

the Catalyst



January 2026
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ACS Philadelphia Section



Introducing Our New Chair
Mr. Andrew Devany

HIGHLIGHTS

Introducing our New Chair	3
News Atoms	4
News from National	6
Call for Nominees Pre- College Teaching	8
Directory of Services	17

ADVANCE NOTICE

February Meeting

TBD

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CONTENTS

Introducing our New Chair.....	3
Opportunities to Volunteer.....	3
Comments From the Chair	4
News Atoms.....	4
Committee on Minority Affairs Seeks Members.....	5
ACS Career Consultants	5
News from National.....	6
MARM 2026	6
2026 Section Award Nominations	7
Nominations for Excellence in Pre-College Teaching...	8
September Board of Directors Meeting Minutes	9
October Board of Directors Meeting Minutes.....	12
November Board of Directors Meeting Minutes	13
Directory of Services	17

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INTRODUCING OUR NEW CHAIR —Mr. Andrew Devany

Mr. Andrew Devany is an Associate Scientist at International Flavors & Fragrances (IFF), where his work focuses on the development and scale-up of functional biopolymers for applications in the home and personal care industry. He earned his Bachelor of Science in Chemistry from Widener University, where he conducted undergraduate research centered on the green synthesis of substituted maleimides. This research was presented at the 2022 Spring American Chemical Society National Meeting during the Division of Chemical Education poster session.

Following his graduation in 2022, Mr. Devany joined IFF as a Research Associate and has since advanced through increasing levels of responsibility, contributing to applied research efforts that integrate reaction design, materials characterization, and process scale-up.

Mr. Devany's involvement with the American Chemical Society Philadelphia Local Section has been a central component of his professional development and service to the chemical community. He previously served as Secretary in 2024 and as Chair-Elect in 2025, during which time he supported the organization of technical programming, community outreach initiatives, and member engagement activities. Through these roles, he has worked to strengthen communication within the Section and promote participation across career stages.

In addition to his industrial and professional service activities, Mr. Devany remains committed to chemical education. He has served as an Adjunct Professor at Saint Joseph's University, where he instructed Organic Chemistry laboratory courses.

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 Kunyu Wang <Kunyuwang95@gmail.com>; Andres Vazquez <a.vazquez1120@gmail.com>

Comments From the Chair



Andrew Devany

Dear Philadelphia ACS Members,

Happy New Year! I am pleased to begin this year and to build upon the momentum and successes achieved in 2025. Last year, our committees were led with renewed energy and leadership. The Women Chemists Committee has reinvigorated the Philadelphia Area Girls Exploring Science (PAGES™) program under the leadership of Dr. Brisa Hurlocker, Dr. Jessica Myers, and Ms. Gwenny Go. In parallel, the Younger Chem-

ists Committee embarked on an exciting new chapter under the leadership of Drs. Andres Vazquez-Lopez and Kunyu Wang, bringing fresh perspectives and innovative ideas to support early-career chemists.

I am grateful to work alongside the Executive Committee of Dr. Matt Irwin, Dr. Wei Gao, Mrs. Ivona Macor, and Ms. Greglynn Gibbs as we continue to strengthen our committees and advance the mission of the Section. Together, we aim to sustain our signature events while also introducing new initiatives.

As we move forward, we also pause to remember members we have lost, including Marge Matthews, a devoted member and a cornerstone of the Communications Committee. While we mourn her passing, we honor her legacy by continuing the work of the Section with the same dedication, care, and commitment she exemplified.

Looking ahead to 2026, my goal is to further strengthen member engagement by empowering our committees, listening closely to the interests and needs of our membership, and expanding outreach efforts that positively impact the scientific community throughout Philadelphia.

NEWS ATOMS—*Alan Warren*

DEATHS

G. Hulings Darby, chemist, in 2025 at age 85. He was retired from the Franklin Institute Research and Development Laboratories. He wrote about potential occupational hazards for the National Institute for Occupational Safety.

