



GEORGIA TECH PHOTO/GARY MEEK

PHOTO BY PETER CUTTS

PACIFIC NORTHWEST NATIONAL LABORATORY PHOTO

GEORGIA TECH PHOTO/GARY MEEK

**Opportunities  
for 2005  
and beyond**

# EMPLOYMENT

## STILL SEARCHING FOR SIGNS OF RECOVERY

In tight job market, chemists who look outside the box may find careers that match their skills

LINDA R. RABER, C&EN WASHINGTON

**I**T'S ROUGH OUT THERE. FOR THE FOURTH CONSECUTIVE YEAR, the job market for chemists remains depressed. The 2005 C&EN Employment Outlook is our annual package of analysis and anecdotes from reporters who cover the employment scene. In the opening section on demand, Assistant Editor Aalok Mehta talks to the major players in both the academic and industrial job markets. Industrial hiring is stagnant, and recruiters

generally predict few new positions for the coming year. Although the pharmaceutical industry has been fairly resilient in the face of economic hardship, the traditional chemical sector has had no such luck. High raw material costs and the continued erosion of manufacturing capacity in the U.S. have hit the segment especially hard during the economic downturn, so new graduates seeking jobs in the area may continue to have great difficulty.

C&EN Editor-at-Large Michael Heylin analyzes information from the most recent ACS Salary Survey. He reports that unemployment among ACS chemist members in the domestic workforce was at 3.6% this March. This is up slightly from 3.5% one year earlier and the highest since ACS starting doing these annual surveys more than 30 years ago. As recently as 2001, ACS members were essentially fully employed, with 1.5% unemployment. Heylin also reports that a record high of 9.1% of chemists don't have full-time jobs.

Salaries of chemists who have jobs are

holding up fairly well, but the percentage of chemists receiving raises has been on a slight decline for the past several years, as has the size of the increases received. Raises, however, remain higher than inflation, Heylin reports.

The 2004 U.S. presidential election will take place the same week this Employment Outlook is published. In addition to this Employment Outlook, Heylin's article includes an effort to get beyond all the furious spin put on jobs data as the election nears.

Departing from the "big picture" perspective, C&EN Online Editor Melody



## EMPLOYMENT OUTLOOK

They report that working in teams, logical thinking, and writing from research are strengths that many chemists share. To find a new niche, chemists may need to see themselves in a different light.

Assistant Editor Victoria Gilman reports that temporary staffing agencies are helping employers fill the gap when they need skilled scientists quickly for specific projects and are providing chemical scientists with pertinent employment between permanent jobs. The fraction of chemists working in temporary positions has increased, she notes, and some scientists report that they like the variety of positions they can fill by making contract work their career. Other chemists find that the skills gained in temporary assignments better position them for permanent employment; still others see the assignments as "on the job" opportunities to try out for permanent positions.

As a special feature, this year's Employment Outlook offers readers a guide to conducting a job search in a tight job market. C&EN Associate Editor Corinne Marasco combines her expertise in employment issues with her reporting skills

Voith and C&EN Chemjobs Manager Nick Waffle take a look at chemists who have made radical changes midcareer. Sometimes the changes have been by choice, sometimes not—but all of the career moves are interesting. They are an encouraging reassurance that training in the chemical sciences is transferrable from the laboratory and classroom to, say, the Antarctic tundra.

to come up with a package that is must reading for chemists who are in the job market or who may be looking for a job in the future—in other words, pretty much everyone.

In addition to advice on self-analysis, résumé writing, and interviewing, Marasco lists job-search resources and lets readers know how ACS can help them in their careers.

## DEMAND

Chemists who are just beginning their job hunt will face yet another year of weak hiring. Most of the employers C&EN spoke with about prospects for chemists, biochemists, chemical engineers, and scientists in related disciplines say that not much has changed since last year; many university representatives, however, were cautiously optimistic that there will be minor improvement in the academic job market. **PAGE 36**

## SALARIES & EMPLOYMENT

Unemployment among American Chemical Society members and the fraction of members without full-time employment have hit the highest levels since the society started measuring the employment status of its members annually more than 30 years ago. **PAGE 41**

## MIDCAREER TRANSITIONS

Making a major midcareer transition can be scary, exciting, exhausting, and, for many, incredibly rewarding. C&EN spoke to chemists who have faced or are in the process of facing major career change. **PAGE 46**

## TEMPORARY JOBS

A growing segment of the skilled professional workforce—including chemists at all degree and experience levels—is adopting temporary assignments as part of a long-term career path. Some scientists pursue contract work with the ultimate goal of finding their dream job; for others, contracting is their dream job. **PAGE 48**

## JOB SEARCHING IN TOUGH TIMES

Anyone who has conducted a job search recently is familiar with the emotional roller coaster that comes with it. The still-tight job market comes with just one guarantee: It will take many interviews to land a job. C&EN has enhanced its annual listing of job-hunting resources with some solid advice on targeting the market and landing a good job. **PAGE 50**

USDA PHOTO



GEORGIA TECH PHOTO/GARY MEEK

