

# Newsletter

Summer 2025 Issue 11



# DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY

## A Message from the Department Head

Greeting from the Department of Chemistry!

It has been another fantastic and busy year for the Department, and we are happy to share with you many of the successes that members of the Department have had this year as well as welcoming new colleagues. This past year was a challenge for myself as I grew into the role of Department Head, and I want to express my sincere thanks to our colleagues and students for their patience.

While we continue to face several challenges because of the financial situation of the University, the Department of Chemistry continues to demonstrate perseverance and excellence which is evidenced by the many exceptional research articles that have been published by members of the Department, graduate and undergraduate students receiving awards for academic and research excellence, and faculty success in terms of being awarded grants.

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BE WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS

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 @USaskChem

# Department of Chemistry News

## Message from the Head continued...



As of June 30, 2025, 100% of faculty in the Department hold NSERC Discovery Grants! Along with the successes mentioned above, we were also thrilled to welcome a new faculty member (Dr. Miguel Soto), two new adjunct faculty (Dr. Krista Gill and Dr. Adam Leontowich), and a new storekeeper (Sam Ekanayake).

More information on our new colleagues will be provided below. The Department was delighted to hear that glassblowing services were approved to resume at the University of Saskatchewan through the Office of the Vice President – Research in April 2025. Rick Elvin has returned to the glassblowing shop and is providing expert glassblowing services in support of research and teaching to the USask community. He can be reached at [rick.elvin@usask.ca](mailto:rick.elvin@usask.ca). While we still face several challenges, I am confident that the Department will meet these head-on and will continue to offer high-quality undergraduate and graduate Chemistry programs to our students. We hope our alumni, donors and sponsors are well and thriving, and please do feel free to stay in touch. We are always happy to hear from you, and we deeply appreciate your ongoing support of the Department of Chemistry.



We are excited to announce that **Miguel Soto** joined the Department on July 1, 2025 as an assistant professor.

Dr. Soto earned a BSc in Chemistry from the National Autonomous University of Mexico and a PhD in Chemistry from the Center for Research and Advanced Studies (Mexico). Dr. Soto held a postdoctoral fellowship position at the University of British Columbia under the supervision of Prof. Mark MacLachlan where he also later held the position of research associate.

Dr. Soto's research will span organic and inorganic synthesis and integrate advanced spectroscopy. His team will develop new molecules and materials that transform, activate, or switch properties in response to physical and chemical stimuli, aiming to discover new functions and drive applications in, e.g., sensing, molecular machinery, and adaptive materials.

## New Adjunct Faculty



**Dr. Adam Leontowich**, Canadian Light Source (CLS), was also welcomed into the Department as an Adjunct Faculty Member. Dr. Leontowich holds a BSc in Chemistry from USask and a PhD in Chemistry from McMaster University.

Dr. Leontowich is a scientist working at the Brockhouse sector of beamlines at the CLS. Dr. Leontowich will supervise undergraduate research students and co-supervise graduate students in the Department and will contribute to teaching materials chemistry courses in the Department.



**Dr. Krista Gill**, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, was welcomed into the Department as an Adjunct Faculty member. Dr. Gill holds a BSc in Chemical Biology from McMaster University and a PhD in Chemistry from the University of Prince Edward Island.

Dr. Gill is currently a Research Scientist in natural products chemistry at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. Dr. Gill will supervise undergraduate research students and co-supervise graduate students in the Department and will contribute to teaching organic chemistry courses in the Department.



**Sam Ekanayake** joined the Department of Chemistry as a Storekeeper in Summer 2025. Sam previously worked at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine for 11 years.

# Active Learning Pilot in CHEM 112 and CHEM 115

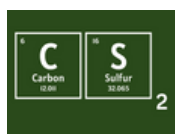


Thanks to support from the POGIL project, the Gwenna Moss Centre for Teaching and Learning and the College of Arts and Science, the active learning method **Process Oriented Guided Inquiry Learning**, e.g. POGIL, is being implemented by **Eric Price** in CHEM 112 (term 1) and by **Stephen Urquhart** in CHEM 115 (term 2).