Michael K. Kovacs, retired chemist, July 11, 2025 at 75. He held positions with Vulcan Materials as a technician (1972-1973), Amchem Products as a chemist in the Steel Group Automotive Section (1973-1979), and Ashland Chemical as a supervisor in the new product development-specialty chemicals division (1979-1982). He then moved to Oakite Products as research projects and business manager (1982-1989), PQ Corporation as market development manager (1989-1998), and General Electric Water and Process Technologies. The last firm was taken over by Hercules where he was senior technical marketing project engineer (1999 until retirement). He was active in a Pennsylvania Civil War re-enactment group.

Wallace L. Knepper, retired chemistry teacher, October 14th at 87. He taught high school chemistry in Bucks County for 35 years. He was also a high school swimming coach and American Red Cross instructor.

Evanda Gale Jefferson, pioneering analytical and environmental black chemist, October 14th at 77. She served as chemistry lab assistant while attending Randolph-Macon College. Jefferson was a supervisor and then senior chemist at Gulf Oil Corp. She represented Gulf in magazine advertisements and at industry conferences and meetings. She was also a local and regional leader of the Association of Desk and Derrick Clubs of North America, an industry group for women in gas and oil. After retiring from Gulf, she was engaged in missionary work as a member of the National Missionary Baptist Convention.

Richard John Hinchey, retired inorganic chemist, October 18th at 87. He taught chemistry briefly at Purdue University and then worked in industry for Portland Cement, Union Carbide, Katalytics, Universal Oil Products, and PQ Corporation.

Susan C. Saltzman, retired chemist, October 23rd at 85. Following positions at Rohm and Haas and DuPont for 30 years, she served as president of Saltzman Consulting Services for 8 years. The firm specialized in shipment of hazardous materials. After retiring she was a volunteer with the Science History Institute and the Philadelphia Animal Welfare Society.



The Committee on Minority Affairs is seeking members. If you would like to join, please contact cma.philaacs@gmail.com to learn more.

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 to set up an appointment.

News from National

ACS' 150th Anniversary

On April 6, 2026, ACS will reach its 150th Anniversary milestone mark!

Visit the webpage at www.acs.org/ACS150

ACS Is Enhancing Your Account Security: Here's What's Changing

To enhance account security, ACS will be updating its username and password requirements starting in Q425. As part of this update, users who haven't changed their password in the past 365 days will be prompted to do so upon login. New password guidelines including length and special character requirements will be clearly displayed via on-screen instructions on Account Creation screen to help guide users through the process.

Empowering the Next Generation of Chemical Scientists

The ACS Catalyst Scholarship provides support to undergraduate students who demonstrate financial need or hardship. It is intended for those pursuing chemistry-related majors who exemplify academic excellence, leadership, and a commitment to life-long learning. This program provides \$10,000 in funding, with the possibility of renewal in future years, to help students continue their academic journey. **Apply NOW** Applications close March 1st, 2026.

2026 Global Innovation Grant: Applications now open!

Applications are now open for the 2026 **Global Innovation Grant**. This grant provides up to \$5,000 to ACS units for internationally collaborative and innovative activities/events. Open to ACS Chapters, Divisions, and Sections. Award opens: October 15, 2025, | Deadline to apply: January 10, 2026

Nominations for Heroes of Chemistry are now open!

Innovation paired with commercial success is worth recognizing. The Heroes of Chemistry Award is one of ACS's highest industry honors, recognizing companies that have developed successfully commercialized products that have had an impact on the welfare and progress of humanity. 2026 nominations are now being accepted through **February 1, 2026**. Any private or publicly owned for-profit company may nominate a team of chemists or allied scientists. Information on team eligibility is found on the [HOC page](#). The company nominating the technology must be the current owner of the technology. Celebrate your company's hard work and success in innovation – **nominate today!**



MARM 2026

**The 54th Middle Atlantic Regional ACS Meeting
will be held on May 17-19, 2026**

at the Hershey Lodge Convention Center, Hershey, PA

Further details at <https://marm2026.com/>

Discounted/early registration until late March

**CALL FOR NOMINATIONS
2026 ACS PHILADELPHIA SECTION
AWARD**

Notice is hereby given that the ACS Philadelphia Section invites its members, as well as Regional and Topical Groups, to nominate candidates for the 2026 ACS Philadelphia Section Award.

