

Spring 2006
Volume 2

KSU Chemist

Department of Chemistry - Kansas State University / chemdept@ksu.edu



Upcoming Events:

Sept. 7
Distinguished Alumni Seminar
Prof. Steve Bernasek
Princeton University
King Hall Room 4
1:00 p.m.

Sept. 8 - 9
Alumni Advisory Council Meeting
and
Chemistry Alumni Gathering

Mark your calendar
and plan to join us!

Dear Friends -

It has been a busy and productive year for your Chemistry Department. Our students, faculty and staff members continue to do exceptional things, only some of which can be relayed in the newsletter.

In the Fall of 2005, we welcomed three new faculty members: Assistant Professors Viktor Chikan (physical/materials) and Sundeep Rayat (bioorganic), and Professor Ryszard Jankowiak (biophysical). Each is off to a great start, and I invite you to get to know them better by browsing our website.

Speaking of the website, its revision is taking longer than expected to complete and we hope to have it debut by the end of the summer. I think it will be worth the wait.

In Fall 2005, we enrolled one of the largest classes of new graduate students in recent memory: these 23 new Ph.D. students have selected their thesis advisors and are now fully engaged within their research groups.

Our undergraduate enrollment also

continues to increase, and now stands at nearly 80. Our undergraduate numbers are rising because of two factors: a slight increase in freshman enrollments coupled with a higher rate of retention. The latter is due in large part to Dan Higgins' effective advising: Dan's efforts were recognized in 2006 with the William L. Stamey Advising Award from the College of Arts and Sciences.

This Spring, we also began the process to re-establish the Chemistry Alumni Advisory Council. This group will serve as a resource to our students and will seek to muster support for enhancing our ability to recruit outstanding graduate students to our program. I encourage you to share your talents with us by becoming involved with this group - please contact me if you're interested.

I hope to see you this September!

Sincerely,

Eric Maatta

Professor and Head

eam@ksu.edu

Three Chemistry Faculty Members Earn Promotion

Chemistry faculty members Christer Aakeröy, Dan Higgins, and Chris Levy each earned promotions effective July 2006. Christer and Dan were promoted to the rank of Professor, and Chris was promoted to the rank of Associate Professor with tenure.

Christer joined the department in 1996 and was promoted to Associate Professor in 2001. His research on supramolecular chemistry and crystal engineering has garnered international renown, as reflected by his service on the Editorial Boards of three journals. Christer is one of the department's most gifted teachers and chairs our Graduate Recruiting Committee.

Dan also joined the faculty in 1996 and was promoted to Associate Professor in 2001. His research interests include near-field and atomic force microscopies, the study of

mesoporous silica sol-gels using single molecule fluorescence, and the preparation and study of organic semiconducting thin films. Dan's research has been featured in invited articles in *Accounts of Chemical Research* and *Nature Materials*. Dan also serves as the department's lead undergraduate advisor, and manages our undergraduate scholarships.

Chris joined the faculty in 2000 as an Assistant Professor. His research interests include the design and synthesis of helical ligands and their transition metal complexes, green chemistry, and bio-inspired stereo-selective catalysis. Chris was the recipient of an NSF CAREER award in 2004. He has completely revamped our Inorganic Techniques laboratory, and is a coordinator of our outreach activities at K-State's annual Open House event.

Congratulations to each of them, and well done!



Chris Levy, Dan Higgins
and Christer Aakeröy

Chemistry Alumni Gathering and Alumni Council Meeting in September!

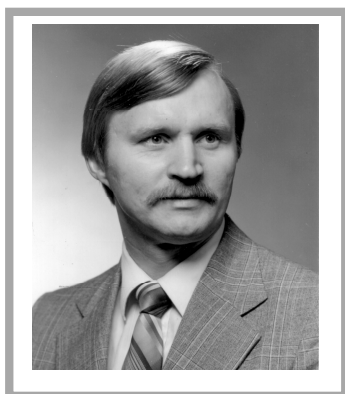
In March, a group of alumni gathered with current KSU chemistry faculty and students at the new Alumni Center for a day of planning and information sharing in preparation for the re-formation of the Chemistry Alumni Advisory Council.

