

# *the Catalyst*



**ACS**  
Chemistry for Life™

May 2025  
Volume 110, No. 5



**Teaching and Student Awards Luncheon**

## HIGHLIGHTS

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## ADVANCE NOTICE

### JUNE MEETING

Tuesday, June 17, 2025

**50-, 60-, 70-Year Member Appreciation Luncheon**  
12:00 PM

**William Penn Inn**  
1017 Dekalb Pike, Gwynedd, PA 19436

Additional details to be shared on our website, <https://www.phillyacs.org/>,  
And in the June issue of *the Catalyst*

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Advertising: Victor Tortorelli, vtortorelli@ursinus.edu

**Comments**  
**From**  
**the**  
**Chair**



Dear Philadelphia ACS Members,

April was a vibrant month for our Section, filled with events that celebrated excellence, fostered inclusivity, and advanced scientific discourse. Our strength lies in our ability to support one another through both achievements and challenges, driving the field forward together. As we navigate challenges facing our chemical community, I'm excited to share highlights and our efforts to support our members.

Our Teaching and Scholastic Achievement Awards 2025 ceremony was a highlight, recognizing outstanding contributions to chemical education and scholarship. The Scholastic Achievement Award, presented annually to top-ranking seniors majoring in chemistry or chemical engineering at ACS-approved departments or Student Affiliate Chapters in our region, honored exceptional students for their academic excellence. The Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching in Chemical Science celebrated an educator who inspires and innovates in undergraduate education. This year's winner is Dr. Jeff Ashley of Thomas Jefferson University, recognized for his dedication to fostering scientific curiosity and advancing chemistry education.

Additionally, two K-12 teaching awards recognized outstanding educators for their dedication to inspiring young learners:

- Chantelle Smith, Julia R. Masterman Laboratory and Demonstration School (K-8)
- Amy S. Alvarez, Conestoga High School (9-12)

Their commitment to excellence in science education is shaping the next generation of chemists, and we applaud their remarkable contributions.

A special highlight of the evening was Tyraine D. Ragsdale of Grand Hank, who shared his journey from being a research chemist at Johnson & Johnson to becoming a STEM educator and advocate. He spoke passionately about the Grand Hank STEM Center for Inner City Youth, located near La Salle University, and his mission to expand access to science education through initiatives like the Grand Hank STEM Road Show Tour. His message reinforced the importance of representation, perseverance, and mentorship in shaping the future of STEM.

Congratulations to our 2025 recipients for their remarkable achievements!

The ACS Natural Polymer Convergent Chemist Community (ACS-NP-CCC) Webinar Series continues to provide a platform for cutting-edge scientific discussions. In the April ACS-NP-CCC meeting, more than 20 members joined the session featuring Kinjal Joshi, Research Scientist, Product Development, Personal Care R&D at The Dow Chemical Company. Her presentation on natural hair fixatives as an alternative to PVP replacement showcased the groundbreaking MaizeCare™ Clarity Polymer, a biodegradable hair fixative recognized with R&D 100 and BIG Sustainability Awards. The webinar sparked an engaging conversation, including a dynamic Q&A session, where attendees explored formulation design, sustainability challenges, and commercialization strategies for greener solutions in personal care.

Looking ahead, our NP-CCC May Webinar featured Prof. Eleftheria Roumeli from the University of Washington. Her talk, *An Integrated Biopolymer Framework for Sustainable Materials: From Seaweed-Derived Adhesives to Algal Biomatter Plastics*, highlighted groundbreaking approaches to sustainable materials, reinforcing our commitment to green chemistry and sustainability.

The Minority Committee's "Meet and Eat" event, chaired by Greglynn Walton-Gibbs, provided a valuable forum for career discussions and resume reviews, helping members navigate transitions in the field. A particularly meaningful conversation emerged around developing non-profit organizations to support homeless communities, with Louis Taylor leading a brainstorming session to explore impactful solutions. This exchange highlighted the importance of leveraging chemistry and community engagement to create lasting change.

To further support career development, we are collaborating with the Chemical Consultants Network (CCN) to provide guidance and networking opportunities for chemists seeking new directions in their careers. CCN, supported by the ACS and AIChE, connects professionals with consulting resources, career development support, and technical expertise. Our partnerships with CCN, our Section's Career Services Committee, and the ACS Committee on Economic and Professional Affairs (CEPA) will deliver a networking event in June to empower chemists in a dynamic job market.

