

COMMUNICATIONS

Dear Alumni and Friends,

Greetings from the Chemistry Department! I am happy to share some of the latest news and accomplishments for the Department, our students and faculty. This is my last newsletter as Departmental Chair, and I am optimistic about and grateful for what we have been able to accomplish together. We are brimming with new and accomplished faculty, staff, and students with fresh ideas, experiences, and perspectives, who are moving our unit forward in all sorts of ways. The past 3 years has seen record-breaking graduate student recruitments as well as unprecedented levels of tenure-track faculty hires in the double-digits including 2 new Endowed Professorships in cheminformatics and molecular inorganic chemistry. We came out of a horrible flood stronger than ever. Our building, while imperfect, has had a lot of work put into it whether it be upgrading the audiovisual capabilities of the seminar rooms, fixing up the graduate student lounge, installing ADA parking spaces, redoing hallway floors throughout the Building, or rehabbing student and faculty offices on the 7th floor.

I have primarily focused on the big picture, on securing resources for the whole Department in strong support of our educational and research missions through constructive and positive partnerships with the President's office, the Provost's office, CAS, the Graduate School, CELT, CPDC, the Office of Research and Innovation, just to name a few. We are a dynamic, exciting, respected, and visible Department which is considered to be an integral and important piece of this campus. We are involved with and are a part of every major program spanning diverse sets of activities from the campus-wide quantum information initiatives to the CAS Arts Everywhere project to annual races with the Physics & Astronomy Department. I wish to acknowledge and thank everyone for your hard work, time, and effort towards making all of this a reality. I am glad to have had the opportunity to have served the entire Departmental community. After all, the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few or the one. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Stanislaus S. Wong
Distinguished Professor & Chair
Department of Chemistry

Student Spotlights:

Alexis Weng (Hsiao group): on her [research being highlighted at the SUNY undergraduate conference!](#)

Thomas Knoll (Levine group): for [being featured](#) in a series on CAS Graduate Spotlights!

COMMUNICATIONS

Bradyn Weaver (Chapman group): 2026 SUNY [GREAT award](#) winner.

Zain Zaldi (Levine group): named a [Paul & Daisy Soros Fellow](#) as well as a [Hertz Fellow](#) for 2026.

Aman Dimri (Jia group) - won the André Mischke prize in the Strangeness in Quark Matter 2026 international conference in high-energy nuclear physics.

Lily Cam (Boon group) – awarded for her poster entitled “*Uncovering NosP's Role in P. aeruginosa Biofilm Dispersal via Pyocyanin Profiling of Functional Residues*” — B.R.I.D.G.E.S. 2026 Stony Brook University's Cross-Departmental Graduate Research Conference.

Jessica Luo (Takeuchi / Marschilok groups) - received the **Best Poster Award** for her work titled “*Operando Insights from the Atomic to the Electrode Scale*” at the Fall 2025 Materials Research Society (MRS) Meeting.

Jiyun Jung (Ojima group) - received a **2026 Chemical Computing Group (CCG) Excellence Award** (Spring meeting) from the Medicinal Chemistry Division of the American Chemical Society (ACS) for her presentation entitled “*Discovery of New FABP5 Inhibitors to Treat Opioid Addiction Through In Silico Screening and Computer-Aided Drug Design (CADD)*”.

Dhiraj Raj (Levine group) and **Sanket Mhaskar** (Hsiao group): On being selected as recipients of the [2026 ACS Graduate Student and Postdoctoral Scholars Recognition Program](#).

Faculty & Staff Spotlights:

In Memoriam –

Prof. [Arnold Wishnia](#) retired years ago, but had been an active and contributing member of the Department for many years. His [research interests](#) centered on “the structure and behavior of a variety of macromolecules and macromolecular systems (proteins, nucleic acids, ribosomes, phospholipid vesicles)” by several techniques including magnetic resonance imaging using laser-polarized ^{129}Xe . In addition, the [Wishnia Award](#) was named after both his wife, Judy, and Arnold for their lifelong dedication to the UUP and its various causes. In the words of a colleague, “those who knew him well will remember not only his professional accomplishments but also his integrity, collegiality, generosity, and steadfast commitment to improving both the university and the lives of those around him”. On behalf of the Chemistry Department, we offer our sincere condolences as well as our thoughts and prayers to Judith and her family on their loss; he will be keenly missed.

It is with deep sorrow that the Chemistry Department recently learned of the passing of Prof. [Stephen Koch](#), emeritus professor. Steve's research passion and curiosity centered on the synthesis and characterization of new types of transition metal compounds, that exhibit interesting structural, spectroscopic,

COMMUNICATIONS

and reactivity properties, of relevance to bioinorganic chemistry. In 2009, he and Dr. Michelle Millar established the Stony Brook Lectureship in Inorganic Chemistry. Steve was also the Undergraduate Program Director for many years. In addition, in 2023, Dr. Koch received the American Chemical Society (ACS) Award for "Distinguished Service in the Advancement of Inorganic Chemistry". Within the past year, Steve spearheaded the creation of an endowed professorship in molecular inorganic chemistry to honor Michelle's legacy. We mourn the loss of a dear friend, a caring colleague, and a friendly, outgoing mentor to so many of us who knew him and who benefited from his profound wisdom and wit. We send our heartfelt condolences to his family, especially his spouse Jane.