This Award shall be presented “to one member of the Section, or in exceptional circumstances to two members of the Section jointly, who by conspicuous scientific achievement has made important contributions to the field of chemistry and thereby aided the public appreciate of the profession.” (ACS Philadelphia Section Bylaw X, §1.)

Any member of the ACS Philadelphia Section may be nominated. Recent awardees include Spiridoula Matsika (Temple University), Ron Levy (Temple University), Rick Ewing (Rapafusyn Pharmaceuticals), Anthony W. Addison (Drexel University), and Marsha I. Lester (University of Pennsylvania). A full list can be found here: <https://phillyacs.org/philadelphia-section-award/>

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMITTING A NOMINATION

- 1) Nominators should provide a CV of the nominee showing education; employment and/or academic history; a list of publications, presentations, and patents; and a record of other accomplishments pertinent to consideration for this award.
- 2) One or two seconding letters (at least one of which should be from a person in an organization other than that of the nominee) should be requested in support of the nomination.
- 3) Nominators and seconders should be identified with addresses, e-mail and telephone numbers so that they can be contacted, if necessary, for additional information.
- 4) Unsuccessful nominees from previous years may be renominated. In fairness to the nominee, however, renominations must be accompanied by an updating of the nominee's biographical data and a list of accomplishments to make the nomination competitive. Unsuccessful nominees who have been considered three years in a row should not be renominated for the fourth year in succession without prior consultation by the nominator with the Chair of the Awards Committee.

The completed packet of nomination materials should be e-mailed to PhilaACS@gmail.com or mailed by **August 1, 2026** to the Chair of the Awards Committee at:

ACS Philadelphia Section
Department of Chemistry
University of Pennsylvania



**CALL FOR NOMINATIONS
2026 ACS PHILADELPHIA SECTION
AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN PRE-COLLEGE TEACHING**

Notice is hereby given that the ACS Philadelphia Section invites its members to nominate candidates for the 2026 ACS Philadelphia Section Awards for Excellence in Pre-College Teaching.

The Awards honor two outstanding science teachers. One Award will be given to a full-time educator involved in teaching science in grades K-8. The second Award will be given to a full-time educator at the secondary level (grades 9-12) who teaches chemistry. Nominees must teach in the geographic territory of the ACS Philadelphia Section (Philadelphia, Bucks, Chester, Delaware and Montgomery counties in Pennsylvania; and Burlington and Camden counties in New Jersey).

PLEASE NOTE! Nominations for 2026 will be accepted until March 1, 2026.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMITTING NOMINATIONS

- 1) **A Nominator Recommendation** of not more than 750 words submitted by the nominator.
- 2) **A current curriculum vitae or resume** that includes a list of the nominee's honors, professional activities, and additional evidence of service to the profession. This must be limited to no more than two pages, and the activities listed must have occurred within the past five years.
- 3) **A statement by the nominees** of not more than 500 words that describes the nominee's teaching philosophy or commitment to the profession.
- 4) **At least one, but not more than three, letters of support.** One letter, of no more than 400 words must be from the teacher's current principal or supervisor. Additional letters of support, of no more than 400 words, may be sent by colleagues, members of the ACS who are familiar with the nominee's achievements, or former students and parents of former students.
- 5) **The total nomination package should not exceed 30 pages.**

The nomination package may be e-mailed or sent to:

ACS Philadelphia Section
Department of Chemistry
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6323
(267) 485-1792; e-mail PhilaACS@gmail.com

The Award Recipient will be honored at our April Section meeting with a plaque and an honorarium 772nd ACS Philadelphia Section Board of Directors Meeting

Thursday, 09-11-2025

Teleconference Meeting

Present: Victor Tortorelli, Sharon Haynie, Wei Gao, Andrew Devany, Christine McInnis, Anne DeMasi, Amy Brown, Matt Irwin, David Salas-de la Cruz, Andres Vazquez-Lopez, Deborah H. Cook, Ivona Sasimovich-Macor

Excused: C. Bentzley, M. Cichowicz

Absent: S. Fleming

Other Attendees: J. Murray, K. Wang, G. Gibbs, G. Go, G. Arbuckle, L. Hoffmann

The 772nd Board Meeting of the Philadelphia Section, ACS, was called to order at 07:04 PM and Wei Gao read the ACS Code of Conduct. (Action: Review with National)

Roll Call

Roll was taken, a quorum was present, and the meeting began at 7:01 PM.