Meanwhile, the 50-, 60- and 70-year Appreciation event to recognize our senior members will be held on Tuesday, June 17, 2025. Members are also invited to attend the 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Symposium-2025 by the Chinese American Chemical Society East Chapter on June 7<sup>th</sup> focusing on the theme *Embracing a Changing Landscape: AI, Supply Chains, and Regulatory Shifts in Chemistry and Medicine*.

Additionally, we look forward to MARM 2025, taking place in May, where ACS members from across the region will gather to exchange ideas, present research, and explore innovations in chemistry. This meeting remains a cornerstone event for collaboration and scientific advancement in the Mid-Atlantic region.

Let's continue to support one another, celebrate our successes, and tackle challenges with unity. I encourage you to engage with our efforts, share your insights, and collaborate with us in building a stronger, more connected chemical community.

Thank you for your engagement with the Philadelphia ACS. Please share your ideas or concerns—I'm here to serve our community.

Warm regards,

Wei Gao

Chair, Philadelphia Local Section of American Chemical Society

## NEWS ATOMS—*Alan Warren*

**Christopher B. Murray**, professor of chemistry and materials science and engineering at the University of Pennsylvania, was elected a 2024 Fellow of the American Association for the advancement of Science (AAAS).

The American Institute of Chemical Engineers named Ravi Radhakrishnan, professor of chemical and bioengineering and chair of the department of Bioengineering at Penn, an AIChE Fellow.

### DEATHS

**Tung-ho Chen**, retired physical chemist, July 13, 2024 at 94. Born in Taiwan and educated there and in the United States, he worked as a senior research chemist at the US Army's Picatinny Arsenal for 36 years. He focused on the detection of plastic explosives in relation to airline safety.

**Sol Howard Goodgal**, retired biochemist, September 10, 2024 at 103. He taught microbiology at Penn's school of medicine for 30 years. Goodgal researched applications of RNA and DNA on infectious diseases.

**Mark L. Bernstein**, February 17, 2025 at 75. No other details available.

**John Alan "Jack" Murphy**, retired chemist, March 4<sup>th</sup> at 81. He was a polymer chemist and worked on foam applications used in NASA rockets.

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## OPPORTUNITIES TO VOLUNTEER

*Younger Chemists Committee Program and Event Planning Volunteers:* The Younger Chemists Committee (YCC) is a committee of the Philadelphia Local Section focusing on the needs of undergraduate, graduate, post doc, and early career chemists under 35 years old. The committee is looking for volunteers to help with program planning this year! This is an excellent opportunity for students and early career chemists to assume leadership roles and network with likeminded scientists within the ACS community. The estimated time commitment would be less than 1 hour per week.

All interested individuals can reach out to Isaac Choie at: [yongsuk.isaac@temple.edu](mailto:yongsuk.isaac@temple.edu)

### ACS CAREER CONSULTANTS

*Would you like to speak to a local ACS Career Consultant? The Philadelphia Section career consultants can provide one-on-one career advice, resume reviews, or mock interviews. Please send an email request to [acsphillycareerservices@gmail.com](mailto:acsphillycareerservices@gmail.com) to set up an appointment.*

ACS Transformative Natural Polymers CCC ([ACS-NP-CCC](#)) [Webinar Series](#)



## An Integrated Biopolymer Framework for Sustainable Materials: From Seaweed Derived Adhesives to Algal Biomatter Plastics

Eleftheria Roumeli, PhD

Assistant Professor of Materials Science & Engineering, University of Washington

**DATE & TIME: Thursday June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2:00 PM ET**

**Location: Zoom, [click here](#) or scan the QR code to register**

**Abstract:** The need to replace fossil-derived polymers drives the development of fully biobased, truly biodegradable alternatives. We show that minimally processed biomatter—from microalgae, cyanobacteria, or macroalgae—can be heat-and-pressure processed into (1) formaldehyde-free wood adhesives whose flexural strength, moisture resistance, and flame retardancy rise with binder content, and (2) rigid, compostable plastics matching polystyrene and PLA in mechanical performance. To uncover self-bonding mechanisms, we assemble bottom-up model composites by blending purified carbohydrates, proteins, and lipids in native ratios, then apply identical compression-molding to isolate each macromolecule's contribution to network formation. Our integrated experimental–computational framework delivers design principles for tunable biomatter-derived adhesives and plastics—no chemical modification required.

**Biography:** Eleftheria Roumeli is an Assistant Professor of Materials Science & Engineering at the University of Washington, where her group pioneers sustainable biopolymer-based materials—ranging from bioplastics and biocomposites to green construction resins—by linking molecular structure, processing, mechanics, and life-cycle impact. She completed postdoctoral fellowships at Caltech and ETH Zurich after earning her B.S. and Ph.D. in Physics from Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. Her work has been honored with the 2024 ACS PMSE Early Investigator Award, 2024 BioResources Early Career Investigator Award, Kavli Frontiers of Science Fellowship (2024), NAS Young Observer (2023), and three consecutive UW MSE Faculty of the Year awards (2022–2024).

