



ECS in Mexico

In October 2014, a joint international meeting between ECS and SMEQ was held in Cancun, Mexico. The meeting was held at an interesting and efficient venue

that provided the attendees with a rich technical program and even new opportunities. The meeting itself was co-sponsored by our partner society, Sociedad Mexicana de Electroquímica (SMEQ). We very much appreciated the efforts and hospitality of SMEQ President Facundo Almeraya Calderón and past presidents Norberto Casillas Santana and Yunny Meas. The interaction of the two societies provided larger and broader symposia, along with a chance to initiate new interactions. The positive experiences from this second joint meeting of the two societies established a format for recurring meetings on a regular basis, probably every four years in Mexico. We hope it will be a platform for other societies in Latin America to join in this partnership with a regional flavor. *Estoy deseando una relación larga y mutuamente beneficiosa.* The reoccurring meetings format with regional partners follows our highly successful joint meetings with societies in Asia, which meet on a regular basis in Hawaii under the name PRiME. These partnerships promote international cooperation, education, and goodwill. I hope this relationship in the Western Hemisphere grows and engenders other opportunities in different parts of the world.

As reflected in the technical program in Cancun, the global interest in electrochemical and solid state science and technology has never been stronger. The Society's technical areas are contemporary, including fundamental and applied topics such as energy, environmental issues, and electronics. The meeting site was particularly friendly and efficient because the conference rooms were in closely-located buildings, making travel between sessions easy. The hotel package included all meals, enabling attendees to stay at the property's restaurants, which promoted networking at all hours of the day. The unique flavor of the Mexican location was brought out in the *Cena Baile* at the end of the conference—*¡un divertido fin a una semana productivo!*

The Society's initiatives and commitment to scholarly publications was reflected in awarding each attendee an Open Access article processing charge (APC) credit for publishing a peer-reviewed paper in the Society's journals. By using this APC, a published paper in one of the Society's journals will be an Open Access paper, and can be read worldwide without the need for the reader to have a subscription or single article charge. Open Access, as practiced by some publishers, may sacrifice quality or be very expensive. The ECS approach is purely for the benefit of authors and readers. It is the unrestricted distribution of the articles, which, because the papers receive the same, high-quality review and publication treatment, gives authors the widest possible distribution of their peer-reviewed, scholarly work, without sacrifice of prestige or quality. It makes the ECS journals the best place to publish high-quality, peer-

reviewed papers because publication occurs in a highly-cited, established journal and does not hold papers behind a paywall. I hope everyone takes advantage of this unique opportunity. There is a Society-wide commitment to support and fund this endeavor to publishing without barriers.

The Cancun meeting also had a new initiative—a facilitated brainstorming session that resulted in ECS awarding four unrestricted research grants, a program sponsored by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The topic was the application of electrochemical and solid state technology to address global sanitation and water challenges. The availability of clean water and secure sanitation is a significant challenge in the world and a major cause of disease and death. Plenary and brainstorming sessions were held early in the week to stimulate hallway discussions about the topic and allow meeting participants time to think about solutions to the presented problems. Attendees were invited to submit short proposals at the conference; by week's end, ECS had awarded four unrestricted grants with the possibility of additional grants in the near future. This was the first time I experienced a focused outreach and funding event that happened (start to finish) at an international conference. The keynote presentations were engaging and informative. They were effective because the opening talks detailed many aspects of the sanitation and water problem not commonly known, and encouraged attendees to find innovative approaches to solving the problems. The presence of an informed and ready audience was a key aspect of the process. This approach opens new opportunities for other organizations to harvest the collective creativity and energy of a diverse group of scientists and engineers, just like those that attend ECS meetings. As a trial run, it was successful, and it is stimulating consideration for similar future events in other technical areas.

I have had the great fortune to participate in many publications and endeavors through ECS as Editor of *Interface*, the *Journal of The Electrochemical Society* and *Electrochemical and Solid-State Letters*, and now as an officer of the Society. Along the way, I have had some of the most remarkable outcomes from chance meetings. The focus and topics in electrochemistry and solid state science have changed over the years but are stronger and more relevant than ever, as shown by the enthusiasm and breadth in Cancun. This may be my last column in an ECS publication, so I want to say a special word of thanks to all those who work or volunteer for ECS. It is a great organization to be associated with. I would also like to give a few words to those involved in the Cancun meeting—*¡Gracias a todos los participantes en esta conferencia!*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul A. Kohl". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Paul A. Kohl
ECS President