Approval of Meeting Minutes – tabled until the October meeting

Officers' Reports:

Chair – Wei Gao – Get slides

Thanks to the Communications Committee for their efforts (*Catalyst*, other social media platform. June meeting was CCN event. The event was well-received.

Senior Chemists event (50-, 60-, 70-year members.) The September 18th event will be a webinar titled “Transformative Natural Polymers” and the speaker will be Dr. Qiong Yuan. A YCC Poster Event will take place on September 26th. YCC Co-Chairs are Dr. Kunyu Wang and Dr. Andres Vasquez. On October 4th, there will be two events: PAGES™ and the SHI Museum tour and career program. Chair Gao gave special thanks to S. Haynie for creating the pamphlet in memory of our dear colleague Kathleen Shaginaw honoring her many years of selfless service to our Section.

Immediate Past – Matt Irwin – M. Irwin is working on the election slate. (See slide) He noted that we are looking for Chair-Elect 2026 (3-year term); Secretary (2-year term); Nominations due to Matt on September 25th. He shared the list of Directors who are terming out. Alternate Councilors can run for Council. V. Tortorelli is filling K. Shaginaw's unexpired term as councilor. It is not necessary to replace K. Shaginaw term on the Board per the Section bylaws. Bios will be due to Steve Fleming by the end of September. The Board will need to approve the slate by email. Elected members need to be certified with National before the end of the year.

Ulliyot Lecture Committee – Phila ACS event. M. Irwin shared the following on slides:

History & Context

- The Ulliyot Lecture is a **Philadelphia Section ACS event** (per Glenn & George Ulliyot) where the selection committee is co-chaired by the chair-elect of Philly ACS and the President of the Science History Institute (SHI).
- Sponsorship includes Delaware ACS, U Penn, St. univeris's University (formerly USciences), and the Science History Institute (formerly CHF).
- For decades, the Philadelphia Section has had a **permanent representative** (Jim Falcone → Deb Cook).
- Section minutes (2013) and work manuals confirm this practice, though bylaws used today omit it.

Current Concern from SHI (2025)

- SHI questions the Section's “extra” voting role since **not explicit in current bylaws**.
- They propose shifting to **non-voting or term-limited status**.
- Issue was first raised in 2023 with intent to revise bylaws; **no bylaw revisions were adopted then**.
- The matter has now **resurfaced in 2025**.

Philadelphia Section Position

- There is **clear documentation and precedent** for the Section's permanent representative — a **de facto state** that has guided practice for over a decade.
- No unilateral changes — **all sponsors must agree** before bylaws can be revised.

Path Forward

- Affirm the **de facto state** as valid precedent, despite omission in bylaws.
- Recognize the need for **updated bylaws** that align with established practice and prevent future disputes.
- Ensure any revisions are **consensus-based**.
- Maintain stability for 2025 while pursuing clarity for future years.

S. Haynie may have a conflict of interest as she serves on SHI Board; she supports Matt's proposal; stand by the original intent of the Ulliot family.

V. Tortorelli mentioned that we are only ones that have two at the table. Perhaps we should have a non-voting member though it has been by consensus. D. Cook noted that SHI President Permanent member is on committee, chairs and does not vote. She shared the selection process recommended that suggestions for award-ees be sent to Chair-Elect Devany. There exists a document (work manual etc) that states that the other entities are designated by their department chairs. They can have an additional member if they so choose. Purpose of permanent to have consistency as local section chair-elect rotates each year. Penn has two votes, two different departments. St. Joesph's University and Delaware Section have one vote. D. Cichowicz shared the history. SHI is default venue but can be adjusted at the discretion of the committee. V. Tortorelli mentioned that we have copies of the document that Glenn Ulliot signed. We are obligated to use the proceeds, not the principal to fund this lecture. This document needs to be reviewed. Recognize that CHF does a wonderful job hosting the event. Budget and Finance has a separate fund specific to this endowment. It does not cover food and beverage. It generally covers travel costs. The guidelines are from 1996. D. Cook to send document to Chair Gao.

