UNIVERSITY of ROCHESTER

Chemistry Diploma Ceremony

Saturday, May 18, 2024
Douglass Feldman Ballroom A/B
11:00 AM

Faculty & Staff

Department Faculty

Brandon Barnett
Kara Bren
Joseph Dinnocenzo
Ignacio Franco
Alison Frontier
Benjamin Hafensteiner
Pengfei "Frank" Huo
William Jones
C. Rose Kennedy
Kathryn Knowles
Todd Krauss
Ellen Matson
David McCamant
Bradley Nilsson
John-Carl Olsen
Shauna Paradine
Benjamin Partridge
Lewis Rothberg
Michael Ruggiero
Wolf-Udo Shroeder
Courtney Stanford
Agnes Thorarinsdottir

Research/Cluster Faculty & Senior Scientists

Frank Ebetino
Dmitri Ermolenko
Samir Farid
Sina Ghaemmaghami
Alan Grossfield
Al Marchetti
David Mathews
Benjamin Miller
Brendan Mort
Astrid Müller
Marc Porosoff
Alexander Shestopalov
Andrew White

Staff

Tessa Baker
Emily Breitbart
William Brennessel
Daniel Colon
Brie Coyne
Donna J. Dolan
Katie Fiete
Joseph Hickey
Jason Holt
Tony Lenzo
Elaine Maholick
Chloe Mantis
Lynda McGarry
Terry O'Connell
Ken Simolo
Barbara Smith
Barbara Snaith
Yinru Song
Ray Teng
Jeff Tschirhart

Librarians

Susan Cardinal
Trina Lowery

The Class of 2024

Doctoral Degrees (Ph.D)

Abhijith Saseendran Anitha
Diego Mauricio Arevalo
Juan Sebastian Sandoval Cabezas
Amanda M Canfield
Erin Elizabeth Christensen
Ethan Michael DeCicco
Steven Anthony Diaz
Maitrayee Ghosh
Jiwon Han
Aleksa Milosavljevic
Darya Rodina
Alison Salamatian
Jacob L Shelton
Jakub Vaith
Francine Elizabeth Yanchik-Slade

Master of Science (en route to Ph.D)

Negede Alemayehu
Kathryn Aumick
Xinxian Chen
Hannah Claus
Rishabh Dora
Andrew Sung Hong
Lucy Huffman
Yusuf Ajibola Ibrahim
Parbhat Kumar
Santanu Poddar
Abhishek Roy
Frank Eric Valoy
Madelyn Rebecca Alta Walls

Master of Science (Terminal)

Tong Sun

The Class of 2024

Bachelor of Arts (B.A.)

Jingfei Dai
Winifred K. Dorlean
Meiqin Gao
Xavier Enrique Green
Millicent Grace Hawkins
Sandy Kuang
Claire Jooeun Lee
Tyler Matthew Richter
Jessie "Ellie" Vetack
Eureka Zhang

Bachelor of Science (B.S.)

Ian Arnold
Molly Corr
Elise Alexandra Gendrich
Alexandra Lawrie
Josh McPherson
Hafsa Mohamed
Josephine J. Myung
Margaret Scholer
Zachary Philip Schremmer
Hope Silva
Erin Stockdale
Xijue (Jade) Wu
Paul Seungmin Yoon
Ruilin Zhang

Jingfei Dai

During my nearly four years of study at the University of Rochester, I identified my interests in organic chemistry while exploring. One invaluable opportunity was my role as a teaching assistant in the organic chemistry lab. Additionally, during my junior year, I joined Professor Bradley Nilsson's lab, where I delved into the characteristics of self-assembling beta sheet peptides. This immersive research experience solidified my career path and my confidence in pursuing it further. I am grateful to Professor Nilsson, my mentor Hannah Distaffen, as well as all my friends and family members for their support and guidance, which have shaped me into both a better chemist and a person. I will pursue my Ph.D. in chemistry at Rice University in Houston.