**Co-Hosts:**

[The Philadelphia Local Section of ACS](#)

[ACS technical Divisions of POLY, PMSE, AGFD, ENVR and CARB](#)

[ACS GCI Natural Polymer Consortium](#)

[Chinese American Chemical Society](#)





**CALL FOR APPLICATIONS  
2025 ACS PHILADELPHIA SECTION STUDENT  
TRAVEL AWARD FOR IN-PERSON RESEARCH PRESENTATION AT A SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE**

Notice is hereby given that the ACS Philadelphia Section invites students to apply for the 2025 ACS Philadelphia Section Student Travel Award. This award is open to both graduate and undergraduate students who will be presenting in-person, either through a poster or an oral presentation at a scientific conference.

The ACS Philadelphia Section encourages both graduate and undergraduate students to present their research at conferences including but not limited to the National and Regional ACS Meetings. Conferences are a fantastic opportunity to showcase research, network with professionals in a specific field, and gain valuable experience. This award will provide supplemental funding for the awardee to present their research at a conference of their choosing.

**PLEASE NOTE! Applications for Fall of 2025 will be accepted until August 1, 2025.**

**Application requirements:**

- 1) Application letter**
- 2) Abstract of the research to be presented at the conference**
- 3) Reference letter from a professor**

**How to Apply:**

Submit all application requirements by **August 1** to the Chair of the Awards Committee at [PhilaACS@gmail.com](mailto:PhilaACS@gmail.com) with the subject "Student Travel Award."

ACS Philadelphia Section  
Department of Chemistry  
University of Pennsylvania  
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6323  
e-mail [PhilaACS@gmail.com](mailto:PhilaACS@gmail.com)

**The Award Recipient will be contacted by email 2 weeks after the deadline.**



**2025 ACS PHILADELPHIA SECTION  
STUDENT SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENT AWARDEES**

**Scholastic Achievement Award Winners**

<b>Maximilian Bagileo</b>	<b>Eastern University</b>
<b>Arjun Bothra</b>	<b>Haverford College</b>
<b>Katherine Calderone</b>	<b>West Chester University</b>
<b>Nicole M. Dallara</b>	<b>Arcadia University</b>
<b>Christopher Gamboa</b>	<b>Temple University</b>
<b>Stella Kahn</b>	<b>La Salle University</b>
<b>Stephen Kwas</b>	<b>Swarthmore College</b>
<b>Christopher Lawrence</b>	<b>St. Joseph's University</b>
<b>Alec Mallari, Biochemistry</b>	<b>St. Joseph's University</b>
<b>Kelsi Membrino</b>	<b>Villanova University</b>
<b>Alannah Miller</b>	<b>Ursinus University</b>
<b>Nuha Mohammed</b>	<b>Bryn Mawr College</b>
<b>Kenzi Neighbors</b>	<b>Drexel University</b>
<b>An Nguyen, Biochemistry</b>	<b>Temple University</b>
<b>Patricia Olsen</b>	<b>Thomas Jefferson University</b>
<b>Wesley Rauenzahn</b>	<b>West Chester University</b>
<b>Anthony Ruggiero</b>	<b>Widener University</b>
<b>Dominic Watson</b>	<b>Rutgers University-Camden</b>
<b>Kempton Wilcox</b>	<b>Delaware Valley University</b>
<b>Sarah Zhang</b>	<b>University of Pennsylvania</b>





**2025 ACS PHILADELPHIA SECTION  
TEACHING SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENT AWARDEES**

**Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching**

**Dr. Jeffrey Ashley      Thomas Jefferson University**

**Award for Excellence in Pre-College Teaching  
Grades 9-12**

**Amy S. Alvarez      Conestoga High School**

**Award for Excellence in Pre-College Teaching  
Grades K-8**

**Chantelle Smith      Julia R. Masterman Laboratory and  
Demonstration School**

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**53<sup>rd</sup> MARM - May 28-31, 2025  
Seton Hall University, S. Orange NJ.  
<https://marm2025.com>**

**768<sup>th</sup> ACS Philadelphia Section Board of Directors Meeting**

Thursday, 03-13-2025

Teleconference Meeting

**Present:** David J. Cichowicz, Deborah H. Cook, Kathleen Shaginaw, Victor Tortorelli, Sharon Haynie, Ann Valentine, Wei Gao, Andrew Devany, Christine McInnis, Anne DeMasi, Ivona Sasimovich-Macor, Amy Brown, Melissa Cichowicz, Andres Vazquez-Lopez, Matt Irwin

**Excused:** C. Bentzley, David Salas-de la Cruz

**Absent:** Judith Currano, Isabella Goodenough, Steven Fleming

**Other Attendees:** Michael Castaldi, James Murray, Jess Myers, Brisa Hurlocker, Wei Wang

The 768<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting of the Philadelphia Section, ACS, was called to order at 07:00 PM and Wei Gao read the ACS Code of Conduct.