**Eric Price, Stephen Urquhart** and **Amy Stevens** successfully applied for the POGIL project Large Chemistry Classroom Transformation award earlier this summer. This grant is designed to help the instructors of large introductory chemistry sections incorporate POGIL active learning methods into their lecture sections. The most significant resource from POGIL project is **mentorship** from chemistry professor peers who use POGIL when they teach their own large intro chemistry sections. The team is having regular Zoom meetings with our POGIL mentors, Susan Shadle of Boise State and Charity Lovitt of the University of Washington Bothel. We're joined by Roberta Cambell – Chudoba and Aditi Garg of the Gwenna Moss Centre for Teaching and Learning, who will help the team with formative feedback to refine what we're doing in the classroom.

More details on POGIL can be found at the project web page: [pogil.org](http://pogil.org). Research shows that POGIL learning methods improve student academic performance and lead to a better content knowledge retention into subsequent chemistry courses. POGIL's explicit focus on process and group work skill development will help our students to develop the skills sought by future employers – which includes professors, as future research supervisors.

If you're curious about POGIL teaching, please reach out to any of us. Stephen Urquhart is using POGIL in CHEM 344 (Quantum Mechanics) in term 1. Please let Stephen know if you want to see POGIL in action ... but you'll be required to join and work with a group!



## Chemistry Students' Society (CS2)

The **Chemistry Students' Society** had a very successful academic year! Our members list consisted of 164 students whom we were able to connect with and support through our lounge in Thorv 164, our Discord server, and many fun events.

Focusing on academics, we hosted our usual midterm tutorials for CHEM 112, 115, 221, 231, 242, 250, and 255. Beginning in the Winter semester, we workshoped a new form of tutorials which consisted of late night study sessions with guided help on pre-made worksheets. This turned out to be a major success with lots of positive feedback from students. We also hosted our annual Research Night in January where we had presentations from industry chemists Kripa Grewal and Dr. Herman Coceancigh, from PhD student Siddhant Singh, and from department faculty **Dr. Amy Stevens** and **Dr. David Palmer**. We had an amazing turnout with over 50 people in attendance.

Our year of fun events began in September where we participated in Welcome Week in the bowl. We did our popular freeze-dried ice cream which no surprise was a hit, and we were able to reach out to many new and returning students. We had a tie-dye lab coat event again in the Fall resulting in many more undergraduate students with fun and colourful lab coats in their labs. We also hosted our once a semester "Drinking with the Profs" events at the Thirsty Scholar which featured a chair configuration drawing contest, Periodic Table Jeopardy, and a cup pong tournament. This was a great way to bring students and faculty together for a night of socialization and fun! We had successful merch sales with beautiful new designs and many exciting end-of-year events such as a movie night featuring "The Princess Bride", bowling, and a grad event to send off all of the graduating undergraduate students. Here's to a busy year, and many more to come!

We wouldn't have been as successful if it wasn't for the department and all of the amazing faculty and staff within it. We are especially grateful for all of the support from **Salma Bennaïem, Bonita Wong**, and our faculty advisor **Dr. Amy Stevens**. We greatly appreciate how you make it possible for us to continue to share our love for chemistry with others!

Our core values as a group are supporting undergraduate students in their studies and making Chemistry a welcoming place. We are so proud of what we have accomplished and are very excited for more fun in the upcoming year!



Team Photo

### 2024- 25 CS2 Executive

Sandra Leblanc (**President**)  
Claire Southam (**VP Finance**)  
Taylor Swistun (**VP Internal**)  
Vacant (**VP External**)  
Shanelle O'Connor (**VP Academic**)  
Emjay Koller (**VP Admin**)  
Jada Mirosovsky (**VP Design**)  
Viktor Shramko (**VP Social**)  
Irene Nguyen (**EDI & Safety Officer**)  
Shanzay Nawaz (**2nd Year Rep**)  
Karl Ottenbreit (**3rd Year Rep**)  
Wyatt Scaddan (**4th Year Rep**)



Drinking with the Profs



Research Night



Midterm Study Sessions



Welcome Week

# USASK-WIC

The **USASK-WIC**, organized a variety of impactful events during the 2024–2025 academic year to support and uplift underrepresented communities in science. We hosted our Annual Multicultural Potluck, celebrating cultural diversity through a wonderful array of traditional dishes from many different countries.

The event provided a great opportunity for our department community to connect and socialize. Furthermore, we arranged two insightful tours to provide students with direct exposure to industrial environments across different sectors. The first tour was at the Sylvia

Fedoruk Canadian Centre for Nuclear Innovation, where students learned about the production of PET radioactive molecules used in hospitals and visited the research facilities focused on developing advanced imaging techniques. The second tour was held at Australian Laboratory Services (ALS) and hosted by Colby Bingham. Students learned about the various departments inside the company, analytical techniques, and quality assurance processes, gaining insight into how data is generated, validated, and prepared for clients. Additionally, we welcomed Phil Boutin from SaskPower as a guest speaker in our Friday seminar series. He shared his professional experiences and expertise with the students and participated in a follow-up Q&A session.