Communications Challenges and Path Forward. M. Irwin shared the following:

Current Issues

- **Catalyst deadlines:** Content due **15th of prior month** (e.g., Sept issue → Aug 15).
 - Deadlines often missed; editors must chase content individually.
 - Would be stronger if the **whole Communications Committee drove content collection**.
- **Website:** Not updated prior to Fall meeting — likely linked to missed *Catalyst* inputs.

Context

- Ongoing concerns with **timeliness, responsiveness, and coordination**.
- Prior attempt in 2024: I developed a **checklist with Robert (admin)** to ensure consistency.
 - **Not adopted in 2025**, leaving processes unstructured.

Path Forward (Recommendation)

- Recommend establishing a **standard communications calendar** across *Catalyst*, website, email, and polls.
- Recommend ensuring accountability is **committee-driven**, not on individuals.
- As I term off as Immediate Past Chair, I offer to take a **more active role in the Communications Committee** to support improvement.

Chair-Elect – Andrew Devany – A. Devany reported that Dr. Spiridoula Matsika from Temple University will be the recipient of the 2025 Philadelphia Section Award. The event will take place Thursday, October 23rd, 5 - 8 PM at Temple reception will run from 5:00 PM to 6:00 PM, the ceremony/lecture from 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM, and dinner would follow on from there. He commented that Ann Valentine has been a major help assisting with reserving the space, get the parking passes, and work on the catering exception for He requested for preemptive approval of \$1,000 to cover initial dinner costs and will charge tickets for dinner. He also requested another \$500

to cover reception or split cost with Temple. A. DeMasi/V. Tortorelli mentioned that there should be funds in the Program Budget to cover whatever is needed.

Secretary – Anne DeMasi – no report

Treasurer – Ivona Macor - checks to Councilors have been mailed and should arrive next week. 12 seed students in 8 lab. Ivona warned us to be wary of spam emails asking for money. Ivona received a letter from the IRS (University of Penn), needs to be addressed. We are missing a credit card. Ivona suggests a PO Box for our correspondence.

Motion to approve Treasurers report - seconded by V. Tortorelli, all in favor except C. McInnis abstained.

Council Affairs:

D. Cook reported that we had a full complement of Councilors at the DC meeting with 6 attending in person and 4 virtually. Councilors need to submit reimbursement vouchers with receipts to Ivona. Alcohol will not be reimbursed. Cook also reported that she, Macor, Tortorelli and D. Cichowicz met to discuss Councilor reimbursement procedures and how to deal with unexpended funds from the ACS and Section allotments. D. Cichowicz will work up an outline. The group will reconvene to discuss before bringing recommendations to the Board. Directors were asked to submit questions or suggestions to D. Cichowicz via email.

Other Committees

YCC

Kunyu Wang reported that YCC is hosting an event at UPenn on September 26. It will include a speaker and career workshops. Details can be found on the Section website and in the Catalyst.

Minority Affairs

Greglynn Gibbs reported that the committee now has officers and members. They are planning an event on Oct 25 in conjunction with a cancer organization. It is a run with a gathering at the Art Museum Rocky Steps and fountain. Other plans are in the works including a virtual speaker series and Sr. Chemists podcast.

Communications Committee

Lee Hoffman reported on the *Catalyst* delay and that the deadline was the 20th of the prior month. The Committee is working on a workflow document. The Committee will work with Robert Mertz, Section Admin, to request his involvement in reminding people to submit Catalyst items.

Matt Irwin reported he is working on the workflow document and will present in the future. There will be a process for Board members to access distribution lists via the website. This will be a secure site and users will have to request access.

Georgia Arbuckle brought up need for someone in addition to Marge Matthews to access MailChimp for Catalyst distribution. As an aside Marge is currently in Bryn Mawr Hospital. D. Cook also reported that Wei Gao was asked to distribute Councilor Talking Points to the Board members. PAGES™ is in need of additional participants.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:28.