Winifred K. Dorlean

My undergraduate years at the University of Rochester have been filled with remarkable educational and personal experiences. I began my journey at U of R as a Brady, Michael & Susan Dell, and ECO Scholar. In my second year, I served as a Lab TA for Organic Chemistry I and a teaching assistant for Organic Chemistry II. Additionally, I have been a Writing Fellow at the Writing, Speaking, and Argument Program for the past 2.5 years. Throughout my undergraduate studies, I have taken on several leadership roles. I served as a Student Alumni Ambassador and held the positions of Secretary, Vice-President, and President of the First Generation Students Society. My dedication to the first-generation community on campus was recently recognized when I was selected as the 2023-2024 recipient of the Gwen M. Greene First Generation Senior Student Life Award.

In terms of research, I have worked with Dr. Thomas Kash and Dr. Meg Flanian at UNC-Chapel Hill, studying the effects of 5HT2c receptor knockout in animal models to understand Alcohol Use Disorder (published October 2023). As a McNair Scholar in Summer 2023, I had the opportunity to research Nickel-Catalyzed Decarbonylative Amination of Amides in the Kennedy Lab. Additionally, I worked as an Emergency Department Research Associate at Strong Memorial Hospital. My time at the University of Rochester has been transformative, and I am grateful to my family, mentors, and close friends for making this experience so memorable. After graduation I will be taking a gap year before applying to medical school!

Meiqin Gao

I really enjoyed my time here, and I have grown a lot from when I first started. I had been an organic chemistry workshop leader for two years with Professors Dinnocenzo and Hafensteiner, and I appreciated the learning opportunities of being a student and being able to help others who are in the same boat as I was. For the past summer, I participated in a plastic recycling REU program at SUNY University in Buffalo and learned about the upcycling of polyethylene by functionalizing LLDPE. I really want to thank Professor Thorarinsdottir for the fantastic research opportunity in the synthetic chemistry of tetracarboxylate ligands. I enjoyed the learning environment of consistently trying new approaches and never giving up. I was also a first-year fellow last year and a resident advisor this year as a resource for students who might need support. I want to thank everyone who supported me in this journey. After graduation, I will get more clinical experience and apply for medical school in the next cycle. I want to become a psychiatrist in the future.

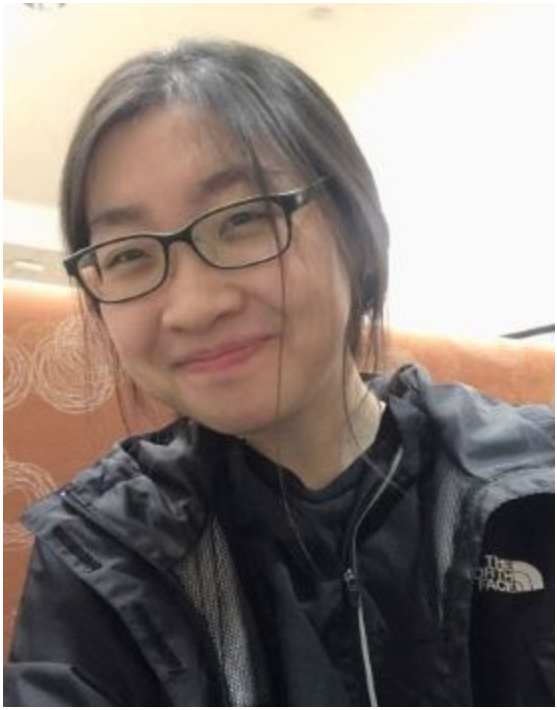
Xavier Enrique Green

My time at the University of Rochester wasn't the initially planned route; there were twists and turns every semester but thanks to the entire chemistry department, Professor McCamant and Professor Frontier in particular, my football coaches, and my family, I was able to get through it. I have enjoyed my time being a member of the varsity football team for these past 5 years as well as the UR disability awareness club for 2 years. Those memories will last a lifetime. After graduation I plan on pursuing a career in chemistry and potentially education.

