It is graduation week here in Clemson which is a good time to reflect on the past year. We have accomplished quite a lot. We welcomed the largest group of incoming freshman chemistry majors in recent memory, with the total number of majors standing at 138 in fall 2011. That number is sure to rise in fall 2012 as the May 1 admissions data show no fewer that 74 incoming freshmen (an increase of more than 50% from last year!) who indicate their intent to select chemistry as their major. Next year will be exciting but also challenging as we see all our disciplinary classes getting larger and seek to find ways to educate all the students whose education is being entrusted to us. Clemson as a whole is also getting a little larger, with 3400 incoming freshmen expected in August 2012, up from approximately 2950 in 2011. It is surely good to be in demand but the challenge will be on us to find ways to accommodate this large group of very talented young men and women.

This newsletter includes stories on honors which our faculty and students have received recently. Of particular note is the Charles H. Stone award, given to the most outstanding chemist in the southeastern US, which this past spring was won by our own Bill Pennington. Two Clemson chemistry faculty were also listed in a recent publication titled “The Top 300 Professors”, which lists top professors at universities all across the United States, as indicated by ratings on the web site RateMyProfessor. Also, one of our chemistry graduate students, Ms. Brynna Laughlin, won a very prestigious National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship. Brynna won in a very strong national pool that includes the best and brightest graduate students in all disciplines, not just chemistry, throughout the US. Several other student awards are mentioned within -- congratulations!

We also said goodbye recently to two longtime staff members, Dianne Harris and Frances Miller, who retired in May 2012, and we welcome two new persons who will try their best to fill Diane’s and Frances’ shoes. These and other stories await you within!

My reflection on this past year parallels Clemson’s process of planning for the next ten years, which has been a major part of the campus discussion this past year. A Clemson 2020 plan is taking shape that will address many campus priorities including faculty hiring and compensation, and student engagement. “The Plan” will likely change as the campus discussion progresses, but chemistry figures to play a prominent role no matter how the plan comes out. Chemistry has long been a foundational subject at Clemson, with our emphasis on agriculture and mechanics and science and technology, and this fact is not likely to change.

I know I represent the faculty in once again extending my heartfelt thanks for the support of our friends of alumni, and I look forward to continuing to stay engaged with you as we build Clemson’s future.
Congratulations to Karen Pressprich and Stephen Schvaneveldt, instructors in general chemistry, for being profiled in the recently published “The Best 300 Professors.” This guidebook is a collaboration between The Princeton Review, an education services company, and RateMyProfessor.com, a college professor rating website in which ratings for over 42,000 professors were used to identify top professors. The list was further refined using qualitative and quantitative data collected by both organizations. Professors Pressprich and Schvaneveldt were two of the fourteen chemistry instructors who won high praise from undergraduate students for their teaching ability and accessibility. Both are key contributors to the Chemistry Department’s teaching mission.

Alumni News

Dr. Dale C. Buchanan graduated from Clemson with a BA degree in Chemistry in 1978. During his time at Clemson, he was inspired by the teaching of Dr. J.L. von Rosenberg, Jr., a professor of organic chemistry from 1965 to 1992. Following Clemson, Dale received his medical degree from MUSC in 1982 and did postgraduate training at MUSC, Duke, and Pittsburgh Children’s Hospital. Dale is now a Board Certified Anesthesiologist with Presbyterian Anesthesia Associates in Charlotte, NC.

Because of the excellent teaching and inspiration that Dale received from professors like Dr. von Rosenberg, Dale and his wife Cathy have established the Dr. Joseph von Rosenberg, Jr. Memorial Scholarship Endowment at Clemson. Over time, it is their intent that the scholarship will benefit students in the Chemistry department.

Dr. von Rosenberg’s son, Joe III (a successful Clemson grad from 1980), is very pleased to see his father recognized in this way. When contacted about the new endowment, Joe remarked, “My sisters and I were moved by the kind and generous gesture of Dr. and Mrs. Buchanan, and we are very grateful to them. Dad would have been honored to know that he played a role in Dr. Buchanan’s success story; he also would have been very pleased to know that his life’s work ultimately would help to benefit future Clemson students for generations to come.”