During the Fall term, we hosted a successful Game Night to help students unwind from research stress. Graduate and undergraduate students enjoyed card games, laughter, and friendly competition. The evening was topped off with pizza and Indian samosas, creating a fun and flavorful experience. In the spirit of Christmas we held a nice competition of decorating a chemistry-themed Christmas tree.

We encouraged students to be creative and have fun in addition to having a chance to win a delicious prize. In the Spring, we organized an EDI-supported workshop for parents in academia, focusing on the unique challenges they face. Two speakers from the Wellness Centre shared practical tools to help balance work and home life. The event included lunch and souvenirs for attendees. Along with these events, our group welcomed new students on Orientation Day with treats and swag bags, and took care of the decorations for the Holiday Social Event.

It was a joyful and activity-filled academic year!

If you are interested in joining USASK-WIC, please contact us at

[womeninchemsask@gmail.com](mailto:womeninchemsask@gmail.com)

## 2024-25 WIC Executive

**Chair:** Anne Oliveira

**Vice President:** Farah Mustafa

**Secretary:** Negin Neissari

**Treasurer:** Tahira Hassan

**Communication and Social Outreach coordinator:** Mariam Mir

**Events Coordinator:** Gopal Singh

**Industrial Liaison and Seminar coordinator:** Melissa Houseman

**Undergrad Student Representative:** Giao Nguyen



ALS Tour



Fedoruk Tour



Parent EDI Event



Potluck



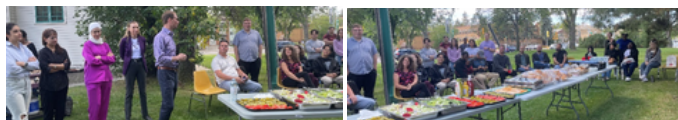
Game Night

**President:** Ozra Mohammadi  
**Vice President, Internal Operations:** Lozaalsadat Taghavi  
**Vice President, External Operations:** Marco Justino  
**Vice President, Finance:** Jaydeep Kumar  
**Vice President, Communications:** Pedro de Franca Souza  
**Graduate Students' Association Rep:** Graduate  
**Association Committee Rep:** Department meeting Rep:  
**Safety meeting Rep:** Student representatives: Vi Phan,  
 Mario Proulx, Srikant Singh, Negin Neissari, Gopal Singh,  
 Siddhant Singh, Mariam Mir.

# Chemistry Course Council (CCC)

The Chemistry Course Council spent this academic year actively supporting the Department of Chemistry graduate students, not just hosting events, but by bringing voice to them and looking after their wellbeing, inclusion, and professional growth. From socials to workshops, CCC efforts focused on improving the department's sense of community, celebrating diverse identities, and listening closely to the needs of our peers across the department. Looking forward to another great year!

## 1. Welcome event and End-of-Summer Social



Two welcome events were held to kick off the academic year. From 11:00 to 11:45 AM, a workshop in S295 introduced new Chemistry graduate students to the department, starting with a guided tour of key spaces in the Thorvaldson Building, followed by coffee and a meet-and-greet. The session included a short presentation on departmental services and CCC activities, and each attendee received a swag bag courtesy of Women in Chemistry (WiC), with approximately 10 participants attending. Later, from 12:00 to 2:00 PM, a lively outdoor BBQ at the GSA Commons (1337 College Drive) brought together 50–70 faculty, staff, and students. The event was well-received for its good food, welcoming atmosphere, and sense of community.

## 2. Diwaloween (Diwali + Halloween Cultural Fusion Event)



A unique fusion event combined Diwali and Halloween celebrations. Featuring cultural music and dance, diya decorating stations, a costume contest with prizes, and traditional Indian snacks, the event drew approximately 50 participants and was praised for its creative blend of cultural traditions.

## 3. Holiday Social – Department of Chemistry



The annual holiday celebration was held at the GSA Commons, 1337 College Drive. WiC and CS2 collaborated with CCC to make this event successful. Open to students, staff, and faculty, the event featured a buffet dinner with saffron chicken kebab, pasta, rice, salad, cookies, and drinks, along with a cash bar, holiday-themed games, trivia, and a group photo area with props. With an estimated attendance of 80, the event was warmly received for its festive and relaxed atmosphere.