Millicent Grace Hawkins

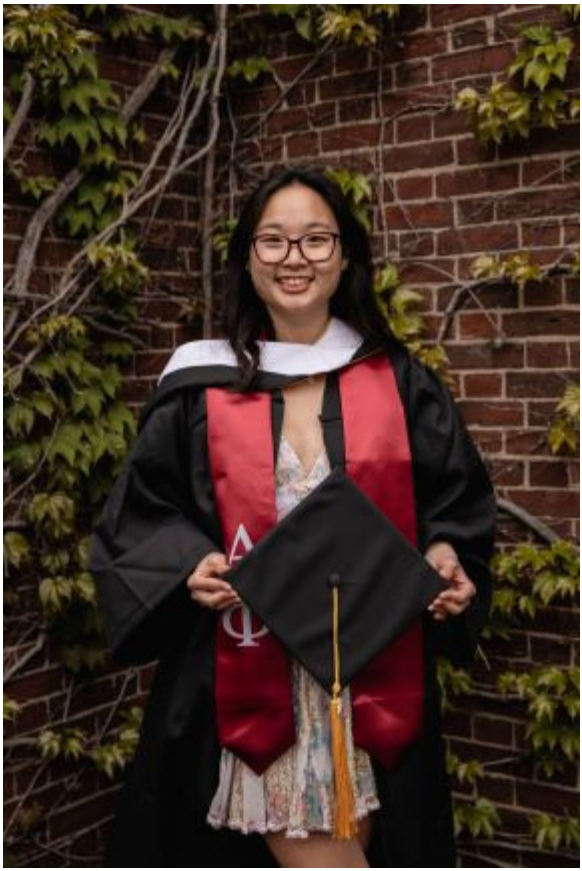
When I originally came to the University, I did not think (in my wildest dreams!) that I'd receive a chemistry degree. However, through my biology degree and pre-medical requirements, as well as a little bit more hard work, I learned I could earn a BA in chemistry for my second degree. I didn't expect to love the subject as much as I did, and I never expected to get two degrees! But through the help of my classmates, my teachers, and an amazing department, I'm so thankful for what I've learned and the accomplishments I've made. I want to thank UR for giving me the opportunity to earn two degrees to aid me towards my future in medicine. I especially want to thank my "Chemistry of Poisons" class. My love and joy for the content I learned from Dr. Frontier helped guide my future choices in education. I am waiting to hear back from medical pharmacology masters programs for next year! In the mean time, I will be working as a patient care technician at Rochester General Hospital.

Sandy Kuang



My love for chemistry began in high school under the mentorship of my 11th-grade chemistry teacher. This love only grew in college and even expanded to various other fields. After four fulfilling years, I will be graduating as a double major with a degree in Chemistry and English and minors in Chemical Engineering and Anthropology. Rochester has provided me with countless opportunities I never thought possible as a first-generation, low-income student. I am forever grateful for the Kearns Center, SSS TRiO, and Basic Needs programs. I want to extend special gratitude to Dr. Shestopalov, Dr. Müller, and Dr. Rothberg and for making thermodynamics and electrochemistry among my most favorite subjects; Dr. Olsen for the TA opportunities; and Dr. H and Dr. McCamant for always encouraging learning and growth in chemistry and beyond. After graduation, I will be completing an internship in biochemical and process engineering and studying towards licensure. I will also be working in the Division of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology at my local hospital. I also hope to one day, near or far, continue education in pathobiology and laboratory medicine and/or Asian and African literature. Importantly, to my family, here and across the seas, thank you for all your sacrifices, for always believing in me, for watching over me, and for providing me with unwavering love and support.

Claire Jooeun Lee



During my time here, I have studied two majors, chemistry and physics, and minored in biology. For the past three years, I have been a TA for five classes and Workshop leader for four classes in physics, chemistry, and biology. In addition, I have been active in club leadership by being the President of Alpha Phi and the Pre-Dental Club. For the past three years, I have been conducting research in the Eliav-Khan lab - focusing on mechanisms associated with EIH and focusing on the opioid and cannabinoid system. I would like to thank my family, friends, and professors for supporting me throughout my college years. After graduation, I plan on pursuing a career in dentistry.