Respectfully submitted,
Anne DeMasi

773rd ACS Philadelphia Section Board of Directors Meeting

Thursday, 10-9-2025
Teleconference Meeting

Present: Sharon Haynie, Wei Gao, Andrew Devany, Anne DeMasi, Amy Brown, Matt Irwin, Andres Vazquez-Lopez, Deborah H. Cook, Ivona Sasimovich-Macor, Melissa Cichowicz, S. Fleming, D. Cichowicz, Ann Valentine

Excused: V. Tortorelli, C. Bentzley, C. McInnis, I. Goodenough

Absent: D. Salas-de la Cruz

Other Attendees: K. Wang, J. Murray, L. Hoffman, G. Arbuckle, Greglynn Gibbs, G. Go, J. Currano

The 773rd Board Meeting of the Philadelphia Section, ACS, was called to order at 07:02 PM and Wei Gao read the ACS Code of Conduct.

Roll Call

Roll was taken, a quorum was present, and the meeting began at 7:04 PM.

Approval of Meeting Minutes – June Motion (S. Haynie), Second (D. Cook); September Motion (D. Cook), Second (J. Murray)

Officers' Reports:

- **Chair – Wei Gao** – Marge Matthews passed on October 8th. She supported our Section with *the Catalyst*, Section emails, and served as DAC Chair. Chair Gao will share service details when available. D. Cook requested a moment of silence to remember our dear colleague, Marge Matthews. October *Catalyst* is on the web page, thanks very much to the team for putting this together. She reviewed LinkedIn activities and highlighted that we now have 500 followers (good growth). Recent activities include:
- Oct. 2nd Thursday, Webinar on Transformative Natural Polymers
- Oct. 4th- Saturday: SHI museum Tour- Career
- Oct. 4th- Saturday: PAGESTM event

She commented on how to improve social media “hits”. She also mentioned that the local Section industrial award should be more advertised; it should sit with the Awards Committee. Chair Gao also mentioned planning for the December Board Dinner. She mentioned that the call for symposia for MARM has been announced.

Upcoming events include:

Chemical Consultants Network meeting – Digital AI Consulting
Phila Local Section Award – Dr. Spiridoula Matsika (Temple University)
Ulliyot Award and Lecture – Sir David W.C. MacMillan

Immediate Past – Matt Irwin – The election slate has been approved. Bios are in progress. S. Fleming hopes to send out the ballots on Saturday, October 11th. The bylaws have been drafted for approval to send to National for input. D. Cook asked about calling the BOD the Executive Committee. Therefore, we should update our current Executive Committee. A. DeMasi suggested ‘Officers’. The Board voted to approve the motion for approval to send the bylaws onto National. Second (I. Macor) all in favor with M. Irwin abstaining. Next step, the Board will review any comments by National. Formal ratification will follow. The loss of Marge will have a huge impact on the Section; we need a special meeting to discuss. L. Hoffman mentioned that we will need to work on Mailchimp, etc. and thanked Matt for his assistance with *the Catalyst* for October. Irwin mentioned that a meeting at the SHI was productive; SHI suggests that we craft the bylaws for the Ulliyot Committee. Irwin will send a draft to the Board to review. The Liberty Bowls are stored at Hamilton Jewelers. We have 4 left. Need to make a decision at some point to find a new bowl.

Chair-Elect – Andrew Devany – Section Award is October 23rd. (Announcement on website). A. Valentine helped with the planning. Devany has reached out to several individuals to assess our view on the needs of the section and is seeking insight.

Secretary – Anne DeMasi – no report

Treasurer – Ivona Sasimovich-Macor - Report accepted. I. Macor has been having issues with mail. She is not receiving it on a timely basis. She has three people seeking replacement checks and it costs \$35 to replace a check. Cost to send certified is about \$6.08. Eleven checks are pending. The amount is \$9000. Electronic payments are also difficult. Venmo is not an option. D. Cichowicz recommends using certified checks for higher value payments (\$200 limit). All agreed.