Members of this core group included Dr. Jim Curtis (PhD 1971) who will serve as Chair, Dr. John Bersheid (BS 1970), Prof. Emeritus Dale Hawley, and Mr. Michael Hinton (BS 1991). Other members include Dr. John Sparapany (PhD 1985), Mr. Jerry Crow (BS 1966), and Dr. Steve Bernasek (BS 1971).

The Council's establishment will take place on Friday Sept. 8 and you are cordially invited to participate.

To entice you to come back to Manhattan this September, we're also planning several alumni events. Among the activities planned for the weekend are an ice cream social with our undergraduates sponsored by Alpha Chi Sigma and a tour of NanoScale Materials' new research facilities. If you would like to attend the K-State football game on Sat. Sept. 9, we've arranged for a block of seats to be held for purchase through June; if you are interested, please contact Connie Cusimano (785-532-6665; cusi2@ksu.edu) for information on how to purchase these tickets.

Whether or not you can participate in the Alumni Council at this time, we'd love to see you! Send an e-mail (eam@ksu.edu) if you can come.



Remember when?

Another of the photographs we discovered in the Willard Hall cleanout of summer 2004 is this vintage 1980 formal portrait of Ken Klabunde. At that time, Ken was newly-arrived at KSU, having been hired as Chemistry Department Head from the University of North Dakota.

After nearly thirty years - comprising 300 manuscripts, ten of millions of dollars in

grants, dozens of patents, and scores of Ph.D. students - Ken continues to be one of the University's most prolific and respected teacher-scholars. His company NanoScale Materials now employs 40 scientists in Manhattan and was recognized in 2005 by *Business Week* as a "player" to watch in nanomaterials. *Popular Mechanics* honored Ken with a Breakthrough Award in 2005 for NanoScale's FAST-ACT detoxifying agent.

Donors to the Chemistry Department in 2005: Thanks to one and all!

\$1000 +	\$100 -- \$249	Up to \$100
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Call, write, e-mail, or
better yet, stop by.
We'd enjoy hearing
from you!

New website coming!
visit us online at:
www.ksu.edu/chem/



Yasmin Patell

Continuing Our Tradition of Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching

At the Spring 2006 commencement ceremonies, Dr. Yasmin Patell received the Presidential Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching - the University's highest teaching honor. Yasmin is a remarkably dedicated and effective instructor in our freshman program. She also serves on the ACS General Examination Committee and in that capacity helped to create the standardized General Chemistry exams that will be used by thousands of students nationwide.

Yasmin and our colleague Maria Paukstelis (a 1996 recipient of the same award) combine to provide superb instruction for all students beginning their study of chemistry at KSU. We're justifiably proud of both of them.

A Closing Anecdote...

Former Head of the Department, Professor Emeritus Dale Hawley recounted a story from the early 1990s about Ken Klabunde.

Ken took a group of Boy Scouts up to the Boundary Waters area of Minnesota for an extended outing and canoe trip. The timing happened to coincide with a deadline for Ken to submit a renewal proposal to the NSF.

After each day of paddling and portaging, Ken would put pen to paper after the boys were in their tents for the night. After two weeks, the trip was completed, as was Ken's NSF proposal.

It was typed up and sent off upon his return. The result? A perfect set of reviews: each rated the proposal as 5 out of 5!

A Round of Applause for:

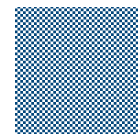
Asst. Professor Chris Culbertson, our department's most recent recipient of an NSF CAREER Award (2006-2010).

Matt Basel, senior Chemistry major, who was named by USA Today as an Honorable Mention member of their All-USA College Academic team.

Prof. Stefan Bossmann, chosen by on-campus KSU students as the Housing and Dining Professor of the Year for 2005.

Amy Twite, sophomore in Chemistry and Microbiology, who was awarded a Goldwater Scholarship in 2006. Amy is one of 3 current Goldwater Scholars in the Department and is our 13th overall.

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