

2015 NERS[®] Student Chapter Program Awards

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- Pow! Zzzzzappp! My Chemistry Dissertation Comic Book PAGE 10
- How Brownian Motion Can Affect Your Chemistry Career PAGE 13

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inChemistry

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THE MAGAZINE FOR ACS STUDENT MEMBERS November/December 2015



Cover: Students celebrating at the Chapter Awards Ceremony at the 249th ACS National Meeting in Denver, CO. 19

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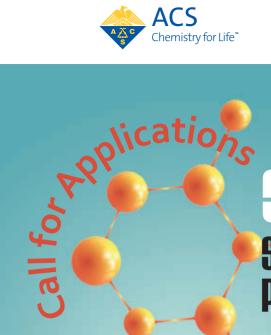
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AIChE

Summer Industrial Internship Program for Undergraduates Summer 2016

The Society of Chemical Industry (SCI) is pleased to offer the **SCI Scholars Program**, which provides exceptional chemistry and chemical engineering students with 10-week internships during the summer of 2016. If you plan to pursue a career in chemical industry, apply for this opportunity to build your skills and gain valuable experience!

Benefits:

- Industrial workplace experience
- \$6,000–10,000 work stipend (varies by employer)
- Certificate and \$1,000 travel award to participate in a scientific meeting
- Opportunity to nominate a high school chemistry teacher for recognition and a \$1,000 award

Requirements:

- Current sophomore or junior
- Chemistry or chemical engineering major
- Minimum GPA of 3.5
- U.S. citizen or permanent resident

SCI Scholars will be selected based upon the strength of their application, statement of interest, and letters of recommendation.

To see information and apply, visit www.acs.org/sci Deadline to apply is December 15, 2015

ACS & YOU

EDITORIAL: Together We Can!

BY DIANE GROB SCHMIDT

It is with great joy that I help to announce the award-winning ACS student chapters for the 2014–2015 academic year!

Particularly important is the work you do to increase the public's interest, understanding, and support of chemistry. Your outreach efforts over the past year, and into the future, will help the scientific world gain public support so desperately needed. This allows chemists to continue working to solve fundamental health and societal issues through ongoing chemical research.

In the process, you have benefited as well. Over the past year, you have gained confidence and valuable skills that will serve you well as students and in your career. Through your student chapter, you have started developing and exercising your leadership skills, building a strong network of mentors, colleagues, and friends, and broadly taking advantage of all the development opportunities ACS has to offer.

Though we have made wonderful progress, much work is still left to be done — and we need your help as you continue pursuing your passions and interests for science. I encourage you to begin venturing outside of your comfort zones to expand your professional and social circles.

Realize, too, that chemistry is a global enterprise. I encourage you to broaden your worldview to enable yourself to work and contribute as a chemist. Get to know students at your institution who are from other parts of the world. Travel and study abroad to experience new cultures. Try to learn a new language. International partnerships serve our members and, at the same time, serve to enhance the global scientific and research enterprise.

Demonstrate your enthusiasm for chemistry by attending an ACS local sec-

tion meeting, or join an ACS division that matches a professional interest. Continue to volunteer in some capacity for the group, and get to know some of the other members. There are dozens of ways to help. As you move through your career, volunteering and being an advocate for our profession doesn't have to take huge chunks of your time. You can devote as much or as little of your time and energy as you can spare. The most important thing is to do *something*.

My hope is that your interest, drive, and enthusiasm will be contagious. It takes more than just one person or team to solve world challenges. It takes collective passion, commitment, and energy. It cannot be accomplished alone. But together we can!

Congratulations on all that you have achieved!



Diane Grob Schmidt is president of ACS. She recently retired from her position as section head in Research and Development at Procter & Gamble.

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Diane Grob Schmidt poses with the chapter members from the Inter American University of Puerto Rico Ponce Campus (Mercedita) at the 2015 Chapter Awards Ceremony at the 249th ACS National Meeting in Denver, CO.

ACS & YOU

ATOMIC NEWS

COMPILED BY JESSICA ROBERTS

Source: ACS Office of Public Affairs Weekly PressPac, www.acs.org/content/acs/en/pressroom.html

Sprayable foam that slows bleeding could save lives

Traumatic injuries, whether from serious car accidents, street violence, or military combat, can lead to significant blood loss and death. But using a material derived from crustacean shells, researchers have now developed a foam that can be sprayed onto an open wound to stop the bleeding. They report their successful tests on pigs in the journal ACS Biomaterials Science & Engineering.

For some serious injuries to arms and legs, medics can apply pressure to keep bleeding in check. But for major trauma to the torso, particularly when it affects vital organs, compression can make the situation worse. Currently, first responders have no way to stop this kind of bleeding, which is a leading cause of death among young adults and the most common cause of death from combat-related injuries. Srinivasa R. Raghavan, Matthew B. Dowling, and colleagues wanted to find a simple way to treat these wounds quickly. They developed a sprayable foam made of modified chitosan, a biopolymer derived FRGE from the shells of shrimp and other crustaceans that is already being used in other types of non-foam wound dressings. In tests on pigs, the spray reduced blood loss by 90%.

Read more about the research: "Sprayable Foams Based on an Amphiphilic Biopolymer for Control of Hemorrhage Without Compression," *ACS Biomater. Sci. Eng.*, 2015, 1 (6), pp 440–447.

Current options for testing air and water for contaminants, including microbes and radiation,

Keeping astronauts in space longer with better air and water

4

As astronauts embark on increasingly ambitious space missions, space programs must figure out how to keep them healthy for longer periods far from Earth. That entails ensuring the air they breathe and the water they drink are safe not an easy task given their isolated locations. But researchers are now reporting in the ACS journal *Analytical Chemistry* a new method to monitor the quality of both in real time with one system. require collecting samples and sending them back to Earth for analysis. But for long missions — aboard the International Space Station (ISS), for example — this approach could take six months before astronauts have their results. The ISS is also equipped with some real-time hardware for detecting unwanted substances, but it has limitations. Facundo M. Fernández, William T. Wallace, and colleagues wanted to create a system to conduct real-time, sensitive monitoring.

> Fernández, Wallace, and colleagues outfitted an air quality monitor (AQM) already used aboard space missions with a device that can vaporize water samples, turning its contents and any contaminants into a gas. The gas can then enter the AQM for analysis. Astronauts could also use the same equipment, with a modification, for testing the air. The team says the system could be used in space or for remote locations right here on Earth.

