

Department of Chemistry Newsletter



Issue 2 (May), 2021

Irving K. Barber Faculty of Science, University of British Columbia
Sylx Okanagan Nation Territory

Announcements

Congratulations to:

All undergraduate students for their graduation on June 2nd, 2021.

You have made it despite the pandemic and all the obstacles it throws in your ways.

Congratulations!



Dr. Conor Prankevicius for the 5-year NSERC Discovery Grant entitled “Multifunctional borylenes for metal- and boron-mediated reactions”, complimented with a Discovery Launch Supplement award. This funding will allow Dr. Prankevicius to support his first graduate student joining the Department in the Fall 2021 and Winter 2022 terms.



Dr. Wesley Zandberg for the CFI Innovation Fund’s MIDAS (Microbial diversity expansion for applied sciences) led by Dr. Thibault Mayor and Dr. Vivien Measday (UBC Vancouver) being fully funded by BCKDF. The full proposal is for CA\$ 8.1 mil, and Dr. Zandberg is looking forwards to bringing some new “toys” to our Department.



Riley Petillion for the 2021 Judit Moldovan Memorial Teaching Assistant Award (graduate TA category).



Rebecca Chadney for the 2021 Judit Moldovan Memorial Teaching Assistant Award (undergraduate TA category).

Department Head search:



The application deadline for Head of Chemistry at UBC Okanagan is **11:59 pm** on **June 14th, 2021**. Please continue to share the advertisement and encourage suitable candidates to apply before this date.

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The full posting can be found here: https://ubc.wd10.myworkdayjobs.com/en-US/ubcfacultyjobs/job/UBC-Okanagan-Campus/Head-of-Chemistry---Associate-or-Full-Professor-Competition_JR2242

News from the Department

Judit Moldovan Memorial Chemistry Teaching Assistant Awards

(by Dr. Jennifer Robison)

Each year, the UBCO Chemistry Department presents the Judit Moldovan Memorial Chemistry Teaching Assistant Awards, consisting of a certificate and a \$500 prize, to the most deserving Graduate Chemistry TA and Undergraduate Chemistry TA. The awardees are chosen for their teaching excellence, leadership, enthusiasm in their role as a TA, and service to both the Chemistry Department and their fellow students.

Judit Moldovan was the UBCO Chemistry Laboratory Manager from 2005 to 2011. The Moldovan Memorial TA awards were established by Judit's children to honor her memory and her love of the sciences and her teaching assistants. Information about the award and past recipients can be found at https://chemistry.ok.ubc.ca/judit_moldovan/.

Additional information about Judit's life, the awards, and how to contribute to the award funds may be found at: <https://give.ubc.ca/memorial/judit-moldovan/> and <https://give.ubc.ca/memorial/judit-moldovan-grad-award/>.

2021 Graduate Student recipient: Riley Petillion. Riley played an instrumental role in developing content for C203/204 labs for on-line delivery. He filmed and edited most of the labs for use as the cornerstone of our on-line curriculum. In addition he created self-marked on-line pre-lab quizzes and pre-lab procedure tests as the pre-lab assignments for each lab (which helped reduce hours spent marking by TAs). When he actively taught, he mixed using the videos with real-time live streaming to help us develop best practices for teaching labs on-line. He received very positive feedback from his students about how he made the labs more engaging and a positive environment for learning. He continuously seeks to improve the lab experience for students, through his own research, and actively applies this to his teaching.

2021 Undergraduate student recipient: Rebecca Chadney. Rebecca not only taught double assignments of 1st year Chem labs this past year, but also volunteered to build curriculum for our on-line labs. This included creating videos on how to use excel to build graphs, developing quizzes for labs based on external resource assignments, and preparing of TA powerpoint guides for use in replacement of the TA board note talks we would normally give for in-person labs. She was very focused on improving the learning experience for students, in her own sections as well across the entire student body of 1st year Chem. She routinely actively shared possible improvements we could make during TA meetings and in discussions with staff (such as increased content in our TA guides, ways she handled student office hours, marking guides, etc.). We have adopted many of these improvements as best practices in our continued on-line instruction.