CGSO News

The Chemistry Graduate Student Organization (CGSO) celebrated the conclusion of another wonderful year at a local sushi bar. Everyone enjoyed fine food, fun, and great prizes. Newly elected officers for 2012-2013 are Matt Zimmerman, President; Alfredo Picado, Vice President; Jamie Shetzi, Secretary; Leah Corley, Treasurer; Melissa Roaiski & Sheng Lin, Senator.

Prof. Modi Wetzler Wins Travel Award

Prof. Modi Wetzler was named a recipient of the CIBA/YCC Young Scientist Travel Award sponsored by the Younger Chemists Committee of the American Chemical Society (ACS) and CIBA, Inc., now a subsidiary of BASF. This award provides funding for early-career chemists under age 35 to participate in an ACS national or regional meeting. Four awards of $500 each were given nationally for travel in 2012. Dr. Wetzler joined the Clemson faculty as a Research Assistant Professor of Organic Chemistry in August 2011 and will be using this travel award to present his research at the August 2012 national ACS meeting in Philadelphia, PA.

Student Achievements

Ms. Carolyn (Quarles) Burdette, a fifth-year chemistry PhD student working under the direction of Dr. Ken Marcus, was selected to attend the Dietary Supplement Research Practicum, sponsored by NIH to be held on the NIH campus in Bethesda MD on June 4-7 2012. This practicum will provide fundamental knowledge of dietary supplements to faculty, students, and practitioners with a serious interest in this subject.” It is a very competitive program to which only about 150 people per year are invited.

Ms. Brynna Laughlin, a chemistry PhD student working in under the direction of Associate Professor of Chemistry Dr. Rhett Smith, has won a prestigious National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship. This fellowship provides three years of support for her PhD work starting in fall 2012, and includes a stipend, tuition, and a professional expense allocation.

Mr. Cameron Bloomquist and Mr. William Mackay, both May 2012 graduates in Chemistry, were inducted into Clemson’s chapter of the Phi Beta Kappa academic honor society. In addition, Mr. Rhett Ricard, double major in Chemistry and History, was awarded the Norris Medal at the May 2012 graduation. The Norris Medal is given annually to the graduating student who is judged to be the best all-around by the University Scholarships and Awards Committee.

Congratulations to all these students for their accomplishments!
HONORS AND AWARDS DAY, APRIL 21, 2012

The Department of Chemistry Honors and Awards Day Luncheon was held on April 21, 2012 at the Clemson University Outdoor Lab-Kresge Hall. The following awards were presented at that time:

- Senior Research Award - Caleb Hilley
- Chemistry Faculty Award - Megan Sibley
- American Chemical Society Award - Alyssa Rabon
- American Institute of Chemists Award - William Mackay
- Merck Index Award - Earl Ritchie
- Houghton Mifflin/ICUC First Year Chemistry Award - Erina Hoshi
- Chemical Rubber Company Award - Sophie Tilles
- Outstanding Student in General Chemistry - Jamora Hamilton
- Outstanding Student in Introductory Chemistry - Alexandra Costner
- Outstanding Student in Organic Chemistry - Julie Robinson and Taylor Cook
- Outstanding Sophomore Chemistry Major - Samantha Elhoms
- Undergraduate Award Inorganic Chemistry - William Mackay
- Western Carolinas Section ACS Award for Outstanding Chemistry Senior - Tyler Duniho
- Graduate Teaching Assistant Award - Barbara Bull, Sara Comer, Evy Colon-Garcia
- Outstanding Graduate Researcher Award - Brynna Laughlin, Nihar Ranjan
- Mark Bernhard Hardin Prize in Chemistry - William Baker
- Warwick Chemical Foundation Prize in Chemistry - Mina Shehata

STAFF NEWS

Retirements

Dianne Harris, Administrative Assistant/Accounts Payable, retired from the Department on May 1. Dianne and her husband Warren, both originally from Pennsylvania, transferred to the area where Warren worked for the City of Salem. Dianne worked several temp jobs at Clemson before moving to Chemistry in April, 2002. Dianne not only worked accounts payable, but was the chief “shopper” for the department – always looking for and finding bargains to make the money go farther. She also was our unofficial caterer for departmental events. Dianne will be sorely missed but is looking forward to spending time with Warren, her children and grandchildren.