Read more about the research: "Electrothermal Vaporization Sample Introduction for Spaceflight Water Quality Monitoring via Gas Chromatography-Differential Mobility Spectrometry," *Anal. Chem.*, 2015, 87 (12), pp 5981–5988.

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Recovering a rare metal from LCDs to avoid depleting key resource

Life without bright screens on our smartphones and TVs is hard to imagine. But in 20 years, one of the essential components of the liquid-crystal displays, or LCDs, that make many of our gadgets possible could disappear. To address the potential shortage of this component — the element indium researchers report in the journal *ACS Sustainable Chemistry & Engineering* a new way to recover the valuable metal so it could be recycled.

Many consumer electronics from laptops to tablets contain thin films of indium tin-oxide that act as transparent conductive coatings in the displays. Currently, the rare-earth metal is not being adequately recycled. And in China alone, experts estimate that consumers will throw out 100 million TVs, computers,

49 149 149 188 183 14.818 Scra and Mec 137 (21), pp 6

and laptops between 2014 and 2020. This rapid turnover explains in part why the limited global reserves of indium are in danger of running out. So Jinhui Li and colleagues set out to devise a new method to get the metal back from discarded products.

Researchers performed 18 experiments to find the optimal conditions for coaxing indium from LCDs. The most effective technique involved crushing and grinding LCD glass into particles less than 75 micrometers, or 0.003 inches, in size and bathing them in a sulfuric acid solution at 122 degrees Fahrenheit. These and other key parameters, Li and colleagues say, could contribute to a closed-loop process of indium recovery that could allow the display industry to get indium from discarded electronics rather than using dwindling reserves.

Read more about the research: "Recycling Indium from Scraped Glass of Liquid Crystal Display: Process Optimizing and Mechanism Exploring," *ACS Sustainable Chem. Eng.*, 2015, 137 (21), pp 6947–6955. The amount of hydrogen in liters termites can produce by ingesting a single sheet of paper.

> The pressure (in GPa) at which hydrogen becomes opaque and electrically conductive at room temperature.

The percentage of global

28 methane emissions that can be attributed to cows and other livestock.

10³⁴ The size in carats of a diamond that was found 50 light-years away in the constellation Centaurus.

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Expanding the code of life with new "letters"

The DNA encoding all life on Earth is made of four building blocks called nucleotides, commonly known as "letters", that line up in pairs and twist into a double helix. Now, two groups of researchers are reporting for the first time that two new nucleotides can do the same thing — raising the possibility that entirely new proteins could be created for medical uses. Their two studies appear in the *Journal of the American Chemical Society*.

Synthetic biologists have been attempting for years to expand on nature's genetic "alphabet", consisting of the nucleotide bases cytosine, guanine, adenine, and thymine — also represented by the letters "C", "G", "A", and "T", respectively. But so far, the potential additions they've tested have shown limited promise. For example,

one duo pairs up but doesn't form a helix, an important criterion given that the bases would have to incorporate fairly seamlessly with the original four to be useful. Millie M. Georgiadis, Steven A. Benner, and colleagues from Indiana and Florida wanted to see if another potential set of letters, "Z" (6-amino-5-nitro-2(1*H*)-pyridone) and "P" (2-amino-imidazo[1,2-*a*]-1,3,5-triazin-4(8*H*)one), would form a helix — and evolve.

The researchers found that multiple Z–P pairs can contribute to a double helix, just as C–G and A–T pairs do, with the same combination of flexibility and rigidity required for natural DNA to function. They also showed that the Z–P pairs integrate well with conventional pairs and that six-letter GACTZP DNA can evolve. The evolution of DNA containing the new building blocks endows the structures with new properties that could be useful in protein recognition.

Read more about the research: "Structural Basis for a Six Nucleotide Genetic Alphabet," J. Am. Chem. Soc., 2015, 137 (21), pp 6947–6955.



251st American Chemical Society National Meeting

mputers in Chemistry

UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM

Sunday, March 13

Hospitality Center 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Undergraduate Research Oral Session 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM

Making the Most of Your First National Meeting 9:00 – 9:45 AM

Graduate School Reality Check, Part I: Getting In 10:00 – 11:15 AM *Cosponsored by the ACS Younger Chemists Committee*

Chem Demo Exchange 11:00 AM – 12:30 PM

Graduate School Reality Check, Part II: You're In – Now What?

11:15 AM – 12:30 PM Cosponsored by the ACS Younger Chemists Committee

Symposium: New Trends in Computational Chemistry

1:00 – 2:30 PM Cosponsored by the ACS Computers in Chemistry Division

Networking Social with Graduate School Recruiters 1:00 – 5:00 PM

Workshop: Community Outreach Ideas 2:45 – 4:00 PM

All events are sponsored or cosponsored by the Society Committee on Education Undergraduate Programs Advisory Board CHAIR: Matthew J. Mio, University of Detroit Mercy, MI. PROGRAM CHAIR: Steven Emory, Western Washington University, Bellingham.

www.acs.org/SanDiego2016

& Exposition

March 13–17, 2016 San Diego, CA #acsSanDiego

Workshop: Networking 101

4:00 – 5:30 PM Cosponsored by the ACS Younger Chemists Committee

Student Chapter Awards Ceremony 7:00 – 8:30 PM

Undergraduate Social

8:30-11:00 PM

ATTENTION: Graduate School Recruiters!

Network with highly qualified undergraduate students who are interested in learning more about your graduate school programs. Register to participate in the graduate school recruiting events. To register, go to www.acs.org/ GradSchoolRecruiters. For more information contact undergrad@acs.org.

Monday, March 14

Hospitality Center 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Realities of the Chemical Industry: Career Paths and Opportunities 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM

Undergraduate Research Oral Session 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM

Symposium: Advances in Chemical Imaging: Ultra-Resolution to Single Molecules

9:00 - 10:30 AM

Cosponsored by the ACS Division of Analytical Chemistry and the Physical Chemistry Division of the ACS

Symposium: Frontiers in Inorganic Chemistry

9:45 – 11:45 AM Cosponsored by the Division of Inorganic Chemistry of the ACS

Undergraduate Research Poster Session

12:00 NOON – 2:00 PM Cosponsored by the ACS Divisions of Agricultural and Food Chemistry, Analytical, Environmental, Inorganic, Medicinal, Physical, and Polymer Chemistry, Biological Chemistry, and Geochemistry

Eminent Scientist Lecture

Featuring Richard N. Zare, Stanford University 2:30 – 3:30 PM

Speed Networking with Chemistry Professionals 3:45 – 5:15 PM

Kavli Lecture 5:30 – 6:30 PM

Sci-Mix/Successful Student Chapter Posters 8:00 – 10:00 PM

Tuesday, March 15

Realities of the Chemical Industry: Career Paths and Opportunities 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM

Chemistry and the Environment Film Series 12:00 NOON – 2:00 PM

ACS & YOU

ACS Programs and Services for Student Chapters

BY ACS STAFF

t the start of the 2015–2016 academic year, there were more than 1000 ACS chartered student chapters and nearly 20,000 undergraduate members of the ACS. While most ACS chapters are located in the United States, including Puerto Rico, the number of international chapters is steadily growing — with chapters representing 20 countries around the world. To help foster the success of all chapters, ACS offers a wide range of programs and services through the ACS Undergraduate Programs (UP) Office.



