

Department of Chemistry Newsletter



May Issue, 2023

Irving K. Barber Faculty of Science, University of British Columbia
Syilx Okanagan Nation Territory

Announcement

Congratulations to:



Dr. Thu-Thuy Dang for her new NSERC *Alliance International Catalyst* grant (\$ 25,000) on initiating collaboration in single-cell omics of plant natural products biosynthesis with Dr. C. Robin Buell's group at the University of Georgia (USA).



Dr. W. Stephen McNeil for winning the 2023 *West Coast Teaching Excellence Award*. In the second year of this BC Teaching & Learning Council's award, Steve is one of the five awardees at colleges and universities across BC and the Yukon.

New members:



Everal David started on May 29th as the Department's new Senior Administrative Assistant. She has experienced similar roles in the Department of Economics, Philosophy & Political Science.

We would like to thank the tremendous assistance from Alana Jordan, Lindsay Odney, and Jennifer Janok in the Dean's Office during the transition time.



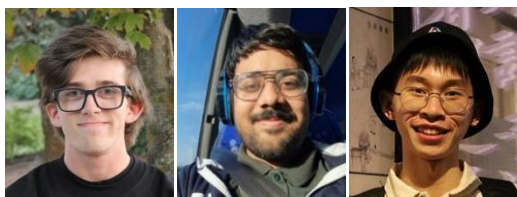
Mahsa Nazemi Ashani started her PhD studies in Dr. Gino DiLabio's group in May. Mahsa recently completed her MSc degree at the University of Alberta.



Amelia Mae Walker (with USRA), **Sophia Vanslyke**, **Simona Mastroiani**, and **Durvan Zandamela** joined Dr. Conor Pranckevicius' group as summer undergraduate research students.



Cassie Mesburis (CHEM448, Work-Study), **Stephanie Busse** (Work-Study), **Advait Risbud** (with *Mitacs*), and **Yanliang Huang** (with *Mitacs*) started their works in Dr. Robert Godin's group for the summer.



Ryan Riopel (with NSERC USRA), **Aryan Gupta** (with *Mitacs Globalink*), and **Shawn Huang** (with *Mitacs Globalink*) have joined Dr. Isaac Li's laboratory.

Recent publications



Teddy Herriman, Robert K. Szilagy (2023). Peptide condensation and hydrolysis mechanisms from a proton-transfer network perspective. *Organic & Biomolecular Chemistry*. DOI: 10.1039/D3OB00410D.



Peter Osei Ohemeng, Robert Godin (2023). Methylated precursor leads to carbon nitride (CN_x) with improved interfacial interactions for enhanced photocatalytic performance. *Sustainable Energy & Fuels*. DOI: 10.1039/D2SE01636B.

Recent events

Teach-In on Climate & Justice

UBC Okanagan's Sustainability Office organized the "Teach-In on Climate & Justice" dialogue on March 13th with faculty, staff, and students across campus to discuss relevant research and climate action. **Dr. Robert Godin** was one of the panelists.

A video summary of the event is available on YouTube <https://youtu.be/G5UueDXGGIU>, in which Robert appears at 1:12.

More information about the *Climate Action Plan 2030* Engagement Working Group including their 2023 Teach-In report can be found at <https://sustain.ok.ubc.ca/teach-in/>.



2023 Researcher of the Year celebration

The annual *Researchers of the Year* celebration was held by the Vice-Principal Research & Innovation's Office on May 4th. As announced in our last newsletter, the *Natural Science & Engineering* awardee this year is **Dr. Isaac Li**, who was joined by colleagues, students, and family on this special occasion.



Biophysical Society of Canada's Meeting



Micah Yang, Scott Minh An, and Dr. Isaac Li attended the meeting hosted by the University of Calgary on May 22nd–26th. They also had an opportunity to meet up with two alumni from the group, Victor Sun and Ally Leam.

Recent presentations

Dr. Robert K. Szilagyi gave an invited presentation entitled "Mapping the molecule-to-material continuum" at the *NanoLytics 2023* symposium organized by Simon Fraser University on May 4th.

Dr. Thu-Thuy Dang delivered a virtual seminar on oxidative enzymes in alkaloid biosynthesis as part of the *Phytochemtalks* series of the Phytochemical Society of North America on May 26th.

2023 Asian Heritage Month celebration

For the Asian Heritage month in May this year, the Department's EDI Committee held a lunch on May 19th to celebrate the diversity of our Department, which includes many members of Asian heritage.



Initially, we wanted to *also* celebrate the culinary excellence in our Department in the form of a potluck lunch. Out of abundance of caution (due to the short notice), food was ordered instead from Chinese, Indian, Japanese, and Korean restaurants in the city. Nevertheless, Dr. Gino DiLabio (*in deep blue T-shirt in the right photo above*) remained committed to the original plan and contributed a wonderful self-made South Asian dish.



The event was extremely well attended. We would like to thank Dyuti Raghu (*left photo: in her beautiful yellow kurta and performing an interpretive dance to explain the food arrangements*) and Dr. Robert Szilagy (right photo) for coordinating the logistics.

Upcoming seminar



“Frustrated Lewis pairs: A general concept for metal-free hydrogenations and beyond”

By Dr. Douglas W. Stephan | Professor, Department of Chemistry, University of Toronto

1:00 PM, June 2nd (Friday) in ART 386

In the news

Visiting International Research Students’ experience in Chemistry

UBC Okanagan News recently featured **Bhavesh Gnanapareddy’s** VIRS experience from a *Mitacs Globalink* student to a MSc student in computational chemistry. During his internship with **Dr. Gino DiLabio**, Bhavesh also explored other lines of research in the Department of Chemistry, and got in touch in **Dr. Robert Szilagyi**. Bhavesh was inspired to apply, and recently accepted, into a MSc program that combines theoretical and experimental chemistry with both Robert and Gino.



The story is available at <https://news.ok.ubc.ca/2023/05/08/opening-doors-for-international-student-research/>.

We acknowledge that the land on which we gather is the unceded territory of the Syilx (Okanagan) Peoples. Kukwststsemc / k^wu k^wuk^wstp !

If you would like to contribute to, or have any suggestions for, our Department’s upcoming newsletter, please contact Thuy Dang (thuy.dang@ubc.ca).