Frances Miller, Administrative Assistant, retired on May 11, 2012. She has been with us since November 2007. Prior to joining Clemson University, Frances worked with WestPoint Stevens for 40 years. Although we will all miss Frances, she has been an asset to our Department and has earned the opportunity to enjoy more time with her family. Please join me in wishing Frances all the best in her retirement.

Welcome to DONNA JERVIS

Donna joined the department on May 11 as the new receptionist/Administrative Assistant, or as people refer to her, “the new Frances”. After working in the Political Science Department, Donna took a couple of years’ sabbatical from the University before returning to work in Chemistry. She lives in Central with her husband (the owner of the Pot Belly Deli) and two children. Her hobby is her family.

Welcome ELLEN SHARPE

Ellen also joined the department on May 11 as the new Accounting Administrative Assistant. She comes to us from Architecture where she worked in off campus programs. Ellen grew up in Clemson, graduated from Daniel High School and currently lives here with her dog Cole. In her spare time she loves horseback riding.

GRADUATIONS DECEMBER, 2011

PhD
Jennifer Grimland
Sunil Kumar
Jung Min Oh
Hsiao Wang
Yueli Zheng

Masters
Carla Garcia

May, 2012

PhD
Yaxin Huang
Jennifer Pittman
Dilru Ratnaweera
Andrea Verdan

BA/BS
Masters
Paris Hamilton

Christina Nic Bailey
Matthew Fuller Baker
Andrew T. Blakinger
Cameron J. Bloomquist
Cooper Russell Timms
Braden M. Durbin
Amanda C. Hatfield

Jessica M. Humphries
Benjamin K. Johnson
Vincent M. Kassel
William D. Mackay
Hanna Kate Medlock
Joseph G. Miller
Christopher M. Pappas

Alyssa D. Rabon
Rhett Douglas Ricard
Cody Lee Smith
Kevin Michael Smith
Kristin Marie Snyder
Lindsay Ann Thompson
Meridian T. Watters

Jennifer Pittman
Dilru Ratnaweera
Andrea Verdan

Christina Nic Bailey

Benjamin K. Johnson
William D. Mackay
Joseph G. Miller
Christopher M. Pappas

Alyssa D. Rabon
Rhett Douglas Ricard
Cody Lee Smith
Kevin Michael Smith
Kristin Marie Snyder
Lindsay Ann Thompson
Meridian T. Watters
STAFF HONORS

Staff Members Sharon Smith, Will Wannamaker and Robin Wilmott were honored at the annual CoES Staff Awards Luncheon on December 7, 2011. All three received the CoES Dean’s Exceptional Staff Award – Robin and Will for their contributions in the technical area and Sharon for her work in the administrative area. The three were again recognized on May 10, 2012 by the Board of Trustees at their 10th annual banquet for the University’s Staff Awards for Excellence. All three were cited by the Board for their “excellence which brought honor upon us all”. Congratulations to Sharon, Robin and Will for their much deserved honors.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Professor Rakchart Traiphol, a PhD graduate of our Chemistry Department, is currently on the faculty of the University of Nasurene in Thailand. Rakchart joined our department in 1997 on a distinguished scholarship from the government of Thailand and carried out his dissertation research on investigative innovative polymers under the direction of Professor Dvora Perahia. Following his graduation from Clemson he returned to Thailand to join the University of Nasurene where he teaches physical chemistry and, together with his graduate research group, carries out research in polymers and nano-particles. Professor Traiphol maintains strong ties to Clemson University and one of his graduate students is currently spending a year here studying under Professor Perahia.

Comments? We would love to hear from you. Please email your comments or questions to Mary Standeffer at standem@clemson.edu and be sure to visit us on the Web at chemistry.clemson.edu.

Your generous donations support our seminar program which brings world-class scientists and educators to campus for public lectures, and also allows for the flexibility to respond to opportunities and pursue initiatives to make Clemson’s chemistry department the best it can be. If you do not already do so, please consider designating a gift specifically to the Chemistry Department. You may do so by writing “Chemistry Department” under “Other” on any donation form you receive from the University, or by indicating the same on the online “Giving to Clemson” form accessible from the Clemson home page. If you do choose to donate, we thank you in advance for your support, whether you choose to designate it to chemistry or not!