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Grants for student chapters — The UP Office offers grants to fund new activities, interaction among student chapters, community interaction, and travel to ACS national meetings. The chapter grants not only help fund many worthy chapter activities; they also provide practical experience to the chapter members who take part in the

application process. Preparing grant proposals, submitting mid-year and follow-up reports, and summarizing how grant monies were spent are just a few examples of the types of skills and knowledge that students can carry over to their professional careers.

To apply for a New Activities Grant, Chapter Inter-Relations Grant, or Community Interaction Grant, members of a chapter are required to submit a detailed proposal outlining the project and how it will benefit their chapter and/or community. The grants are reviewed by faculty advisors according to ACS guidelines, and grants are awarded based on proposal content. All chapters receive feedback about their proposals, as well as tips for improving future proposal submissions.

inChemistry magazine — Since you're reading this article, you've already encountered *inChemistry* magazine, which is published four times each year. It is available online and as a free app through your app

store. As with other UP Office chapter resources, the magazine is a resource to help your student chapter succeed and thrive. In addition to features on careers, graduate school, and other student concerns, *inChemistry* contains a wealth of information for chapters, particularly encouraging them to take an active role in their communities. Each issue features chapter spotlights and articles on outstanding student chapter activities. These articles are contributed by professional chemists and freelance writers ... along with student authors like you! If your chapter would like to submit article ideas or high-resolution photos, e-mail the UP Office.



Social media engagement –

The UP Office maintains a vigorous online presence on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Reddit to inform and support the online community of stu-

dent chapters. We also publish the Reactions blog, where undergraduates can blog about a variety of topics, including student chapter activities. If you are interested in writing a Reactions blog post about chapter activities, your research, or a popular chemistry topic, e-mail the UP Office for more information.



National meeting programming —

The Society Committee on Education (SOCED) Undergraduate Programs Advisory Board and other units within ACS plan sessions, develop workshops, and organize social events for students and

chapters at every ACS spring national meeting. Events typically include a Chem Demo Exchange, an Eminent Scientist Lecture, a Student Chapter Awards Ceremony, an Undergraduate Social, and a How to Be a Successful ACS Student Chapter workshop, among others.



Regional meeting programming –

The UP Office provides regional meeting programming grants to help active student chapters plan and host

undergraduate programs at their respective regional meetings. These programs can include workshops and symposia that focus on career-building opportunities at a local level. Student members not only gain useful skills from the proposal writing and peer-review processes, but also learn about planning a technical meeting. Working with the steering committee of their respective region, chapter

You Can Start or Reactivate an ACS Student Chapter

HERE'S WHAT TO DO!

To start a new ACS student chapter

- 1. Identify at least six student members of the ACS at your school. (Contact the UP Office; we may be able to help!)
- 2. Identify a faculty member who will volunteer to serve as the chapter faculty advisor.
- 3. Complete a charter application form.
- 4. Compose a set of proposed bylaws. Bylaws set the basis for your chapter's mission.
- 5. Email your application and bylaws to undergrad@acs.org or mail them to ACS Undergraduate Programs Office, 1155 Sixteenth Street, NW, Washington DC 20036.

To reactivate an ACS student chapter

- **1**. Identify at least six ACS student members at your school. (Contact the UP Office for assistance.)
- 2. Complete a reactivation application form (www.acs.org/studentchapters).
- 3. E-mail the form to **undergrad@acs.org** or mail it to the ACS Undergraduate Programs Office, 1155 Sixteenth Street, NW, Washington DC 20036.

members plan a program that will be informative and educational for the students in their local area.

At the same time, students who attend undergraduate programs at regional meetings can meet and network with ACS local section officers and other ACS members. These professional chemists can become valuable resources and sounding boards for exploring the chemistry discipline, thinking about graduate school, or finding the right job.



Student Chapters Online — This resource provides a wealth of chapter activity ideas, a calendar of upcoming events and deadlines, and links to ACS resources that are especially useful to student chapters. The site provides a central location for chapters to store and access chapter information; it also helps chapters to better manage and track their

Access ACS Programs and Services for Student Chapters

- ACS student chapters webpage: www.acs.org/studentchapters
- Email: undergrad@acs.org
- Grants: www.acs.org/studentchapters
- *inChemistry* magazine: **www.acs.org/inchemistry**
- Social media:
 - Facebook ACS Undergrad Programs
 - Instagram @acsundergrad
 - Reddit acsundergrad
 - Reactions blog www.acs.org/undergradblog
 - Twitter @ACSUndergrad
- Student Chapters Online: www.studentchaptersonline.acs.org
- Undergraduate Programs Office: undergrad@acs.org or 800-227-5558, ext. 4480

day-to-day operations. This tool is also used to report chapter activities that will be reviewed by faculty advisors to determine chapter awards. Members can also review their award level and access reviewer feedback.



National recognition — The ACS student chapter recognition program is run by the UP Office. Annually in May, student chapters submit their annual reports using Stu-

dent Chapters Online. A panel of student chapter faculty advisors reviews the reports and assigns award levels based on chapter performance. At each ACS spring national meeting, the UP Office and SOCED recognize these student chapters for their exceptional service and activities at the annual Student Chapter Awards Ceremony. ACS has held this annual ceremony since 1992 to thank and encourage student chapters as they continue to promote chemistry in their local communities. **IC**

To learn more about the full spectrum of services the ACS Undergraduate Programs Office provides, go to www.acs.org/undergrad. If you have any questions about any of these programs, please e-mail us at undergrad@acs.org.

FEATURE

Pow! Zzzzzappp! Buh-zinnng!