Chemistry Food Shack

(by Dr. Isaac Li)

UBC Okanagan is a food desert and students in our laboratories have suffered. For the past 2 months, my students Vanessa White and Allison Leam have been piloting a “snack shack” program in the FIPKE lunch room and it’s received positive responses from many other students. We started the program providing simple snacks (chips, bars, cup noodles, pizza pockets) and are now considering to expand the menu with more food options (e.g. frozen sandwich, pizza, soup, etc.).

This is an honour system, run by student, self-sustainable, and non-profit. We aim to keep the cost of food = purchase price from grocery stores (individual items cost \$ 0.2–2.5). With this, we hope no students will need to make compromise between work and food. And we’re now ready to open the system to everyone (lab student + staff + faculty) who has access to the FIPKE lunch room. Please tell your lab members about it:

1. Follow the instruction to sign up:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1TPdo_7xB7AG9HpSMn_iHBjOgl8RBWehCSiABn8lOFxA/edit?usp=sharing (QR code also on fridge and cabinet doors)

2. Log your take

3. Eat

If you would like to support, please consider:

- Donating a seed fund (email Vanessa White, treasurer, cc’d) so students can stock up more varieties without running deficit. Accountability is through transparent transactions on the google sheet above.

- Donating frozen or non-perishable food
- Donating plates and utensils

As they say, food brings people together. 😊 If you have suggestions, please message me, Vanessa or Allison.

Fascination of Plants Day (May 18th)

(by Dr. T. Don Nguyen)



Fascination of Plants Day is an annual event in May, started by plant scientists of the European Plant Science Organisation and celebrated worldwide. As the name suggests, this activity strives to get everyone fascinated about how wonderful and important plants are to our lives.

This year, Dang's PlantBioCoRe group has organized a series of outreach events on "*Medicine in our garden*" for first graders at Glenmore Elementary School. We showed these very young learners how to detect chemicals in common plants based on their smells and colours, and discussed how phytochemicals have been used to cure diseases across the globe.

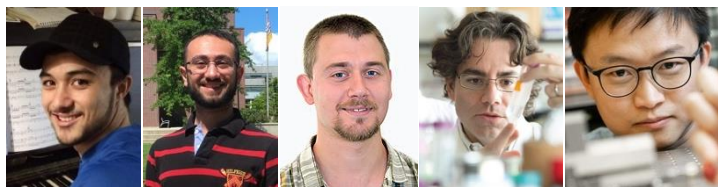
Helena Nunes from Dang's group has been vital in preparing all the activities. And we hope to see more outreach activities from our Department in the near future (see "**Ideas in Development**" below).

New members of the Department of Chemistry

UBC Co-op Program student: **Jitesh Bhatia** (Dang).

Recent publications

Congratulations to our faculty, postdocs and students for their recent publications!



Adam B. Yasunaga, Yousif Murad, Vojtěch Kapras, Frederic Menard, Isaac TS Li (2021). Quantitative interpretation of cell rolling velocity distribution. *Biophysical Journal*. DOI: [10.1016/j.bpj.2021.04.021](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bpj.2021.04.021)



Taylor E Gray, Kamal Narayana, Alexander M. Garner, Samantha A. Bakker, Rachael KH Yoo, Amanda J Fischer-Tlustos, Michael A. Steele, Wesley F Zandberg (2021). Analysis of the biosynthetic flux in bovine milk oligosaccharides reveals competition between sulfated and sialylated species and the

existence of glucuronic acid-containing analogues. *Food Chemistry*. DOI: [10.1016/j.foodchem.2021.130143](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodchem.2021.130143)

Seminars



June 15th, 2021 (Tuesday)
Chem Colloquium Series

02:30 PM

Dr. Gregory Ferguson (Lehigh University): TBA

Student affairs

Research proposals

None scheduled for June

Ph.D. comprehensive/candidacy oral examination

None scheduled for June

Thesis oral examinations

Abisola Kehinde (Murch) will hold her virtual MSc thesis oral examination (on Zoom) at 1:00 pm on June 22nd, 2021 (Tuesday).

