Dear Friends –

At one point during the bucketing rain in May, students surfed in Mid-campus Creek; and June’s longest legislative session in KS history culminated in another year without much support for Higher Education. July is a good time to update you on many things!

After last year’s letter was mailed, we were delighted to welcome Santosh Aryal as an Assistant Professor of Organic Chemistry - with a twist: he joined us through a cluster hire initiative within K-State’s new Nanotechnology Innovation Center. Santosh earned B.Sc. and M.Sc. degrees in Chemistry and in Biochemistry in Nepal and received his Ph.D. in BioNanosystem Engineering from Chonbuk National University in Korea. Before joining us, he was a project scientist in the Department of Nanoengineering at UC-San Diego and an Instructor in Translational Imaging at the Houston Methodist Research Institute. Santosh’s research interests lie broadly in nanomedicine, encompassing things such as polymeric drug release vehicles and the design and synthesis of contrast agents for PET and MRI. His work dovetails nicely with that of several colleagues and will open doors to broad collaborations for both research and proposals.

We learned in May that the ACS has re-accredited our B.S. program for another five years. Although that was not a surprise, it is a testament to the quality of our undergraduate education and it reflects well on the sustained commitment and effort put forth by our faculty, staff and GTAs.

During the past year, a total of 36 students graduated from the department. Of these, 18 received B.S. degrees; another 6 earned M.S. degrees; and 12 students successfully defended their Ph.D. theses. It is encouraging to note that, among this most recent group of KSU Chemistry alumni, exactly 50% are women.

Thanks to a strong team effort led by Chris Culbertson as PI, the NSF renewed our Research Experiences for Undergraduates grant for another 3 years. Our faculty members will host 10 diverse students from primarily undergraduate institutions and community colleges to conduct fundamental research, participate in professional development activities, and interact with students in other REU programs on campus. It also affords us a valuable opportunity to recruit top students to our graduate program.

Christine Aikens received the 2015 Lectureship sponsored by the ACS Division of Physical Chemistry and the Journal of Physical Chemistry A. The award carries with it a $3,000 prize and an invitation to speak on her work at the ACS National Meeting in Boston. Christine was also promoted to Professor and granted a sabbatical leave for Fall, which she will largely spend developing proposals with the Soft Matter Group in K-State Physics.

Stefan Bossmann was named “Highest Honored International Expert” and an Honorary Distinguished Professor at Kunming Medical University in China, where his technology for early cancer detection has screened over 10,000 patients and discovered more than 500 previously unknown cancers.

Ryszard Jankowiak was named as a Distinguished Fellow of the Kosciusko Foundation in New York, joining several Nobel laureates and National Academy of Science members in this inaugural class.

Our dear friend and colleague, Emeritus Professor Jim Copeland, passed away on January 21; he will be sorely missed. Jim was a regular and welcome visitor to the department throughout the years following his retirement in 1996. A brief obituary appeared in the April 20 issue of C&E News and one provided by his family can be accessed at the URL below: www.ymlfuneralhome.com/obituary/5379

As always, I want to thank each of you for your ongoing support of our department. The rocky times for higher education in KS show no signs of easing, yet our students and faculty continue to achieve amazing things. With your help, we have been able to increase our scholarship aid to deserving students; we have been able to improve our instructional and research infrastructure; and have been able to maintain both a departmental seminar series and travel support for our students, faculty and staff. More than ever before, your support is having a positive impact on so many aspects of what we’re trying to achieve.

Sincerely,

Eric Maatta
Mr. Ohno’s Ships Sail to a New Harbor

Five glass ships - the trio of Columbian vessels, HMS Victory, and the USS Constitution - built by Mitsugi Ohno that once graced the 2nd floor foyer of CBC are now delighting a broader audience in the KSU Student Union. After considerable discussion, and with Mrs. Nao Ohno’s blessing, we decided that these unique artworks deserved greater public exposure, and the Union’s renovation offered the opportunity.

Moving these delicate objects required months of detailed planning by Jim Hodgson, ably assisted by Ron Jackson, and a talented team from Facilities. After a successful voyage, the entire moving crew was treated to lunch by Mrs. Ohno, who also presented everyone with beautiful photobooks of Mr. Ohno’s work.
Generous contributions from the individuals, corporations and organizations above have helped us to support talented undergraduates, attract quality graduate students, enhance our instructional and research equipment, host outstanding scientists for interactive visits, and send our students to conferences to present their research findings. Should you be interested in contributing (or if you have any corrections), please contact our KSU Foundation development team at 1-800-432-1578; 785-532-7980; or janetd@found.ksu.edu. We would be honored to have your support.
A Round of Applause for:

Leila Maurmann, our superb Instrumentation Facility Director, who was promoted to Research Assistant Professor.

Adam Kell, 5th year Ph.D. student in Ryszard Jankowiak’s group, recipient of a 2015 University Distinguished Professors’ Graduate Student Award.

Raghavender Sirimdas, 2nd year Ph.D. student in Emily McLaurin’s group, who was selected to present his research at the 12th annual Graduate Research Summit at the State Capitol in Topeka.

Duy Hua, whose patent on quinoline derivatives that restore cellular gap junction activity was licensed to Sigma-Aldrich.

Thank you, Maria!

It doesn’t seem fair, yet after Spring 2016, students in our Chem 1 and Chem 2 classes won’t have access to Maria Paukstelis’s extraordinary teaching skills; she has announced that she will retire then. She has been an amazing Instructor in Chemistry since 1969 (!) and has received every teaching award available at K-State, including: the Stamey Award from the College of Arts and Sciences; the CONOCO Outstanding Undergraduate Teaching Award; and the Presidential Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching. Tens of thousands of our students have benefitted from her effective methods, her high standards, and her caring demeanor. We will miss you, Maria! Enjoy all of the things that come next!

NAME
STREET ADDRESS 1
STREET ADDRESS 2
CITY, STATE 00000