How I Came to Write and Publish a Comic Book about Chemistry

BY VERONICA BERNS

Arlier this year, I raised more than \$14,000 through a Kickstarter campaign to publish *Atomic Size Matters*, my doctoral thesis in chemistry presented as a fully illustrated comic book. News of this campaign was picked up by many newspapers, including the *New York Times, Washington Post*, and *Chicago Tribune*, as well as in *Mental Floss* and other magazines, and a multitude of websites.

How did this adventure begin? As a chemistry student, you can probably relate to this scenario. I had often tried to talk about my work with non-scientist family and friends, but ended up losing them at square one. Sometimes I was more successful at keeping my listeners' interest, but they were still so far removed from the research I was doing that I wasn't satisfied. Surely I could find a middle ground that pleased both my audience and myself.

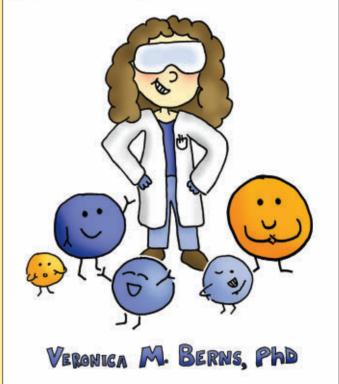
Eventually, I reached for a pen and paper to try to explain some of my work in layman's terms. Orbitals? They sometimes look like dumbbells and four-leaf clovers. A mechanism? It's an atomic square dance. Crystal structure? That's a 3-D wallpaper pattern on the atomic scale. Some analogies of this sort can be sillier than others, but they each hold a kernel of truth because chemistry is so inherently visual. After classes upon classes, we chemists can take for granted our ability to automatically translate the chemical structures we envision into words. To those outside of the field, our shorthand nomenclature doesn't evoke the beautiful pictures that you and I can see when we say " d_z^2 orbital" and "S_N2 mechanism".

I ultimately settled on a comic book format to pair pictures closely with story. And then I began to write.

I knew I was going to be a scientist when I was a little kid. I got such joy from watching Bill Nye mix home chemicals, and by the time I was done with elementary school, I had been on every "Magic School Bus" field trip. Through middle and high school, I selected chemistry as my subject of choice, and then I went to a college with a strong program, where I began synthesizing new compounds in solid-state reactions.

Choosing a graduate school was an easy decision. After applying to several schools, I was lucky enough to have a few options, but I knew exactly what I wanted to do when I read about Professor Danny Fredrickson's investigations into the complex CHEMICAL PRESSURE AND ITS APPLICATIONS TO THE TSAI-TYPE QUASICRYSTAL, OR ...



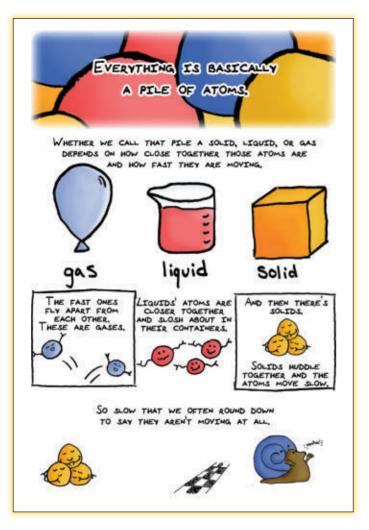


crystal structures of intermetallic compounds at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. His work looks at crystal structures in a new way, interpreting complexity as an alternative to simpler patterns. I was firmly set on studying this fascinating relationship for my five years in grad school.

During those five years, like any grad student, I was immersed in the research. I learned everything I could about the patterns in the family of compounds known as intermetallics. In the summer of 2013, my time left in grad school became finite. My advisor and I met to plan for graduation and to count out the paperworthy ideas that would become the constituent chapters of my thesis. Suddenly the whole world of research that I had explored, discovered, and built had limits. My upcoming graduation day was a way of celebrating my accomplishments, but I was concerned that this beautiful world I knew so well would disappear from my daily life and, worse yet, remain abstract and inaccessible to those around me.

Finding the right balance

I struggled to find the middle ground between readability and precision for a long time. It was important to me to convey accurate and honest information without talking down to the audience, or boring them. In Madison, I was very lucky to be surrounded by talented communicators who fell everywhere on the spectrum of scientist to non-scientist. (The spectrum's end points



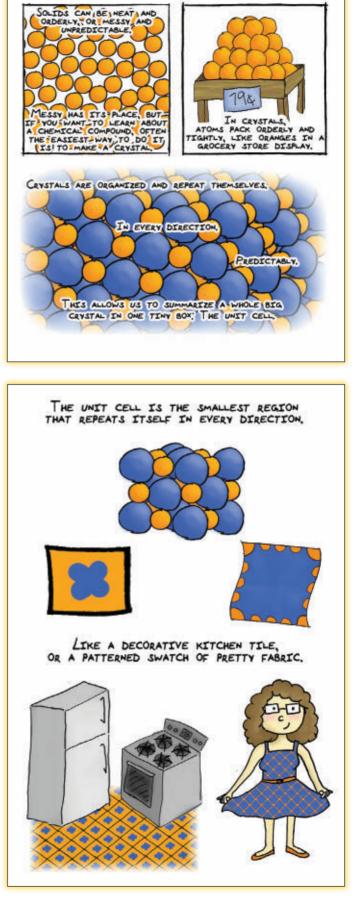
were a labmate working on the very same project and a musician/political scientist of many talents.) I got as much feedback as possible along the way: make this clearer, add some more detail there, and a metaphor would be helpful here.

Fine-tuning the language enabled my comic book to satisfy the expectations and needs of the reader without compromising the detail and truth of the science. I was finding my middle ground.

After I was satisfied with a script, the pictures came easily and I got to have a bit of fun with it. I included a lot of visual jokes and salutes to a favorite podcast and video game to break up the intensely abstract stuff and keep the audience's attention. After all, I knew first-hand that uninterrupted focus on the topic was difficult to maintain.

I worked religiously on the comic in Madison's coffee shops on the weekends, scribbling notes while nibbling on scones. Though the subject matter was exactly the same, it was a welcome break from writing the chapters of my dissertation. Scripting the comic book forced me to find the most important thread of information within all of the often-messy details of the science and strengthened my academic communications as well.

Making the comic book also changed the way I think about doing the chemistry itself. When planning experiments or calculations, I am constantly considering how each test will fit into our overall picture.



FEATURE Pow! Zzzzappp! Buh-zinnng! continued

These benefits alone are a great reason for students and scientists everywhere to begin communicating outside of their field. Comics are my second language, but yours might be music, video, or creative writing. It's the process that matters, finding the most important thread of the work and translating academic jargon which is certainly handy when speaking with peers! — into a different language that the general public can understand.