Committee meetings:

None scheduled for June

Important dates

- **June 1, 2021:** Graduate student progress report is due
- **August 30, 2021:** Final deadline for thesis submission with notable sub-deadlines below
 - Thesis to CoGS - 48 hours before final deadline for completion check - **August 28, 2021**
 - Defence - Assume pass with minor revisions that can be completed in less than 2 weeks - Last day for defence is **August 14, 2021**
 - Thesis to CoGS & examining committee - CoGS recommends 6 weeks - Last day to submit to CoGS for defence scheduling is **July 1, 2021**
 - Thesis to Advisory Committee for their approval to schedule defence - Committee can have upto 3 weeks to read and approve the thesis - **June 9, 2021**
 - Thesis to Advisor for final proof read for minor corrections - Normally 1-2 weeks - **June 1, 2021**
 - Thesis to Advisor for rough draft - **April 15, 2021**
 - Committee meeting to approve data and begin writing process - should have been around **April 1st, 2021** if students had wished to complete in the summer.

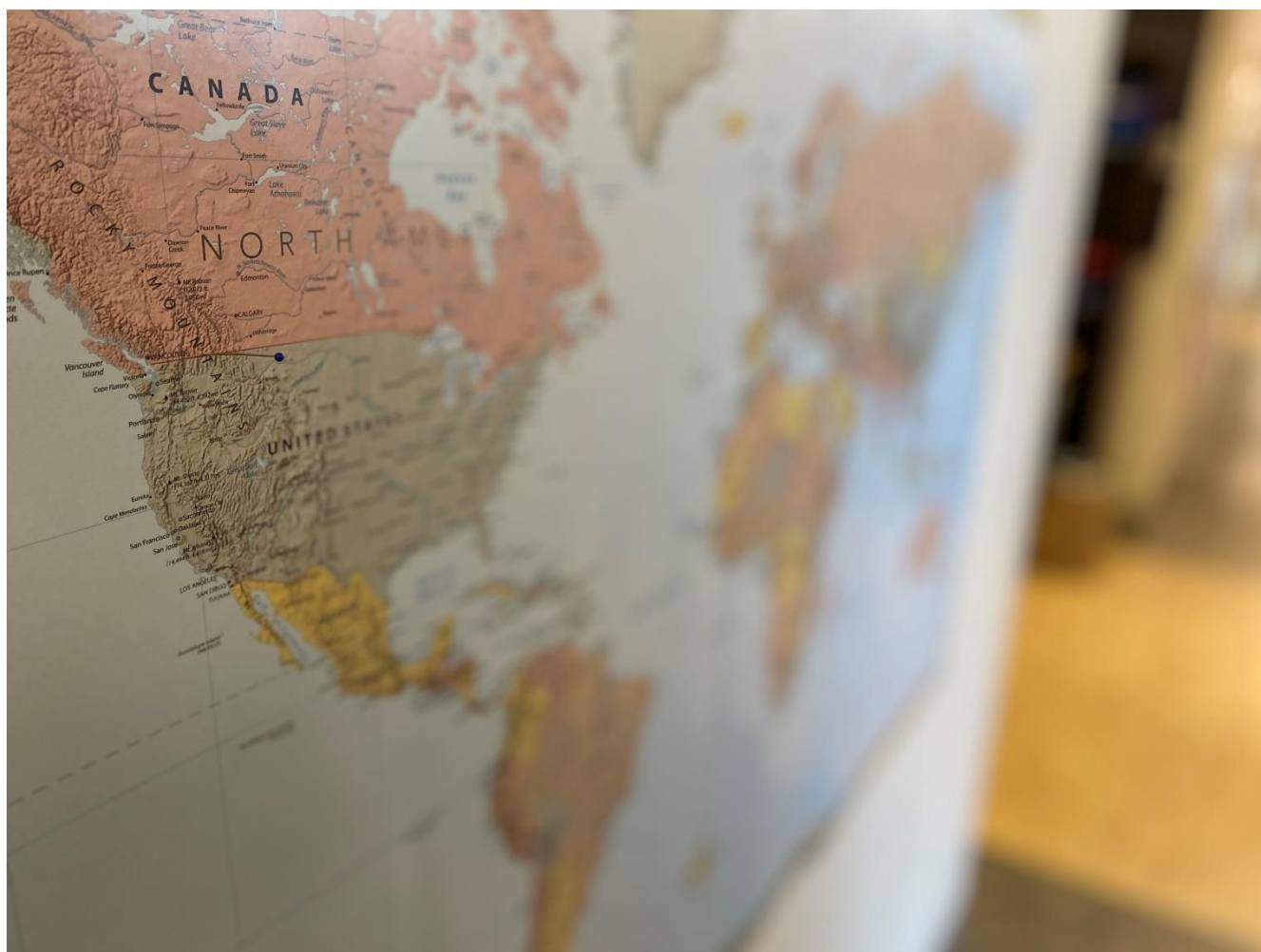
Alumni News

Cameron McGregor has been recently hired for an R&D and manufacturing position that focuses on preventing surgical fibrous adhesions at ARC Medical Devices in Richmond, BC. Cameron just graduated from UBC Okanagan with a BSc degree in medical biochemistry.

Ideas in Development

Please contact the person in charge directly if you want to assist, contribute or collaborate

Celebrating diversity in the Department – We have seen many activities on our campus in May in celebrating Asian Heritage Month and there will be others in June for the National Indigenous History Month. In the spirit of celebrating diversity, a world map is put up across FIP 355 (Department's administration office) starting June 1st. Please put a pin on the map to share with us where you are from.



Department outreach (public engagement) activities – We can have fun and help build a research- and education-friendly community around our campus. You may consider joining our Department's ongoing outreach initiatives (with branded outreach shirts!) lead by **Dr. Tamara Freeman** such as **Chembassadors**, **Pint of Science** (which will be resumed as the COVID-19 situation improves), and **Southern Interior Chemistry Café**. Dr. Freeman is also the Chair of the CIC Southeastern BC local section.