Council Affairs – Deborah Cook – no report. We do not need to replace Marge as Councilor for the remainder of the year as there are less than 3 months in the year. She mentioned that the website needs to be updated.

Committee Reports

Young Chemists Committee (YCC) –Andres Vazquez and Kunyu Wang

YCC Poster session on Sept 26th was a great success 90 people registered , 50 posters, many volunteers showed up and mentored students. 2 seminar speakers from Merck and Du Pont. 3 awards were given.

Woman Chemists Committee (WCC) – G. Go reported that WCC PAGES event

51 girls participated, 20 volunteers donated their time/talent. G. Go requested assistance with insurance for the event and asked about procedure for reimbursement. D. Cichowicz mentioned that individuals should receive their own payments. W. Gao will assist with the report.

The meeting was adjourned at 8.11 PM (D. Cichowicz, L. Hoffman)
Respectfully submitted, Anne DeMasi

774th ACS Philadelphia Section Board of Directors Meeting

Thursday, 11-14-2025
Teleconference Meeting

Present: Wei Gao, Matthew Irwin, Steve Fleming, Amy Brown, Greglynn Gibbs, Isabella Goodenough, Jim Murray, David Cichowicz, Melissa Cichowicz, Ann Valentine, Andres Vazquez-Lopez, Andrew Devany, David Salas-de la Cruz, Christie McInnis, Youwen Xu

Excused: Deborah Cook, Ivona Macor, Ann Rowley, Catherine Bentzley

The 774th Board Meeting of the Philadelphia Section, ACS, was called to order at 7:00 PM and Wei Gao read the ACS Code of Conduct aloud.

Roll Call

Roll was taken, a quorum was present, and the meeting began at 7:03 PM.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Approval of the prior month's minutes was deferred, as updated revisions were not ready for presentation. The amended minutes will be circulated by email for review and approval.

Officers' Reports

Chair – Wei Gao

Wei provided an overview of recent Section activities and updates:

Recent Items:

- The *Catalyst* for November has been published.
- October event highlights were previously covered at last month's meeting, but additional detail and individual acknowledgments appear in the Chair's Message on the website.
- The PAGES™ program has undergone a rebranding, shifting from "Philadelphia Area Girls Enjoying Science" to "**Philadelphia Area Girls Exploring Science**" to better reflect discovery-oriented goals.

Event Recaps:

- Strong turnout and excellent scientific programming were noted at the recent October Section meeting. Special thanks were extended to Ann and Andrew for arranging logistics and managing the event.

Upcoming Events:

- **Transformative Natural Polymers (CCN) Webinar** to be held next Thursday. This event is part of the ongoing national initiative co-chaired by Wei.
- **30th Anniversary CCN Celebration** will be held on **December 9th** at Arcadia University's Grey Towers Castle, including a 6:00 PM tour and a 6:30 PM program.

Board Social:

- A Doodle poll for the December Board Social showed **December 11th** as the date with the highest availability. Members should plan tentatively for this date.

Wei then yielded the floor to the Immediate Past Chair and Chair-Elect.

Immediate Past Chair – Matthew Irwin

Matt reviewed updates related to the **Ulliyot Public Affairs Lecture** and the Section bylaws:

- He met with the Science History Institute to finalize governance document updates.
- Proposal: Add a **permanent Philadelphia Section representative** to the Ulliyot Governing Committee, appointed by the Board for renewable 3-year terms, to preserve institutional memory and ensure long-term continuity.
 - A motion to adopt this language was raised and passed.
- Selection of the individual for this role will be revisited in the **January 2026 Board Meeting**.
- Matt received the most recent bylaws revision draft from National. Volunteers were requested to conduct a line-by-line review:
 - **Jim Murray** and **Andrew Devaney** volunteered.
- Pending the review, an email vote is anticipated in December unless major concerns require discussion at the next board meeting.

Chair-Elect – Andrew Devany

Andrew outlined goals and ongoing planning for his Chair-Elect year:

Administrative Priorities:

- Develop a more formal, comprehensive Chair/Chair-Elect handbook to improve knowledge transfer and succession planning.
- Establish a centralized, well-organized Google Drive repository for committee and officer documents.
- Advance completion of Section bylaws and D&O insurance implementation.