## 4. Python Workshop



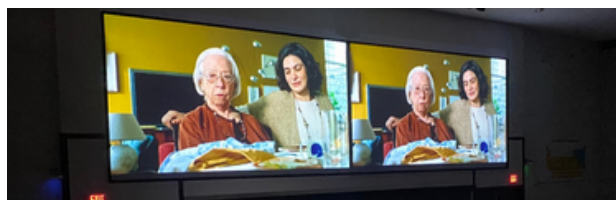
**Dr. Scott Rosendahl** (CLS) facilitated an introductory programming workshop for Chemistry students, focusing on basic Python skills for research and data analysis. With approximately 40 attendees, the session was well-received, complemented by coffee and cookies, and generated strong interest in future coding workshops.

## 5. Nowruz – Persian New Year Celebration



Nowruz celebration was held to mark the Persian New Year. The event featured a traditional Haft-Seen table, a simulation of the Nowruz moment, Persian sweets, and saffron tea, offering attendees a cultural experience that welcomed spring with warmth and inclusivity. Approximately 25 people attended and appreciated the thoughtful, enriching celebration.

## 6. Movie night



CCC hosted a Movie Night as an end-of-term gathering in Thorv 105, with 22 attendees. Students enjoyed the movie along with pizza and pop, and the event received positive feedback.

# Student Achievements



**2025 Taube  
Medallist**

**Bernd Steiger**

## Taube Medal

The **Taube Medal** is awarded to the graduate student in the Department of Chemistry who is judged to have made the most significant contribution to research and scholarly activity.

**Bernd's** thesis in **Dr. Wilson's** group describes the development of several categories of biopolymer adsorbent systems that contain chitosan as a scaffold material. Characterization of structure and adsorption properties toward sulfate in aqueous media led to insight on the structure-function relationships of these biocomposite systems. Bernd's research involved studies of the adsorption mechanism and advanced characterization techniques that include solid state NMR and X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy, among other structural tools. Apart from his core thesis research, Bernd successfully led side-projects that contributed significantly to the field of adsorption science and technology. This includes development of slow-release fertilizer systems, sustainable materials for orthophosphate remediation, and a leading edge study with Environment and Climate Change Canada to investigate the role of adsorption of naphthenic acids from oil sands process water onto sedimentary materials.

Bernd's thesis consists of six publications, of which five are first-authored and one as co-author. His academic work during the program resulted in 19 publications overall, in which two USask undergraduate students appeared as first- or co-author contributors. During his program, Bernd also received several awards, including the University of Saskatchewan Dissertation Award (Doctoral) in Physical and Engineering Sciences.

## Chemistry Student Awards

### **Wilma E. Elias Award :**

Melissa Houseman and Farah Mustafa

### **Herzberg Thesis**

#### **Acceleration Award:**

Pedro De Franca Souza and Darshi Disanayaka

### **Herzberg Travel Award:**

Pedro De Franca Souza and Darshi Disanayaka

### **Dean's Scholarship :**

Jay Dave and Marzieh Heidari Nia

### **Sahtout Award:**

Bdhanya Ramaswami

### **Saddington**

Khushveer Kaur  
Jaydeep Kumar

### **75th CGPS Scholarship:**

Stephen Awuku  
Ryan Lloyd  
Mario Proulx  
Ariel Tirado Baca

### **Harold Ross Saddington Award:**

Minh Thu (Irene) Nguyen (undergrad)

### **Robert A. Fuller Award:**

Sandra LeBlanc

### **Patricia Currie Award :**

Taylor M Swistun

### **Dean's Most Outstanding Undergraduate**

#### **Student in Chemistry :**

Emjay Koller

### **Thorvaldson Scholarship :**

Minh Thu (Irene) Nguyen

### **Dr. O. Kenneth Johansson Awards**

Darshi Disanayaka (upper-year chemistry courses), Tianqi Ji (upper-year chemistry courses), Michael Nicklin (first-year chemistry courses), Mario Proulx (honorable mention), Ahmad Salehi (200 level organic chemistry courses), and Shreya Tiwary (first-year chemistry courses)

