

Fall 10-2016

# Chemistry Department Newsletter 2016

Ken Overway  
koverway@bridgewater.edu

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.bridgewater.edu/chemistry\\_department\\_newsletter](https://digitalcommons.bridgewater.edu/chemistry_department_newsletter)

 Part of the [Chemistry Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Overway, Ken, "Chemistry Department Newsletter 2016" (2016). *Chemistry Department Newsletters*. 3.  
[https://digitalcommons.bridgewater.edu/chemistry\\_department\\_newsletter/3](https://digitalcommons.bridgewater.edu/chemistry_department_newsletter/3)

This News Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Department of Chemistry at BC Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Chemistry Department Newsletters by an authorized administrator of BC Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [rlope@bridgewater.edu](mailto:rlope@bridgewater.edu).

Dear Chemistry Alumni,

On behalf of the chemistry department, I send you summer greetings. My colleagues and I are in our summer mode, preparing for the upcoming 2016-2017 academic year. We are expecting healthy enrollments and a few exciting developments for the department and our majors, some of which I'll summarize below.

In our May departmental meeting I reminded my colleagues of the accomplishments of the 2015-2016 year. Dr. Sara (Higgins) Fitzgerald ('03) received tenure and was promoted to the rank of associate professor. Our new stockroom manager, David Morris, graduated from the University of Virginia this summer and has earned his Ph.D. In March, I traveled to San Diego to meet with the American Chemical Society's Committee on Professional Training to discuss my department's accreditation application. I expect to receive a report from them in the next couple of months outlining the next stage in our process to become an ACS accredited department. And finally, we added 6 new alumni to the chemistry family as a result of the May graduation (John Oates, Caleb Quinn, Tory Minnix, Alys Harbarger, Ibrahim AbuNada & Rachel Weaver).

Some of the recent graduates may remember using a gas chromatograph-mass spectrometer (GC-MS) during the course of their studies (purchase in 2007). The instrument died an untimely death and the department was bereft of the instrument for a year. Thanks to the generous support of our alumni we were able to purchase a new instrument, which was installed during the month of April. I've been using it (with Larry White, class of '65) this summer to develop a new experiment for the biochemistry lab where students will be analyzing the fatty acids in extra virgin olive oil (EVOO). You may have read about the rampant fraud in the EVOO market, one mode of which is dilution with canola oil. Our biochemistry students will be looking for it this spring. Larry, our long-serving adjunct, will be proctoring the lab this spring. The biochemistry lab is new for the department because it has been overseen by the biology department for the past 15 years. After finishing a year off of teaching (during which he was awarded the 2016 Distinguished Service Award from the Virginia Section of the ACS!), Larry will be applying his long experience with biochemistry to the department's modern instrumentation. This is one of two major developments as a result of our new biochemistry major. Sara will teach our Biochemistry II course for the first time next year, giving the department a two semester sequence in biochemistry (another requirement for ACS accreditation).

Another new course that the department will host next year is Dr. Ian McNeil's ('08) interterm course titled "CHEM 350: Introduction to Quantum and Statistical Mechanics." He will get to use the flexible format of the interterm to cover these topics in the classroom and lab. Ian will also be teaching PDP 150 for the first time in the fall! For those of you who remember the PDP 150 course, you know how challenging this will be. His course theme is alternative energy production, so I expect it to be popular with the new incoming class who are required to take these themed first-year seminar courses in the fall semester.

Many of you remember Dr. John Martin, our former organic chemistry professor. You might also remember that the room that housed our chemistry library (MCK 335) was named in his honor. In January, it received a technological make-over when the I.T. Center installed an interactive white-board and covered the remaining wall space with chalk and whiteboards. Sara and Ian used it as a classroom this past spring. It will receive the final upgrade this summer when the old desks and chairs are replaced by new furniture (color-coordinated to represent carbon, oxygen, hydrogen and nitrogen atoms like most molecular model sets!) - designed to be moved easily into several different configurations. This style of classroom is sometimes called a "sandbox" because it can be configured for lecture, small group work and discussion modes of teaching. I hope you can make it to campus sometime to play in our new sandbox!

In addition to the equipment and furniture that the department has gained in the past year, Dr. Joe Crockett will be sporting two new (bionic?) knees this fall. After a bilateral knee replacement in June, Joe spent the rest of the summer in recovery. We expect to see him bounding up the stairs in the fall. His classic limp was part of his character, so many of us may not recognize the new, fast moving and nimble senior member of the department.

The chemistry department gave out 5 awards for distinguished work in classes and labs. Our awardees this year were:

- Meghan Morris, who won the First-year Chemistry Award for her high marks in the general chemistry sequence.
- Carleigh Studtmann, who received the John Martin Organic Chemistry Award for her top performance in the organic chemistry sequence.
- Daniel Feivor and Leah Aclin, who shared the Garland Reed Endowed Award for their outstanding performance in the junior year courses.
- Joshua Bollinger, who received the Stuart R. Suter Endowed Scholarship for the second year.
- Caleb Quinn, who received the Senior ACS Award for dedicated work on his senior project (with Joe) titled, "Synthesis of sterically hindered ketones."

Once again, the college will host a reunion on the campus mall during Homecoming weekend (Oct. 22<sup>nd</sup> at 10 a.m.). If you are making plans to attend, look for us under the tent. My colleagues and I enjoy catching up with familiar faces and alumni we have not met yet. Until then, or until you receive next year's letter, I hope the next 12 month brings to you challenges, enrichment and joy.

Sincerely,



Ken Overway  
department chair