The final benefit of my work on the comic book was the unexpectedly kind outpouring of support during my Kickstarter campaign. I did a crowdfunding drive to introduce the comic

book to the world, and over 500 people funded the first printing in exchange for one of the first copies. The messages and e-mails from fans were moving; many backers are parents who want to read the book with their STEM-inclined daughter, and some are children of engineers who never really could talk with Mom about what she does all day. I'm thrilled that the comic is becoming a way to start a conversation between people who already want to talk about science but don't know how to start. In addition, during the 2015–2016 academic year, each issue of *inChem*istry magazine is featuring "Mind Over Matter", a cartoon I've

drawn exclusively for the magazine.

The big picture

Ultimately, Atomic Size Matters emphasizes the joy of doing science for discovery's sake. My graduate studies aren't going to build any high-capacity cell phone batteries, or much-needed solar panels. Even so, I get excited about fundamental science because it opens the door to these possibilities and more future technologies that haven't been imagined yet.

Over the past five years, I've learned that uncovering new truths about the universe is its own reward. As chemists, we already know the value of doing great science, but we have a long way to go to get the public as excited about chemistry as we are. 🕻



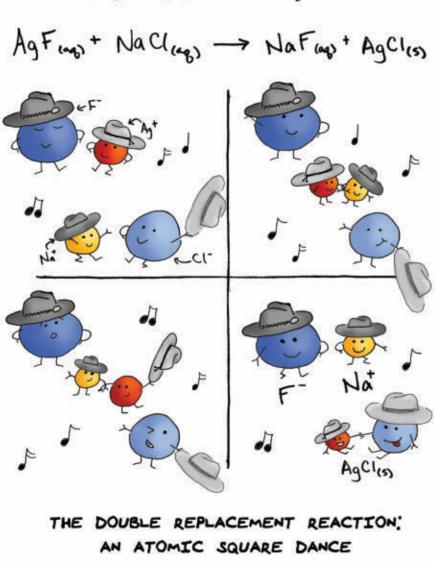
Veronica Berns earned her Ph.D. at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2014, and now works as an engineer/R&D scientist

at Honeywell UOP. When she's not in the lab, she's drawing comics that connect non-scientists to current topics in chemistry.

The double replacement reaction one of the classic types of chemical reactions — involves combining two ionic compounds in solution. The aqueous ions float around like atoms promenading at a square dance. Eventually, the two cations do-si-do and replace one another, making a solid, insoluble salt in the process. In this case, we see silver chloride solid "bow out" of solution, too insoluble and pooped to keep dancing in aqueous solution.



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MIND OVER MATTER

Veronica M. Berns, PhD

CAREERS

13

Navigating the Twists and Turns of Chemistry Careers

Brownian Career Paths

BY BLAKE ARONSON

n one level, careers in chemistry seem linear: study chemistry up to a certain degree level, get a job in your chosen field, and you're set. ACS and National Science Foundation employment surveys (see sidebar on page 15) generally show lower unemployment rates and higher salaries for chemists, compared with other professions. But this seeming stability does not take into account the twists and turns that individual lives take.

Your interests may evolve. The job market may fluctuate. A change in your personal life might throw your career for a loop (or vice versa). According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, more than half of people working in the life, physical, and social science fields have been with their current employer less than five years.

In physical chemistry, the term "Brownian motion" refers to the random motion of particles in a gas or liquid that is caused by colliding into each other. Similarly, some people find that their personal and professional lives collide in a Brownian fashion.

But a Brownian career path is not necessarily a bad thing. Read on to learn more about how chemists have successfully navigated the twists and turns of their lives and careers in the real world.

I definitely want this career... no, wait...

Many undergraduate chemistry majors eventually become chemistry graduate students who pursue research careers. Since chemistry is an experimental science, it is easy to go along with research for a long time before you realize it is not your passion.

This was the case for Frankie Wood-Black, who began her research career at then-Conoco, studying the thermal degradation of polymers. Her research involved a lot of water analysis, and she was asked to support efforts to make the research center a zero-wastewater facility.

Wood-Black never returned to the bench. Instead, she started working with the refineries, implementing

environmental regulatory programs and supervising the cleanup of orphan (or unused) sites. Ultimately, she realized that, while she was a competent bench chemist, she had a real passion and talent for develop-

ing research ideas and identifying potential business applications. So she took positions that enabled her to learn and grow on the business side of the company, morph-

ing her career into one of application development outside of the lab.

It took Aron Pollard three tries to find his true passion. As an undergraduate, Pollard didn't know what he wanted to do until he stumbled upon a chemistry class. Inspired, he enrolled in the chemical technology program, a two-year program that prepared him for a career as a laboratory technician. Upon graduation, he became a quality control technician at Pilot Chemical Company.

However, Pollard soon found benchwork repetitive. He continued to take classes part-time at Miami University (Oxford, OH), earning his B.A. in chemistry four years later. The extra degree enabled him to pursue a job at his company's corporate office writing safety data sheets. He was later promoted to product safety specialist and is now responsible for all product safety issues and regulatory compliance. 1

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"View jobs as opportunities to develop

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While Pollard still enjoys chemistry, he finds a more satisfying challenge in integrating the bench chemistry that he had been doing with ever-evolving state and federal regulations. Indeed, Pollard is adding international regulatory compliance to his skill set and enjoying the expanded responsibilities that come with it.

My degree means I'll have this career ... but ...

Typically, to get a tenure-track position at a university, you need a doctoral degree. However, when Janet Gray Coonce graduated from her combined bachelor's/master's degree program at Oxford College of Emory University (GA), she was promptly invited to become a full instructor at the college. What started as a one-year temporary position turned into a seven-year career, based on the strength of her teaching.

In fact, Coonce's teaching skills were so strong that Tennessee Technological University (Cookeville) created a teaching position for her. Coonce still needed to compete for the job, but she was selected over other candidates with doctoral degrees. Now, she is one of the few tenure-track faculty members at a four-year institution with a master's degree.

Amanda Stewart also works in academia, even though she graduated from a chemistry-based technology program that prepared her for a career in industry. As a student, Stewart enjoyed her on-campus lab assistant job so much that upon graduation she took a chemical technician job at the University of Dayton Research Institute (OH). When the organization's safety coordinator left, those duties became 50% of her position.

Later, Stewart learned that Miami University–Middletown (OH) was hiring a laboratory coordinator. Having worked there as a student, she knew she liked the environment, and applied for the position. She has been working there ever since.