Faculty Arrivals & Updates

The Department is thrilled to welcome the arrival of Oliver Gessner and Matthew Hannigan who will begin their duties on September 1st. [Oliver](#), a senior physical chemistry hire, studies interfacial energy and charge transfer dynamics using photoemission and transient absorption spectroscopies in addition to ultrafast electron diffraction, whereas [Matthew](#), an incoming PRODiG+ Fellow, is interested in conducting research on synthesizing and using families of functional conjugated polymers.

We have a number of [Empire Innovation Program \(EIP\)](#) searches at the senior level (Associate / Full Professor) in progress in the areas of Polymer Science and Infectious Diseases. We have also been recently approved for an analogous senior-level EIP search in the area of "Quantum Information Science – molecules to materials".

Faculty Awards & Recognition

Thomas Allison – Promoted to Full Professor, as of September 1st.

Alexander Orlov – Recently selected to become an [AIChE](#) Fellow.

Jeffrey Lipshultz - 2026 Stony Brook Trustees Faculty Award as well as an [National Science Foundation Early Career award](#) for research on titanium-based catalysts.

Quinton Bruch – [National Science Foundation Early CAREER award](#) for research on multi-functionalization strategies.

Simou Sun - [MIRA Award](#) from National Institute of General Medicine Sciences

Jill Alty - [ACS PRF Doctoral New Investigator award](#)!

Sandhya Muralidharan - [CAS Staff Excellence Award](#). After a long and exhaustive search, Sandhya was also chosen to serve as the next Director of Laboratories, replacing April Musano who retired in October 2025.

COMMUNICATIONS

Dale Drueckhammer - [SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching](#)

Amy Marschilok - [SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Scholarship and Creative Activities](#)

Barney Grubbs - Appointed as Executive Editor of [Macromolecules](#).

Christopher Johnson - 2025-2026 Provost's Outstanding Mentor Award.

News Features

Iwao Ojima - Stony Brook NAI chapter was featured for its [2026 Annual Meeting and Induction Ceremony](#).

Anatoly Frenkel (MSCE) and **Daniel Knopf** (SoMAS) - [Landmark DOE GENESIS Mission AI-for-Science GENESIS awards](#).

Ken Dill - [Laufer Center Team Led by Ken Dill Receives \\$1.38M DARPA Award](#)

Iwao Ojima - A novel, [non-opioid pain drug candidate originating from research at SBU](#) secured \$11 million in private investment to advance product development; the drug candidate's compound was discovered and initially developed by Distinguished Professor [Iwao Ojima](#), and [Martin Kaczocha](#), professor in the Department of Anesthesiology

Ping Liu - [Machine Learning Speeds Up Search for Better Catalysts](#)

Benjamin Hsiao - [Stony Brook-Swift labs Expand Partnership to Industrialize Sustainable Cellulose Nanomaterials](#)

Elizabeth Boon & Benjamin Hsiao - [Faculty - student mentorship efforts in the Regeneron STS scholars program](#).

Peter Tonge - [Link between Tumor Metabolism and Drug Efficacy in Cancer Cells May Help Advance Precision Chemotherapy](#)

Highlights of Departmental events for 2026:

3rd Chemistry and Physics & Astronomy 5K Challenge & BBQ:

We ran the third iteration of this [event](#) in May 2026. A very special congratulations to Chemistry undergraduate student, **John Heraghty**, who won the race overall with a record time of 18 minutes and 35 seconds! Moreover, he won first-place accolades in the overall male and male undergraduate student categories. Also, for the first time, female Chemistry graduate students swept the field in their grouping, earning first, second and third places. We thank all of our participants as we came the closest to achieving the all-around winning score, this year.

COMMUNICATIONS

To complement and strengthen these interactions with our colleagues, the Graduate Chemical Society and the Chemistry Department co-hosted a Physics & Astronomy BBQ social event on June 12th.

Arts Everywhere Initiative

The [Arts Everywhere Initiative](#) (AEI) at Stony Brook University was launched by CAS in Spring 2025 to facilitate the widespread display of student art across the campus and ensure that the arts continue to remain vibrant, supported and celebrated. In this context, "Arts Everywhere: The Bonds We Make" was hosted by AEI and the Department of Chemistry. The [exhibition](#) celebrated the debut of the Revelation Gallery, which features works submitted by students from a variety of SBU programs. The exhibit was curated by Madeline Yacovone and fellow Studio Art MFA candidates Danielle Henneborn and Benjamin Truong. We hope you will visit the exhibition the next time you are on campus!

Alumni/donor recognition:

Emeritus Professor [Benjamin Chu](#) has generously donated \$100,000 towards the creation of an endowed scholarship fund for high-achieving and deserving undergraduate students in Chemistry.

We had 2 Departmental graduates recently honored for their noteworthy accomplishments as distinguished alumni in [the 40 under Forty program](#).

- (a) [Melvin Parasram](#) (Healthcare) was a [5-year BS/ MS student](#) with Prof. Iwao Ojima for 2 years. His M.S. thesis was entitled "Synthesis of Next Generation Taxanes and Tumor-Targeting Taxane-Based Drug Conjugates using Linolenic Acid as Tumor-Targeting Module".
- (b) [Yannick Rigg](#) (Science and Engineering) attended the Chemistry Department from Fall 2004 through Fall 2008. After completing his B.Sc. degree in Chemistry, Yannick continued on with his M.Sc. studies, working in the laboratory of Prof. Daniel Knopf at SoMAS on phase transitions of aerosol particles. He published two papers, notably one as single co-author in *J. Phys. Chem. A* and one in *Atmospheric Chemistry and Physics*, the latter as the first author.