### **Herzberg Fellowship:**

Mariam Mir

### **Gibson-Steer Award :**

Meruyert Kassymova

## Recent Graduates

### **Fall 2024 Convocation:**

#### **Bachelor of Science 3 Year:**

Kylee Hawkins

#### **PHD:**

Bernd Steiger  
Annastacia Stubbs

### **Spring2025 Convocation:**

#### **Bachelor of Science Honours:**

Nythan Dyck  
Emjay Koller  
Jada Mirosovsky  
Khieu Thien Thuat Nguyen  
Minh Thu Nguyen  
Sandra LeBlanc

#### **PHD:**

Osai Clarke  
Braeden Dessert  
Renita D'Souza  
Dexu Kong  
Mehrnaz Mikhchian  
Srikant Singh

# Students Achievements

**Emjay Koller** was named top undergraduate student in the College of Arts and Science, chemistry, at USask.



**Siddhant Sigh** (Scott Lab) awarded prestigious Kokes award to attend the 29th North American Catalysis Society Meeting in Atlanta in June 2025.



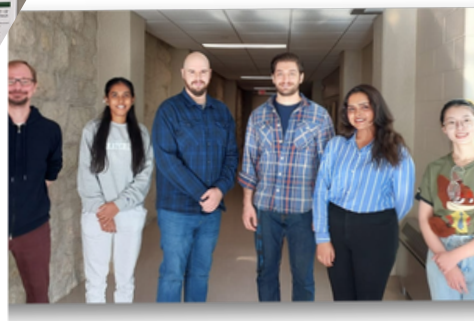
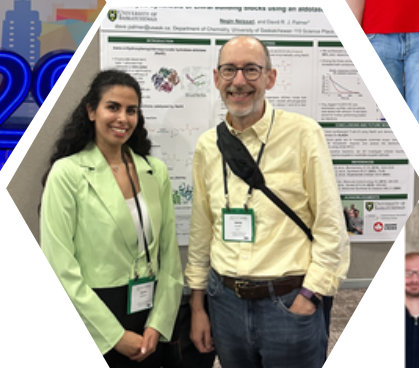
**2025 Undergraduate Summer Research Students.**



**Vi Phan** (Burgess Lab) awarded prestigious Kokes award to attend the 29th North American Catalysis Society Meeting in Atlanta in June 2025.



**Negin Nessari** (Palmer lab) won an award for outstanding poster presentation from the Green Chemistry Division at CSC2025 in Ottawa.



Recipients of the 2024 **Dr.O.Kenneth Johansson** Awards  
L to R: Department Head Andrew Grosvenor, Priyadarshani Disanayaka, Michael Nicklin, Ahmed Salehi, Shreya Tiwary and Tianqi Ji.

# The 7<sup>th</sup> Western Canadian Medicinal Chemistry Workshop

After a Covid-induced hiatus, the **Western Canadian Medicinal Chemistry Workshop** returned in 2024, sponsored by the College of Pharmacy and Nutrition, the Department of Chemistry, the College of Arts and Science, the Biological and Medicinal Chemistry Division of the CSC, and Hermay Labs. The symposium, held September 20–22, was organized by Associate Faculty Member Chemistry **Dr. Ed Krol** and **Dr. David Palmer** and featured 18 oral presentations, a poster session with 22 posters, and a trainee workshop led by USask Chemistry alum Curtis Rieder of Gilead Sciences. The audience of faculty and industry scientists, and undergraduate, graduate, and postdoctoral trainees from across western Canada heard invited presentations from Jinqiang Hou (Lakehead University), Matthew Macauley (University of Alberta), Tony Ruzzini (USask), Kirsten Wolthers (University of British Columbia), and Jessica Willi (University of Lethbridge). Among the student prize winners were Chemistry students **Nathan Dyck** and **Ahmad Reza Salehi**.



7<sup>th</sup> WCMCW poster session



Left to right: Tony Ruzzini, Ed Krol, Curtis Rieder, Jinqiang Hou, Jessica Willi, Matthew Macauley, Dave Palmer, Kirsten Wolthers.



Left to right: Nathan Dyck, Emma Finch, Alexandra Cullen, Agnes Truc Nguyen, Ahmad Reza Salehi, Kristin Labasan, and Marziyeh Ghanbarian.