Tyler Matthew Richter

My time at the University of Rochester has been an incredible experience. I have been a Workshop leader for general and organic chemistry with Professors Hafensteiner and Dinnocenzo. I have also worked with Dr. Feuerstadt at Yale studying acute vascular intestinal diseases in patients with end-stage renal disease. I would like to thank my family and Dr. Benjamin Hafensteiner for all the support and guidance they have shown me throughout my four years here. After graduating, I look forward to taking a gap year before attending medical school to pursue a career in medicine.

Jessie “Ellie” Vetack

My time at the University of Rochester has been far from conventional, but I wouldn’t change a bit! I transferred into the Chemistry Department in my junior year from Chemical Engineering, and despite my late entry, I was welcomed with open arms by both faculty and students! I have gotten the chance to participate in numerous labs, serve as a lab TA, and partake in multiple industry internships at companies including Rich’s Products and Jack Link’s. Outside of chemistry, I have been active in numerous student organizations across campus and even founded a collegiate chapter of oSTEM (Out in STEM) in 2022. This Fall, I will be continuing my education at the University of Minnesota | CFANS for a M.S. in Food Science, focusing on product development and consumer acceptability of products containing sustainable ingredients. I would like to thank my friends, my family, and all of the faculty members at UR who have been supportive of my goals! Meliora!

Eureka Zhang

Zhiqian is working on catalyst design for the hydrogenation and dehydrogenation step of the Guerbet reaction, under the guidance of Prof. Jones. The reaction converts ethanol to butanol, a better alternative to traditional gasoline to fight global warming. She plans to attend MSE in Chemical Engineering at JHU after graduation.

Ian Arnold

My undergraduate years at UR have been nothing short of amazing. During my sophomore year, I was a workshop leader for general chemistry and my junior year I was a lab TA for organic chemistry. During my senior year, I joined the Nilsson Group, where I studied peptide self-assembly and loved it so much that I have decided to return to Rochester in the fall to begin my Master's in chemistry with the group. Outside of academics, I have been an active member of the undergraduate chemistry society (UCS) all four years. I would like to personally thank Dr. Brad Nilsson for the opportunity to conduct research in his lab and to my family and friends for their continued support throughout my undergraduate studies.

Molly Corr

The goal of my research is to discover chemical solutions to the challenges posed by climate change. At the University of Rochester, I conducted my senior research in the McCamant lab, where I studied the excited-state lifetimes of materials for organic solar cells. I have also worked with Dr. Ellen Matson and Mamta Dagar to optimize redox flow batteries for renewable energy storage and held a fellowship at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory where I studied electrochemical CO_2 mineralization. Outside of my research, I was a teaching assistant and a member of the symphony orchestra, Cello Choir, Out in STEM, and WRUR. I will be pursuing my Ph.D. in Chemistry at Stanford University with the support of an NSF Graduate Research Fellowship. I am so lucky to graduate with this class of amazing scientists, and grateful for the support I have received from my family, friends, and mentors!

Elise Alexandra Gendrich

This year, I finished my Chemistry major, Linguistics minor, and Take Five in Jewish Studies. Last year, I was inducted into the Phi Beta Kappa Society and I was a recipient of the Chemistry Department and Undergraduate Teaching Awards. I have immensely enjoyed learning all the material in my classes and re-learning it as a workshop leader and a tutor with the Undergraduate Chemistry Society. This department has a great community and I'm so glad to be a part of it. Special thanks to Dr. Kara Bren, Dr. Bill Jones, and especially Dr. Katie Knowles for all letting me do research in their labs; I learned so much and I am really grateful to have experienced such variety within chemistry. Next year, I will be joining Bausch + Lomb as a lab technician making and purifying solutions for their contact lenses.