Career changes happen for a number of reasons, some of which are not under your control. Jack Lee Hayes's interest in science took him from high school to the U.S. Navy's nuclear power program. After the Navy, he worked in industrial waste remediation for nine years, until corporate restructuring resulted in layoffs.

Customer interactions at his remediation job had convinced Hayes of the need for better science education in the general public. Intending to become a high school teacher, Hayes decided to earn a chemistry degree. In college and graduate school, he took a number of part-time jobs. One of these was an adjunct position at a local community college, where he discovered that he really enjoyed teaching nontraditional students. Upon completing his master's degree, he landed his current teaching position at State Fair Community College (Sedalia, MO).

Well, at least my personal life is sorted out ... uh ...

Sometimes it's your personal life that disrupts your career path. When a planned break between high school and college turned into marriage and a family, Angela French's forensics aspirations were temporarily put on hold. French enrolled in a chemical technology program, which enabled her to complete the first two years of a baccalaureate program quickly, get a good-paying job, and acquire the necessary background for a forensics career.

Through her former classmates, French learned of an opportunity at Pilot Chemical. Over time, French grew her skills in quality assurance and management. By taking advantage of new opportuni-FORENSICS ties as they arose, French applied for and was hired for a job at Pilot. Her responsibilities now include new business opportunities, product line extensions, implementation of statistical process control, management of specifications, internal auditing, and serving as corporate quality representative to support Pilot's manufacturing facilities.

new skills, rather than just a paycheck."

OK, so now what?

So how can you possibly manage a career when everything — your company, your personal life, and even your interests — are in a constant state of flux? Here are seven tips:

- 1. Start by taking advantage of a variety of opportunities in college. For example, Pollard took several courses in college before stumbling upon chemistry as a career path. Elective courses can help you discover other passions, such as writing or business, and give you an edge if you need to make career changes later on. Internships can give you a chance to test different work environments to find your best fit.
- 2. Learn to accept that a number of factors will be out of your control. The weekend after Wood-Black defended her physics dissertation, the *Exxon Valdez* struck Prince William Sound's Bligh Reef, spilling 11–38 million gallons of crude oil into the Gulf of Alaska and nearby beaches. The spill forced many companies to reexamine their environmental practices, opening up a swath of opportunities that comprised a large portion of Wood-Black's career.
- **3.** Career tracks do not need to be permanent, even in academia. Wood-Black, who started her career as a Ph.D. researcher, became an executive, then a consultant, and is now a college professor. She says she hears about people struggling to find tenure-track positions on the coasts, but her small Midwestern university has plenty of openings. She advises aspiring professors to earn tenure anywhere they can before trying for their ideal university. That way, she says, "You're still searching for a job, but you're doing it as a tenured professor, which is very different."
- 4. View jobs as opportunities to develop new skills, rather than just a paycheck. Wood-Black took positions in finance and patents to grow her business expertise, for example, while French has pursued a variety of positions that helped her move from technician to management.
- 5. In some cases, you may need to go back to school. Although Pollard entered the workforce with an associate's degree, he continued to take classes part-time. The bachelor's degree he earned enabled him to move from the bench to the safety career that he currently enjoys. Wood-Black earned her M.B.A. in order to pursue opportunities on the business side of Conoco. For Hayes, earning new degrees enabled him to completely change his career. All agree that going to school while working was hard — but for them, the payoff was worth the effort.
- 6. Maintaining an active network throughout your career makes a difference. Tips from former classmates led both Pollard and French to their current positions. The adjunct

position that inspired Hayes to work at a two-year college came about because a colleague and some of his former students recommended him.

7. Finally, always do your best. Wood-Black's reputation for hard work and dedication gave her enough credibility to explore positions outside of her initial skill set. Coonce's teaching skills — including the willingness and ability to teach topics she herself had struggled with — prompted her current employers to create a teaching position just for her.

On paper, chemistry careers can seem far more stable than careers in other fields. In reality, changes in the workforce, in your interests, and in your life can make your career path seem positively Brownian. However, by following your passions and opportunities, you will not only survive, but thrive amid the changes. **C**



Blake Aronson is a Senior Education Associate in the ACS Undergraduate Programs Office, supporting two-year college activities. She has a Ph.D. in inorganic chemistry and experience in industry, education, and the nonprofit sectors.

Gauging the Employment Landscape: Three Resources

"2014 Salaries & Employment." S.L. Rovner. *Chemical & Engineering News*, September 1, 2014; pp 68-71.

Women, Minorities, and Persons with Disabilities in Science and Engineering: 2015 (Special Report NSF 15-311). NSF, National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics. Available at www.nsf.gov/statistics/wmpd/.

Employee Tenure Summary; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, released September 18, 2014. www.bls.gov/news.release/tenure.nr0.htm.

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CHAPTERS

SPOTLIGHT **City Colleges of Chicago Wilbur Wright College** Chicago, IL

COMPILED BY ROBIN LINDSEY



Chapter presidents: Matthew Miller and Rachel Weaver Chapter members: 76 ACS student members: 26 Institution description: Large, public, urban, minority-serving, 2-year

Q: How do you ensure a smooth officer transition from year to year?

A: We elect a new set of officers for the new academic year in March of the previous year. The new officers shadow the existing officers for a smooth transition.

Q: Do you have any unique positions? If so, what kinds of specialty positions are those?

A: In addition to our executive board, we have a team of five directors, including an education director, who is responsible for tutoring and for our members' professional development, and a community service director, who oversees community service activities. In addition, our membership director keeps track of members and recruitment, the activities director is responsible for planning any other activities, and the public relations director promotes our chapter activities, runs our social media, and keeps our website up to date.

Q: How did you celebrate National Chemistry Week and Chemists Celebrate Earth Day?

A: Our National Chemistry Week activities vary depending on the theme. Last year, we celebrated the Sweet Side of Chemistry by

giving presentations on the benefits of chocolate, selling chocolates, providing chemistry demonstrations to the public, and hosting a quiz show.

For Earth Day, we partnered with student government and the Environmental Club. We taught the audience how to make green soap and we also made posters on chemical weapons to mark the 100th anniversary of the use of chemical weapons.

- **Q:** In what ways does your chapter give back to the community?
- **A:** We do chemical demonstrations and classroom visits at local high schools and grade schools, and we design and run Science Olympiad events. Our members work with more than 1000 K–12 students at Back-to School nights and "You Be the Chemist" events. We also reached more than 2000 people by volunteering with our ACS local section at Higher Education Day during the Illinois State Fair.