**I. Roll Call**

Roll was taken, a quorum was present, and the meeting began at 7:00 PM.

**II. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

The approval of previous month's meeting minutes was delayed until March. (Tortorelli, D. Cichowicz) – A DeMasi abstain, all others approve.

**III. Officers' Reports:**

- **Chair – Wei Gao** – shared 2025 goals; in past month; identify award, support nominations; Stanley Israel; E. Emmet Reid Award; Wei asked how we can increase Fellows nominations; Matt Irwin agreed to support Fellows nomination. Wei asked for volunteers. Increase support for Communications Committee. Noted that *Catalyst* production went smoothly. Asked where we can share data. Consider the ACS Network. LSAC mentioned that the Network is not an option. We have enough storage on our Google account. Lee Hoffmann confirmed access. Will use this moving forward to share and store documents. We have 22 new followers on our LinkedIn page. Impressions/report numbers are lagging. Wei asked Board members to participate and share across our respective organizations. Wei is waiting for the Communication Committee to report National Social Media guidelines. She met with the branding team who advised on logos and uniformity. Lunar New Year celebration was mentioned in Chair's message in *Catalyst*. Wei received a question about Delaware Valley xxxxxx; V. Tortorelli shared how Topical Groups are managed in a one-on-one meeting with Wei. She pointed out that some Topical Groups are not very active. We need an exit strategy for these groups. Wei learned that there is an existing point system we might use to weigh activity. Twenty attendees attended the Jun Wang webinar. Wei is working on establishing a Bylaw Committee. She mentioned the need to increase activity in the Senior Chemists Committee. Wei also reported on upcoming events for April. Wei also promoted the National Committee Preference Form. She asked Board members to share which committees they serve on. Please send them to Wei with Matt Irwin on copy.

- **Immediate Past – Matt Irwin** – no report; interested into assisting with social media landscape.
- **Chair-Elect – Andrew Devany** – Andrew reported that Teaching and Scholastic Achievement Awards will take place at 11 nominations for undergraduate awards. (get slides from Andrew). D. Cook and M. Irwin commented that we have awarded honorariums for keynote speakers in the past. On the Travel Award, we have 1K in the budget. YCC has been contacted but I have not had any feedback. Abstracts for Fall are due March 31<sup>st</sup>. M. Irwin mentioned sharing on LinkedIn. V. Tortorelli explained how the Travel Award is managed. C. McInnis mentioned that we don't receive a lot of submissions due to the singular \$500 limit. D. Cichowicz mentioned that there is an expectation for the recipient to report their meeting experience to the Board. D. Cook mentioned that it might also be shared with the student chapters. C. McInnis mentioned an "experiment" to adjust the expectation of reporting. A. Devany mentioned a potential speaker for September, a ticketed event. He also mentioned MARM 2025 is upcoming.
- **Secretary – Anne DeMasi** – no report
- **Treasurer – Ivona Macor** – report was shared with the Board on March 1<sup>st</sup>. She mentioned that we have received a third of our local section dues. W. Wang mentioned that allotment comes in one payment, likely later this month. I. Sacor will update the report to reflect the dues. Program budget is line 1710 – contains \$2500. V. Tortorelli mentioned transfer from previous year needs to be populated. (Motion to approve; D. Cichowicz seconded. I. Sacor abstained All others in favor).
- **Chair of Council Affairs – Deborah Cook** – Pre-Council meeting took place this week. We will have a full slate of Councilors present; both in-person and hybrid. Councilors reviewed; how would I. Macor like us to submit receipts. W. Wang will assist I. Sacor and D. Cook will send a list of those attending in person. All Councilors have submitted credential cards.

#### IV. Committee Reports

- **Senior Chemists – Michael Castaldi** – Science History Museum event tentative date is October 4<sup>th</sup>.
- **WCC – Jess Myers and Brisa Hurlocker** (Co-chairs of WCC, professors at Villanova) – plan to host a Women's History Month Happy Hour; Looking to re-invigorate PAGES which will take place at Villanova on October 4<sup>th</sup>. Ann Valentine also supports the program and provided some valuable feedback on what to consider in the planning. A. DeMasi provided a historical perspective on the program which was initially the result of an NSF grant.