## Spinks Lecture 2024-25



The **J.W.T. Spinks Lectures** are an annual series of lectures established in 1975 to recognize the exceptional contributions Dr. John William Tranter Spinks (J. W. T. Spinks) made to his department, the University of Saskatchewan, and the broader scientific community. Serving as a dedicated faculty member, Head of the Chemistry Department, Dean of the College of Graduate Studies and Research, University President (1960–1975), and President Emeritus, Dr. Spinks was a central figure at our institution from 1930 until his passing in 1997. Throughout his distinguished career, Dr. Spinks significantly advanced both photochemistry and radiochemistry, pioneered the use of isotopes in agricultural and chemical research, and shaped higher education policy at both national and international levels.

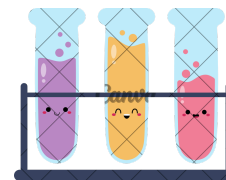
The Spinks Lecture series brings eminent scientists and engineers from around the globe to the University of Saskatchewan each year to share their knowledge, experiences, and insights with students, faculty, and staff. Hosted in collaboration with the Department of Chemical Engineering, the lectures alternate between Chemistry and Chemical Engineering every third year.

The 2024-2025 Spinks Lecturer was Dr. Yunjie Xu, Professor of Chemistry at the University of Alberta. Dr. Xu presented an engaging public lecture on March 20th titled "The Twisting World of Chirality: A Molecular Perspective." Drawing a connection to Louis Pasteur's pioneering discovery of molecular chirality in 1848, Dr. Xu explained the profound implications of distinguishing left- and right-handed molecules, emphasizing their vastly differing biological and pharmaceutical effects. She discussed how contemporary spectroscopic techniques, complemented by theoretical modeling, enhance our understanding of chiral recognition, transfer, and amplification, and explored exciting applications ranging from drug development to materials design. The 7:00 pm evening public lecture, held in STM Auditorium, drew strong attendance and concluded with an interactive reception with refreshments where Dr. Xu engaged informally with students, faculty, and community members.

On March 21st, **Dr. Xu** delivered a more specialized research-focused lecture entitled "Unveiling New Chiral Phenomena: A New Type of Chiral Raman Spectroscopy." She discussed her research group's discovery of electronically enhanced circularly polarized Raman (eCP-Raman) spectroscopy, which combines electronic circular dichroism and circularly polarized Raman spectroscopy into a powerful single technique. Her innovative approach provides deeper insights into complex chiral phenomena, particularly through luminescence spectral features of europium complexes. These groundbreaking findings promise advancements in chiral sensors and broader practical applications in chemistry and materials science. During her visit, Dr. Xu met individually with faculty members and participated in vibrant question-and-answer sessions with both undergraduate (CS2) and graduate (CCC) student societies, greatly enriching the experience for our department.

The Department of Chemistry warmly thanks the College of Arts and Science and the University of Saskatchewan for their ongoing support, and everyone involved for making the 2024-2025 Spinks Lecture a resounding success.

# Outreach by the Numbers



**Spring 2025** marked the 15<sup>th</sup> year that the Department of Chemistry has hosted grade school students participating in two of the larger formally organized outreach programs handled centrally by the Science Outreach office in the college. These are the **Kamskénow Program** and the **Museum of Natural Sciences field trips**. Hundreds of elementary school students come through our department each year because of these programs. Not only do these students get to do some fun chemistry-based activities, but many get to experience being on the USask campus and in a real chemistry lab for the first time. We hope that they can imagine that someday they too may be students here.

As an ode to the length of participation in these programs, we thought it would be fun to share some facts and comments related to the Department's outreach efforts in these two programs.

Number of students who have participated since 2011: **5400!**

Average rating (by students) out of five stars on their experiences with us: **4.84** ★

Percentage of students who say they learn something new: **95.9%**

Percentage of students who say the field trip is fun: **98.4%**

Number of minutes for field trip spots to fill up once the bookings go live: **<15 min!** (Chemistry sessions are always the first to be 'sold out'!)

Here are a few of our favorite comments from teachers:

*"This program is essential for inspiring future scientists. Gives kids the opportunity to have a hands-on experience with science that they would not have access to at school."*

*"Students got so excited doing the experiments! Fantastic – great presenter, cool experiments."*

*"Honestly the BEST field trip I have ever been on – you killed it! All students should get to experience this – Give them all the money – these experiences make future scientists!"*