Q: What local ACS student chapters have you collaborated with?

- A: We send students to Illinois State University to compete in the Battle of the Chem Clubs, in cooperation with the ACS Heartland Local Section. Our students also attend events sponsored by the ACS Chicago Local Section.
- **Q:** What innovative methods of communication are used to inform chapter members of chapter activities?
- **A**: In addition to using word of mouth, we rely on social media and we also send text and e-mail messages to our members.



The City Colleges of Chicago Wilbur Wright College chapter earned an Outstanding award for the 2014–2015 academic year.

- **Q:** What is your most successful fundraiser to date?
- **A:** We sell safety glasses to laboratory students for a cheap price.
- **Q:** Is there anything else you want the readers of *inChemistry* to know about your chapter?
- A: We are vibrant, and our members build community and long-lasting friendships in addition to a love of chemistry. ℃

Faculty advisor:

Doris Espiritu, 4 years

Q: How did you become a faculty advisor?

Espiritu: Together with one student, we founded ACS-Wright College Student Chapter through the ACS Starter Grant.

Q: What challenges have you faced in your position?

Espiritu: We have a fast turnover of members, but the college is very supportive of our activities.

Q: What has been the most rewarding aspect of your service as a faculty advisor?

Espiritu: Seeing students grow their love of chemistry and build a community among themselves. It is also very rewarding when ACS-WCSC alumni come back and credit ACS-WCSC for their success when they transfer to a four-year college.

Q: What advice can you offer those new to the advisor position?

Espiritu: Passion is contagious. When students see that you are passionate about their success, they develop that passion to be successful and to give back.

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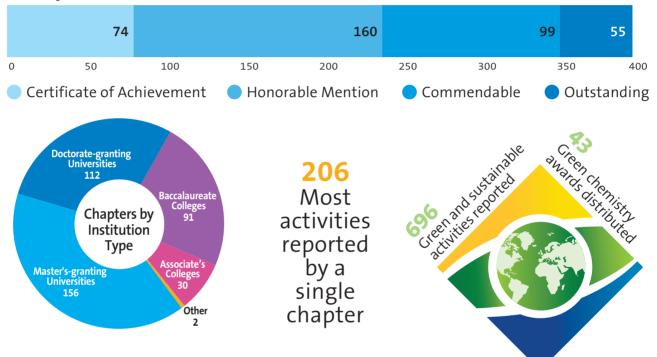
CHAPTERS

Student Chapter Award Profile 2015

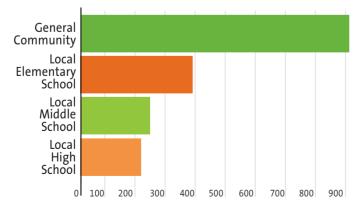
In 2015, 419 ACS student chapters submitted annual reports for award review, the most in submission history! Learn more about some of the award winners.

Chapter Awards





Total Reported Chapter Events, by audience and type



2338 Professional Development Hosting speakers, field trips, etc.

Chapter Development **3664** Social activities, business meeting, etc.

3323 Service Demonstrations, lab tours, etc.

538 Total local section collaborative activities reported

CHAPTERS

SPECIAL RECOGNITION FOR 2014–2015 ACS STUDENT CHAPTER PROGRAMS

he ACS Society Committee on Education has selected the following student chapters to receive special recognition for the programs and activities described in their 2014–2015 annual reports. They will be honored at the 251st ACS National Meeting in San Diego, CA, on Sunday, March 13, 2016.

Chemistry Institute (GCI) chemistry principles and practices is so essential to integrating environmentally benign technologies in academia and industry, the ACS GCI has recognized 43 student chapters that have engaged in at least three GCI activities during the 2014–2015 academic year.

We congratulate 55 Outstanding, 99 Commendable, and 160 Honorable Mention award-winning student chapters.

In addition, because student involvement in applying Green



City Colleges of Chicago Wilbur Wright College, IL Doris Joy Espiritu Matthew Miller & Bryan Espiritu

Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, PA Jeffrey Evanseck & Ellen Gawalt Sarah Kochanek & Benjamin Jagger Georgia College & State University, Milledgeville Catrena Lisse Kelly Taylor & Jessica Minnick

Heidelberg University, Tiffin, OH Nathaniel Beres Lily White & Claire Chandler Pasadena City College, CA Veronica Jaramillo & Peter Castro Kar Wing, Kevin Tsang, & Patrick Donabedian

Pima Community College, Tucson, AZ Lonnie Burke & Pedro Flores Gallardo Jasper Bloodsworth & Christopher Marshall Saginaw Valley State University, University Center, MI Jennifer Chaytor & Adam Warhausen Erin Campau

Saint Louis University, MO Brent Znosko Nicholas Schlarman & Daniel Sepe

Saint Michael's College, Colchester, VT David Heroux Chris Ricciardi & Zachary Minior

Salt Lake Community College, UT Ron Valcarce Sarah Christensen & Jessica Van Wagoner

Santa Monica College, CA Jennifer Hsieh Eugene Kim & Benjamin Shao

South Texas College, McAllen Ludivina Avila & Joe Studer Reymundo Gonzalez & Amber Michalk

Southern Illinois University Edwardsville Sarah Luesse Micheal Ontl & Abby Cox

Southwest Minnesota State University, Marshall Noelle Beyer & Frank Schindler Seifemichael Kenea & Megan Bruns

St. John's University, Jamaica, NY Neil Jespersen Megan Schoenberger

Tennessee Technological University, Cookeville Daniel Swartling & Amanda Crook Kelsey Richards & Marian Butner

Texas Christian University, Fort Worth Kayla Green & Benjamin Janesko Caleb Ashbrook & Prabhesh Patel

The College of New Jersey, Ewing Benny Chan & Abby O'Connor Taylor Maney & Susan Knox **The Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico, Ponce** Lizette Santos & Carmen Collazo *Kessia Hernandez & Carlos Echevarria Maldonado*

Truman State University, Kirksville, MO Timothy Humphry & Barbara Kramer *Eli Riekeberg & Leela Chapman*

Union University, Jackson, TN Randy Johnston & Joshua Williams Phillip Kurtzweil & Evan Lewoczko

University of Alabama at Birmingham Jacqueline Nikles & Gary Gray Calla McCulley & Brandi Hendrix

University of Central Florida, Orlando Stephen Kuebler Morgan Beebe & Bailey Mourant

University of Detroit Mercy, MI Matthew Mio & Kendra Evans Theresa Dierker & Grace Nauyen