#### V. Motion to adjourn (D. Cichowicz) Second (V. Tortorelli)

#### VI. Additional Comments and Updates

Next meeting, Thursday, 4/17/2025, 7:00 PM

The meeting was adjourned at 8:07 PM

All in favor

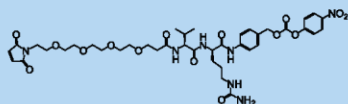
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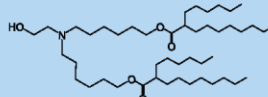


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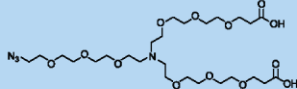
## ADC Linkers



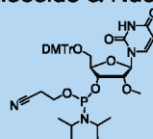
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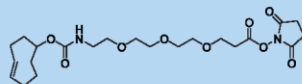
## PEG Linkers



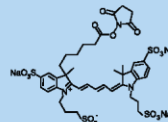
## Nucleoside & Nucleotide



## Click Chemistry Tools



## Fluorescent Dyes



ACS Local Section

Philadelphia

Committee on Minority Affairs

The Committee on Minority Affairs is seeking members. If you would like to join, please contact [cmaphilaacs@gmail.com](mailto:cmaphilaacs@gmail.com) to learn more.

## CHEMICAL CONSULTANTS NETWORK MEETING MAY 14, 2025

### **STEREOCHEMICAL DISCRIMINATION OF A COVALENT, WERNER HELICASE INHIBITOR SERIES**

**Dennis Murphy PhD, Principal Investigator at GSK**

**DATE & TIME:** Wednesday May 14, 2025, 6:30 PM

[Click here to register](#)

**Location:** Online via Zoom! (Registration required, see below)

**Abstract:** The presentation will cover a drug discovery project, illustrating the utility of in-depth analysis of the structure and corresponding behavior of molecules that are early in the optimization phase. The Werner helicase is a synthetic lethality target for MicroSatellite Instability-High/Mis-Match Repair Deficient (MSI-H/dMMR) cancers, identified through genome-wide screening of genetic dependencies and CRISPR rescue. Its primary function is resolving a wide variety of DNA lesions. In-house screening identified three covalent inhibitors that alkylated cysteine-727. One compound containing a tricyclic core was optimized with a cyclic vinylsulfone warhead, yielding four compounds differing only in the configuration of the two stereogenic centers. Kinetic results were fit to a two-step, irreversible inhibition model. The bimolecular inactivation rate showed a nearly 500-fold potency range for the four compounds. The x-ray structure of the most potent analog was solved and showed a binding pocket for the tricycle and a covalent bond between cys-727 and the warhead. Modeling of the three weaker stereoisomers showed that a hydrogen bond with a nearby arginine and the proximity of the electronegative sulfone likely contributed to the variation in potency. While there were significant differences in the absolute binding and inactivation rates of the four analogs against the apo-enzyme versus the actively unwinding helicase, the rank order of the compounds remained the same

**Biography:** Dennis Murphy is currently a Principal Investigator at GSK in Discovery Biology. His work is focused on early drug discovery, primarily against enzyme targets. He utilizes enzymology and biophysics to dissect the mechanism of inhibition for lead-optimization. Dennis's undergraduate degree is from Bucknell University with a double major in Biology and Chemistry. He earned his Ph.D. in organic chemistry at the University of Wisconsin and was a post-doctoral fellow at Penn State University. He has spent the majority of his career in pharmaceutical research, but also worked in biocatalysis and enzyme evolution, bioinformatics, nanomaterials, and adjunct teaching, all in the Philadelphia area.

[Click here to register to attend the event.](#) This session is **FREE**.

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**CAREER DEVELOPMENT**

Being a part of one of our teams can help you develop organizational and meeting skills as well as help you to network with people from the largest area companies. Public Relations, such as sending out meeting notices and press releases, can help you to develop a network and help you get noticed!

All committees are looking for new members and several are looking for “take charge” chairs. Some, like the Teller’s Committee, involve minimal work—one night per year and pizza provided. Others, like positions on Communications or Social Committees, involve one or two hours per month.

Comittee details can be found at:  
[www.membership.acs.org/p/philadelphia](http://www.membership.acs.org/p/philadelphia)  
or by calling the Philadelphia Section Office (215) 382-1589.

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