Alexandra Lawrie

I am incredibly thankful for the four amazing years I spent as an undergraduate student in the Department of Chemistry. Since my very first chemistry course here, I've known that organic chemistry was going to be a lifelong passion of mine. In March 2021, I joined Dr. Frontier's research group, which marked my first step towards becoming a synthetic organic chemist. In the Frontier group, I have spent the last three years developing new halo-Prins and halo-Nazarov cyclizations towards the synthesis of complex nitrogen-containing heterocycles. I would like to thank Dr. Frontier and the graduate students in the lab (especially my mentor, Jackson Hernandez) for supporting my research and helping me every step of the way. I have also had the honor of being a Workshop Leader for several courses, and I would like to thank Dr. Dinnocenzo, Dr. Kennedy, Dr. Paradine, Dr. Barnett, and Dr. Partridge for mentoring me throughout these teaching experiences. My journey over the last four years would not have been the same without meeting the amazing students in the department. I had the pleasure of serving as President of the Undergraduate Chemistry Society this past year, through which I became even more involved with the chemistry community here. Next year I will be attending the University of Chicago to pursue my PhD in organic chemistry. Thank you to my friends and family for your endless support!

Josh McPherson

My past four years at the University of Rochester have been filled with educational and personal growth. I attained minors in Psychology and Spanish, which involved studying abroad in Spain. I was an active member in clubs and on the executive boards of Disability Awareness Club, Improv Club, and Sigma Phi Epsilon. During my sophomore and junior years, I worked with Dr. Bill Jones by synthesizing FOX ligands for transition metal catalysts. During my sophomore summer, I worked with the late Dr. Jeffery Byers at Boston College, studying the encapsulated conversion of CO_2 to methanol in metal organic frameworks. For the past year and a half, I have worked with Dr. Ellen Matson on polyoxovanadate and molybdenum sulfide clusters as charge carriers for redox flow batteries. Last semester, I was also a teaching assistant for Dr. Dave McCamant's Chemical Instrumentation course. I was awarded induction into the National Order of Omega, the Junior Scholar Award, and the Chemistry Department Award. After graduation, I will be conducting research on electrolysis cell fabrication at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory. A special thanks to my family, friends, and chemistry peers and faculty for all your support and encouragement over the past four years!

Hafsa Mohamed

I have had an amazing four years at the University of Rochester as a chemistry major. At the beginning of the four years, I set out to do pre-med and go to medical school. However, research at the Bren lab and TA experience in Organic chemistry labs convinced me to pursue chemistry research. I am excited and also sad because I will not be a part of this community anymore. I look forward to what the future holds for me, and I am grateful I started my journey at the University of Rochester.

Josephine J. Myung

My undergraduate years here at the University of Rochester have been filled with enriching experiences and have given me the freedom to explore a multitude of passions and interests. I have had the pleasure of being a teaching assistant for various organic and general chemistry lab courses for six semesters. I have been inducted into the Order of Omega and served as their president and business manager. During my time at the University of Rochester, I have been an active member of the Varsity Rowing Team, the Rowing Team Representative of the Varsity Student Athlete Advisory Committee, a First-Year Fellow and Lead First-Year Fellow to assist students with the challenging transition from high school to college, served as a volunteer emergency medical technician with RC MERT. I was the business manager and president of the Religion and Classics Society, treasurer and secretary of the Chi Omega Fraternity, an Emergency Department Clinical Research Assistant at URMC, business manager of the Toy Adaptation Program, and I performed with the Sihir Bellydance ensemble. Through these adventures, I have gotten the opportunity to work with and spend time with amazing people. I completed my senior research with Dr. Alison Frontier and am thankful for her guidance, patience, and advice. I would like to thank my friends, family, and professors for their support and encouragement over the past four years.