University of Houston, TX Simon Bott Seung Hong & Thien Ngo

University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, Belton, TX Lin Gao & Joy Beckendorf David McKinzey

University of Mary Washington, Fredericksburg, VA Leanna Giancarlo Brooke Andrews & Anisa Kaur

University of Pittsburgh, PA George Bandik James McKay & Joshua Casto

University of Puerto Rico at Cayey Edgardo Rivera Tirado Angelica Gonzalez-Sanchez & Jeralyne Padilla University of Puerto Rico-Aguadilla Brenda Ramos-Santana & Carlos Ruiz-Martinez Deborah Morales-Rosa

University of Puerto Rico-Mayagüez Campus Jessica Torres Candelaria Hector Quinones Rosaly & Michael Lu Diaz

University of Puerto Rico-Rió Piedras Campus Ingrid Montes Raul Martinez-Quinones & Wilfredo Pediera Garcia

University of Tennessee at Martin S.K. Airee Layla Gargus & Drake Williams

University of Texas at Tyler Laura Boyd & Jason Smee Patrick Martin & Brian Western

Wayne State University, Detroit, MI Mary Pflum & Matthew Allen Nathaniel Hardin & Adrianna Breckenridge

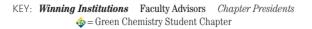
Waynesburg University, PA Evonne Baldauff & Robert La Count Grant Strouse & Cara Petrone

West Virginia State University, Institute Micheal Fultz & Thomas Guetzloff Brandi Bricker & Amanda Smith

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Xavier University of Louisiana, New Orleans Michael Adams & Candace Lawrence Lydia Mensah & Clarence Pace





Adams State University, Alamosa, CO Renee Beeton & Aaron Moehlig Danielle Karlin & Christian Nenninger

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Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green Jeremy Maddox Corbin LeMieux & John Ferguson

Wichita State University, KS Douglas English Rebecca Taylor & Sarah Jack

Youngstown State University, OH Michael Serra Phillip Boran & Jennifer Moore

2015–2016 Community Interaction Grants (CIG)

KEY: Chapters Faculty Advisors Student Project Directors Project Title Amount

For the 2015–2016 academic year, the ACS Society Committee on Education has selected the following 15 CIG proposals to receive funding. The ACS Undergraduate Programs Office is pleased to announce the grant recipients.

Barry University, Miami Shores, FL George Fisher • Victoria Hoelscher Science Outreach to Minority-Serving Elementary and Middle Schools \$500

East Los Angeles College, Monterey Park, CA Armando Rivera-Figueroa • Marco Antonio Lopez & Hever Castellanos Organic Chemistry Through Smells \$500 Emory University, Atlanta, GA Douglas Mulford • Jieming Fu & Shruti Gupta ChEmory Cares: Kids Outreach at Grady Hospital \$350

Los Angeles Trade-Technical College, CA Renee Madyun • Christian Green, Monica Sanchez, & Joanne Javillonar Outreach & Awareness \$500

Pace University, New York, NY Jaimelee Rizzo • Kenya Velez Experience Chemistry Day \$350

Plymouth State University, NH Anil Waghe • Albert Lamonda Chemistry in Art \$275

Presbyterian College, Clinton, SC Evelyn Swain • Anna MacGregor Science Outreach at Local Head Start \$300 Stern College for Women-Yeshiva University, New York, NY Donald Estes • *Leah Zerbib Chemistry and Cosmetics* \$500

Tennessee Technological University, Cookeville Janet Gray Coonce • Kelsey Richards Fusion Science Theater \$500

Texas Christian University, Fort Worth Kayla Green • Caleb Ashbrook Partnership with Burton Hill Elementary School \$500

University of Alabama at Birmingham Jacqueline Nikles • Nicholas Boyle, Marina Triplett, & Calla McCulley Chemistry with Children: Bringing Science to Children in Need \$500 University of Puerto Rico-Mayagüez Campus Jessica Torres Candelaria • Jorge Morales & Hector Quinones Rosaly Chem Demo Packages

West Virginia State University, Institute Micheal Fultz • Aaron Smith & Amanda Smith Hygiene and Health Effects \$200

\$500

Western Washington University, Bellingham Elizabeth Raymond • Tess Clinkingbeard Collaborative Outreach Through Interactive Science Shows \$500

Xavier University of Louisiana, New Orleans Michael Adams • Veronica Miles Wow Chemistry Wednesdays \$200

2015–2016 New Activities Grants (NAG)

KEY: Chapters Faculty Advisors Student Project Directors Project Title Amount

For the 2015–2016 academic year, the ACS Society Committee on Education has selected the following 11 NAG proposals to receive funding. The ACS Undergraduate Programs Office is pleased to announce the grant recipients.

Emory University, Atlanta, GA Douglas Mulford • Jieming Fu & Shruti Gupta Bringing Color to Life \$125

Heidelberg University, Tiffin, OH Nathaniel Beres • Claire Chandler Junior High School Science Day Camp \$500 Los Angeles Trade-Technical College, CA Renee Madyun • Christian Green, Monica Sanchez, & Joanne Javillonar Outreach & Awareness \$500

Miami University, Oxford, OH David Tierney • Brant Center & Claudia Worley Chemistry as a Future Career

\$250

South Dakota School of Mines and Technology, Rapid City Justin Meyer • Zachery Crandall & Tyler Ryther Fostering an Interest in Chemistry through Industry Field Trips \$500 Suffolk University, Boston, MA Edith Enyedy • Janice Bautista Chemistry of Smell and Taste \$280

Tennessee Technological University, Cookeville Janet Gray Coonce • *Kelsey Richards Girl Scouts: Let's Earn a Science Badge Together* \$500

University of Alabama at Birmingham Jacqueline Nikles • Nicholas Boyle, Marina Triplett, & Calla McCulley Boo at the Zoo \$500

University of Central Florida, Orlando

Stephen Keubler • Lauren Gandy & Bailey Mourant Bonding with Bithlo \$500

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Joaquin Rodriguez-Lopez • Shannon Miller Bridging the Gap: College-Level Thinking in High School ChemClubs \$500

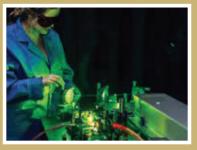
University of Wyoming, Laramie

Elliot Hulley • Rachael Winden & Jonathan Kephart Development of Energy-Related Demonstrations for Earth Day 2016 \$500

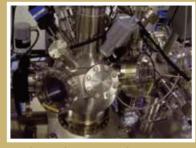
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