in Science. *ACS Divisions:* Chemical Education, Environmental Chemistry, Inorganic Chemistry.

Related activities: RateMyProfessors.com, Top 25 Highest Rated University Professors Nationally, 2013-14 and 2016-17; ACS Presidential Chemistry on the Hill Advocacy Workshop 2017; ACS Legislative Summit Congressional visits, 2016-17; ACS Experts Training, Fall 2013; Member, ACS Sustainability Stakeholders Steering Group, 2011; Wrote over 100 entries in "ACS Celebrates IYC 2011"; Thematic Programming Chair, "Chemistry for a Sustainable World" Spring 2010 ACS National Meeting; ACS Representative "Engaging Disciplinary Societies" grant from Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), 2011-12; Board Member, Women's Education and Leadership Fund, University of Hartford, 2010-12; Sustainability Coordinator, University of Hartford, 2010-12.

STATEMENT

(As provided for Council Agenda, March 2018)

The statements of the candidates represent their opinions and do not necessarily represent the views of the ACS.

A Voice for Chemists

Connecting directly with members is of primary importance to me, so in my first term as Director for District I, I prioritized visiting as many local sections in the District as possible. Thus far I have been to eight of the twenty sections, which is a good start, but I still want to do more. I have spent the majority of my career in District I, starting by accompanying my Ph.D. chemist father to my first Binghamton Local Section meeting as an undergraduate. My MIT postdoc placed me in the expansive Northeastern Local Section for three years, and my faculty position at the University of Hartford then moved me to the Connecticut Valley Local Section. My aspiration is to visit every local section at least once and ideally talk with every member in our diverse and vibrant district, and I will energetically pursue those opportunities if re-elected.

As our members point out to me, we live in turbulent times, and my strongly honed skill set in science policy uniquely equips me to serve ACS and its members. I spent a year on Capitol Hill as an ACS Congressional Science Policy Fellow not long ago, and I have firsthand experience communicating with elected officials, empowering constituents, and applying the expertise and knowledge of science to shape policy that is a win for all sides.

I ask for your vote so that I may continue to communicate non-partisan priorities for scientists.

A voice on behalf of chemists

In this time of great national political uncertainty, I feel strongly that scientists need to spend time outside of their laboratories and classrooms to contribute our expert knowledge of science to the policy-making process. On behalf of all our members, I have immersed myself in the ACS policy process, both ensuring that our public policy statements are strong and clear and that they cover all topics of interest to chemists such as immigration, STEM education, fostering innovation and a healthy business climate, and environmental issues. I have visited Capitol Hill and spoken with Congressional delegations to ensure that the voice of ACS members is heard. Specifically, the Chemical Safety Board, a small invaluable federal agency that investigates chemical accidents and shares lessons learned, survived potential closure due in part to my effectively communicating its vital role in improving and sustaining the safety of the chemistry enterprise.

I ask for your vote so that I may continue to be your voice to policymakers.

Empowering chemists' own voices

In many of my local section visits, I describe my experiences with science and policy, sketch the current national policy challenges as they affect scientists, and most importantly explain how individual members can contact and be heard by their elected officials. My goal is to endow all chemists with knowledge that their voices are important and to remove the mystery from the process of contacting their policymakers. In 2017, I helped present an ACS Presidential training workshop on how to create a message and prepare for a visit to a member of Congress. I include some of that advice in my talks, and I would enthusiastically share all of that coaching with any local section or group that is interested. Ultimately, members have far more leverage with their local, state, and federal officials than do outside individuals, and I want members to own that influence if they are interested.

I ask for your vote so that I can continue to empower members to find their own voices.

A voice for members and local sections

In a complex organization such as ACS, it can be challenging for members to direct their questions at the right person in the organization to get an answer. I have made it a point to follow up on every question I have been asked by a member and to pursue the inquiry tenaciously until I find an answer or an individual who can respond. I prioritize that every member is important no matter how large the organization, and every question should be answered, even if the answer may not be all that the member had wished. Of all my responsibilities as District I Director, I believe my most important job is to listen to each member and ensure that every voice is heard.

I ask for your vote so that I may continue to serve all our members and be a vocal advocate for the benefit of all chemists.