Margaret Scholer

I am so grateful for the four years I spent at the University of Rochester, especially the wonderful professors, teaching assistants and students in the Chemistry Department. As a dual degree student in Chemistry and Environmental Science, I have gotten the opportunity to explore the intersection of these two fields and I am thankful for the plentiful help and flexibility from the Chemistry department, especially Dr. David McCamant, in tailoring my college career towards my interests, including studying abroad in New Zealand! Over the past four years, I have been a workshop leader and lab TA for a number of chemistry courses as well as VP of the Undergraduate Chemistry Society. I began working in Dr. Vas Petrenko's Ice Core and Atmospheric Chemistry lab in the EES department in the spring of my freshman year and am eternally grateful for the opportunity to conduct amazing research and travel worldwide while doing so. I have been privileged to share my research at multiple conferences and receive a Goldwater Scholarship for my work. In the fall, I will continue exploring the intersections of atmospheric sciences, chemistry, and climate change as I pursue a PhD in Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences at University of Colorado Boulder. I owe a very heartfelt thanks to everyone who has supported me throughout the past four years, especially my friends and family.

Zach Schremmer

During my undergraduate years at the University of Rochester I sought to pursue a variety of my academic interests. As a result, I've earned a B.S. in Chemistry, a minor in Biology, and a minor in Economics. Besides academics, I worked as a pharmacy technician. My thesis research in the Nilsson Lab focused on designing novel peptides that self-assemble In-Register. I'm happy to announce that I'll be continuing my work in the lab while completing the department's fifth year M.S. in Chemistry program. I'd like to thank Dr. Nilsson and his lab members for introducing me to research, Dr. McCamant for providing clarity on difficult concepts in physical chemistry, and Dr. Jones for directing my favorite course, Advanced Lab Techniques, so well. Most importantly, I'd like to thank my family for their continual love and support in my endeavors.

Hope Silva

When I came to UofR in the Fall of 2020, Chem 171 and 172 with Professor Dinnocenzo and Professor Frontier, respectively, made me realize I wanted to be a chemistry major. During the following summer, I was honored to be accepted to an NSF REU allowing me to do organic polymer chemistry research at UT Austin. Once I came back to UofR and took inorganic chemistry, I knew I needed metals in my life and joined the Barnett Lab to do inorganic materials research with metal-organic frameworks (MOFs). I've been privileged to receive grants for summer research, to present at a conference, and to receive a Goldwater Scholarship for my work. I'm so grateful to have known and learned from all of the amazing people throughout this department, especially my fellow basement dwellers. To my family, thank you for listening to me complain about my research when it's not working. To my friends, from late night lab report writing to gossiping really loudly in the Carlson basement, I couldn't have gotten through any of this without you. To my mentor Bevan, my PI Brandon Barnett, and the whole Barnett Lab, I can't put into words how much you've taught me. Thank you for your support and guidance when I've made mistakes, and I'll miss your fantastic memes and chit-chat sessions. Next year, I'm excited to head to UC Berkeley to pursue a Chemistry PhD in Inorganic Materials funded by an NSF Graduate Research Fellowship.

Erin Stockdale

Here at the University of Rochester, I am a dual degree Chemistry and Environmental Studies student. I spent my time outside of class in Wind Symphony and on the club field hockey team. For the past 3 years, I have been a workshop leader and a lab TA for several chemistry courses. Two years ago, I joined the Matson Lab to study the synthesis and characterization of actinide complexes. I am extremely grateful to Ellen Matson, and my amazing mentors Leyla Valerio and Kamaless Patra, for helping me learn and grow as a researcher. In the fall, I will be heading to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to pursue a Ph.D. in Inorganic Chemistry. I am thankful to all of the professors who have supported me through my time here, and to my family, friends, and parents for all of their love and encouragement.