Committee Engagement:

- Increase direct involvement with Communications, Treasurer/Finance, and other key committees to strengthen operations and support leadership transitions.

Programming & Outreach Goals:

- Restore an **in-person Section Meeting** with a dedicated networking hour followed by the regular business meeting.

- Expand engagement with the Philadelphia scientific community, including University of Pennsylvania, the Science History Institute, and other regional organizations.
- Strengthen involvement of early-career chemists and prospective members.

Events in Planning:

- A **YCC Delaware Section Social** is planned for March at Ship Bottom Brewery in Swarthmore.
- Speaker invitations are being coordinated for mid- and late-year section meetings.
- Andrew hopes to organize a **food and toy drive** aligned with the 2026 holiday season.

Treasurer – Ivona Macor

The Treasurer's report was provided via email. Members may contact Ivona directly with questions. Ivona was excused from the meeting.

Secretary – Anne DeMasi

Excused; no report.

Council Affairs – Deborah Cook

Excused; no report.

Committee Reports

Tellers Committee – Steve Fleming

Steve reported on election statistics, noting:

- This year had the **highest voting participation in a decade**.
- The total number of eligible voters has declined over time, but repeated reminders significantly improved turnout this cycle.

Election Results:

Chair-Elect (2026):

- *Greglynn Gibbs* elected.

Secretary (2026–2027):

- *Matthew Irwin* elected.

Board of Directors (2026–2028):

- Five directors elected, with the correction that *Rob Dyer* should replace Matt Irwin due to Matt's election as Secretary.

Councilors (2026–2028):

- *Amy Brown, David Cichowicz, Deborah Cook* elected.

Alternate Councilors (2026–2028):

- *Anne Rowley, Jim Murray, Anthony Addison*
(Final adjustments pending review of current-year alternates.)

Steve encouraged outreach to candidates who were not elected but expressed interest, suggesting that their involvement in committees would strengthen the Section.

CCN – Youwen Xu

Youwen shared details for the **CCN 30th Anniversary Celebration**:

- Event will take place on **December 9th** at Arcadia University's Grey Towers Castle.
- Program includes a tour, keynote presentations, and recognition of long-time volunteers.
- Attendees will be invited to contribute ideas for CCN's development over the next 30 years.
- The event is posted on the website and will appear in the December *Catalyst*. Registration is now open.

Delaware Valley Chromatography Forum (DVCF)

Wei presented an update on discussions with the **Delaware Valley Chromatography Forum** about joining the Philadelphia Section as an official topical group.

Key points:

- DVCF is an **active regional chromatography organization** with a strong history of technical programming.
- They host an **annual April symposium**, heavily attended by students, early-career chemists, and local industrial scientists.
- Their programming aligns with ACS goals:
 - Enhances student engagement and mentoring opportunities.
 - Broadens industrial networking and professional development within the Section.
- Adding DVCF could help revitalize topical-group activity, especially compared to several inactive groups currently listed.

Matt noted that the bylaws will be reviewed to determine the **formal process** for adding new topical groups, and the Board will revisit the recommendation later.

Additional Updates from Chair – Wei Gao

Before closing, Wei shared additional context related to the **Transformative Natural Polymers (CCC)** initiative:

- The CCC was established through a 2024 ACS grant proposal and focuses on balancing **performance, cost, waste reduction, sustainability, and health considerations** in natural polymer innovation.
- The initiative is currently supported by six ACS technical divisions, including:
 - POLY
 - AGFD
 - ENVR
 - CARB
 - CELL
 - And a newly added division that recently voted to join
- Work includes:
 - A national website and shared digital resources
 - Monthly webinars hosted through the Philadelphia Section platform
 - Collaboration between academic and industrial scientists in sustainable polymer chemistry

Wei offered to present the full slide deck at a future meeting upon request.

Additional Comments and Updates

No additional comments were raised.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 PM.


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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.

Committee details can be found at:

www.membership.acs.org/p/philadelphia

or by calling the Philadelphia Section Office (215) 382-1589.

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