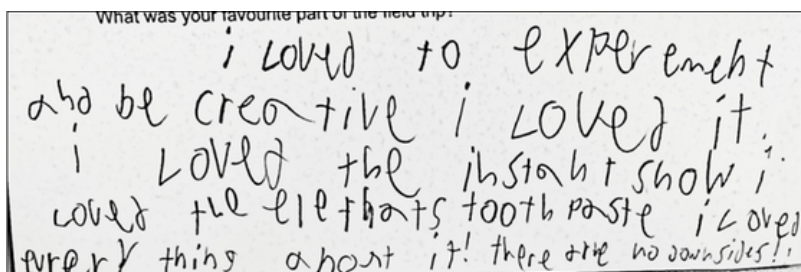
*"Awesome instructors and explanation of chemistry – relating to real-life as well. Inspiring future scientists!"*

*"Shows students' enthusiasm for chemistry and the university in general."*

*"The connections made to real life and climate change were the best part. Amazing demos. Grateful for such a fun experience in chemistry."*

*"What isn't to love! Kids were fully engaged, no complaining, and they learned!"*

And a special quote from one of the students:



The take-home message here is that the outreach work that we do is important for shining a positive light on a science that too often gets a bad rap with the general public and it's highly valued by the teachers and students who come through our facilities.

While the summary this year focused on these two programs, it would be remiss not to mention that there are numerous other ad hoc field trips, booths, tours and activities that department faculty, staff, and students host throughout the year for our Saskatchewan community including outside organizations such as the Girl Guides, SciFi, and Science Rendezvous. The next university-wide event is USask Open House on Friday, September 19th where the Dept. Of Chemistry participates in information booths/demonstrations for thousands of prospective undergraduates and we welcome more of you to get involved!

There is truly an impressive and important ongoing departmental effort that sometimes goes unseen, but of which we should be very proud.



## Wilson and Florence Quail Fund in Chemistry



**Wilson Quail** was a faculty member in the Department of Chemistry for 39 years before retiring in 2003. He enjoyed this long career as an inorganic chemist and crystallographer, studying everything from metal fluorides to proteins. He continued to work as an emeritus professor in the Saskatchewan Structural Sciences Centre for over a decade, collaborating with researchers in the department. He and his wife Florence sent all their children to the U of S, cementing a strong relationship between the University and the Quail family. In 2017, Wilson and Florence agreed to a generous gift to the department, with the goal of helping new faculty with their research.

**Dr. Miguel Soto** received the Quail Award to help launch his new research program in the Department of Chemistry. The award is supporting the setup of his laboratory by providing key resources such as equipment, reagents, and glassware. This will give his team the tools they need to begin exploring new molecules and materials.

The department asks everyone to join us in thanking the Quails for their generosity and support of Chemistry. For information on how you can support research, teaching, and student experience in the Department of Chemistry, please contact the Department Head.

## Samuel and Ethel Brown Memorial Fund

**Weldon G. Brown** was born in Saskatoon in 1908 and completed both his bachelor's and master's degrees in chemistry at USask by age 20. After a PhD at the University of California and postdoctoral experience in Europe and America, Dr. Brown enjoyed a long career in the Department of Chemistry at the University of Chicago, where he became known for the invention of paper chromatography and pioneering work on lithium aluminum hydride reductions. Dr. Brown, as a distinguished alumnus from our institution, was presented with a Doctor of Laws degree by Thorbergur Thorvaldson at the University's Golden Jubilee Convocation ceremony in 1959.

Dr. Brown's family thanked his home department by establishing the Samuel and Ethel Brown Memorial Fund in honour of his parents. The fund is used to support special projects in the Department of Chemistry and has received generous ongoing support from Dr. Brown's son, Ross Brown.

The Brown Memorial Fund provided support for the following activities during the period of Sept 2023 to April 2025.

Graduate Student conference travel:

Canadian Chemistry Conference and Exhibition (CSC 2024): 28 students

20<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Novel Aromatic Compounds (ISNA20), Toronto ON, Aug 11-16, 2024: 2 students

27<sup>th</sup> Canadian Symposium on Catalysis, Sherbrooke QC, May 12-15, 2024: 2 students

Total spending on student travel: \$9,426.85.

The fund was also used to pay for the renewal of a 3-year software license agreement of the Chem Draw program which is used by faculty, staff, and students in the Department (cost was \$18,032.17).



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We are always interested in knowing what our alumni are up to! Please send updates to [chem.dept@usask.ca](mailto:chem.dept@usask.ca).

We acknowledge that we live and work on Treaty 6 Territory and the Homeland of the Métis. We pay our respect to the First Nations and Métis ancestors of this place and reaffirm our relationship with one another.