Xijue (Jade) Wu

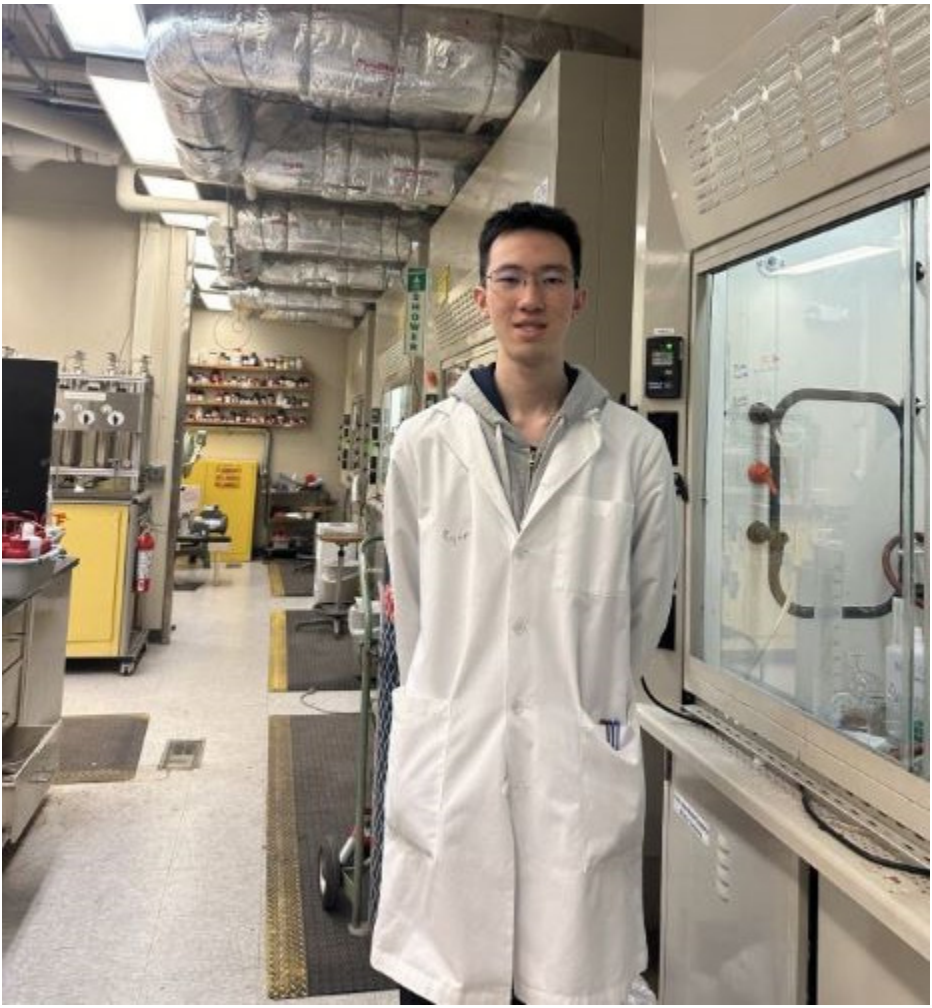
My journey in chemistry began in Fall 2019, when I enrolled in Freshman Organic Chemistry without yet being certain if chemistry was the right path for me. As I struggled with the subject matter, I was fortunate to receive guidance and encouragement from Prof. Rose Kennedy, who ultimately invited me to join her research group. Despite the pandemic delaying the start of my research until Fall 2021, I was grateful to have the support of Prof. Kennedy, Dr. Abhishek Kadam, and my graduate student mentor Medina Afandiyeva to help me begin my work on olefin difunctionalization catalyzed by Nickel(0) complexes. Through the Schwartz Discover Grant, I was able to continue working with my inclusive, diverse, and supportive research group, which resulted in a collaborative publication. Thanks to the flexibility and freedom offered by the chemistry program, I was able to take on the role of teaching assistant for Physical Chemistry I (CHEM 251; Prof. Todd Krauss), as well as enrolled in several graduate level courses. Along the way, I was honored to receive the Discover Grant fellowship, Chatherine Block Memorial prize, Junior Scholar Award, and ACS Award in Organic Chemistry. I am grateful for Kennedy Lab members, so many exceptional professors, and department facilities. As I am entering my Take 5 year, I am excited to explore new areas of chemistry and continue to learn and grow as a researcher. I look forward to the adventure that awaits me in graduate school.

Paul S. Yoon

Completing my Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry over the last few years has not been without its challenges. Being able to conduct research and grow as a chemist under the tutelage of the inspiring researchers at the University of Rochester's chemistry department has been both a blessing and a privilege. I would like to give special thanks to Dr. Brandon R. Barnett and the Barnett Group for having me as an undergraduate researcher and continuing to have me in the following year for my masters of science. I would also like to give special thanks to my friends and family for supporting me throughout this part of my life, as none of this would be possible without them.

엄마, 아빠, 형아, 사랑해.

Ruilin Zhang



In my four years at the University of Rochester, I had extensive research experiences with Prof. Rudi Fasan and Prof. William Jones. In research labs, I enjoyed exploring and developing catalytic systems for chemical reactions. In my free time, I like to play badminton and try new cooking recipes. In the coming fall, I will be attending Northwestern University to pursue a PhD degree in Chemistry.

Undergraduate Awards

Dr. E.W. and Maude V. Flagg Award:

Ruilin Zhang

Established in 1982 as an endowed fund by Dr. John J. Flagg ('36), this award recognizes outstanding performance and promise in chemistry by a graduating senior. The recipient is selected by a faculty committee appointed by the chair of the Department of Chemistry.

John McCreary Memorial Prize:

Alexandra Lawrie

The John McCreary Memorial Fund was established in 1985 in tribute to the high academic and scientific standards and the personal dedication of John James McCreary. McCreary received his bachelor of science degree in chemistry with high distinction from the University of Rochester in 1975. John's career maintained its exemplary character until his untimely death in 1983. The award is given to an outstanding senior undergraduate student.

Chemistry Department Awards:

Josh McPherson Erin Stockdale

The Chemistry Department Awards are given to seniors in recognition of outstanding scholarship in the study of chemistry.

American Chemical Society (ACS) Awards

Inorganic Chemistry Award:

Ruilin Zhang

This award is given to a student who is selected by the faculty on the basis of outstanding academic achievement in inorganic chemistry.

Organic Chemistry Award:

Alexandra Lawrie

This award is given to a student who is selected by the faculty on the basis of outstanding academic achievement in organic chemistry.

Analytical Chemistry Award:

Margaret Scholer

This award is given to a student who is selected by the faculty on the basis of outstanding academic achievement in analytical chemistry.

Physical Chemistry Award:

Molly Corr

This award is given to a student who is selected by the faculty on the basis of outstanding academic achievement in physical chemistry.

Rochester ACS Award for Outstanding Achievement in Chemistry:

Hope Silva

This award is given to a senior with an outstanding academic record and consists of recognition during the ACS Annual Rochester Section Undergraduate Research Symposium, and awardee's name is included on a plaque displayed in the department.

Teaching Awards

Carl A. Whiteman, Jr. Award:

Molly Corr
Alexandra Lawrie
Margaret Scholer
Erin Stockdale
Hope Silva
Ruilin Zhang

This award recognizes exemplary teaching by an undergraduate student in the Department of Chemistry. Carl Whiteman graduated from the University of Rochester in 1950 (BS, Physics) and worked continuously in the department until his retirement in 1986. His enthusiasm and dedication to laboratory teaching made him a legendary figure among undergraduate chemistry majors. Whiteman continued his association with the department until his death in 2007. This honor recognizes his teaching excellence, as well as that of the recipients.

College Awards

Janet Howell Clark Prize:

Alexandra Lawrie

The Janet Howell Clark Prize is awarded annually to a senior woman who has shown the greatest promise in creative work in one of the following fields – Physics, Chemistry, Biology, or Astronomy – and has shown outstanding versatility in the mastery of allied fields. Selection is based on recommendations by the respective departments, which are evaluated by a committee appointed by the Dean of the College.

Keep in Touch!

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