Or if you have individual outreach programs and need some helping hands, the Department's newsletter may be a good place to post your advertisements.

Specific example activities may include discussing science and performing simple experiments in all fields of chemistry at various levels in local schools, events, vendors, and at UBC's open days.

New Resource/Requested Resource

Glassware and organic synthesis equipment: Dang's group is still looking for glassware (including glass chromatography columns, sep funnels, round bottom flasks, collection flasks, etc) and organic synthesis equipment (stands, pumps, vacuum adaptor, condenser, stands...) if you have any to spare. Please contact Thuy (thuy.dang@ubc.ca) or Anh (tuanh.nguyen@ubc.ca). We'll be very happy to collect the glasses if they are just collecting dust somewhere 😊.

Upcoming Events

June: National Indigenous History Month

In light of the recent confirmation of the burial site of 215 children at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School, UBC President Santa Ono has released a statement which includes:

“Our thoughts are with the families, the communities, residential school survivors and all who mourn. We have lowered our flags on both campuses for 215 hours, until sundown on Sunday June 6, in shared grief and to pay our respects to the children of the Kamloops Residential School, their families and communities.

... If you need support, services are available: through the First Nations Longhouse, and counselling services on both the UBC Vancouver and Okanagan campuses.

... Tomorrow marks the beginning of National Indigenous History Month, when we celebrate the history, heritage and diversity of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples in Canada. For UBC in particular, that means celebrating the history of the Musqueam and Syilx peoples on whose traditional and unceded territories the main UBC campuses have the privilege to be situated. As last week’s news reminds us though, that history includes tragedy and sorrow as well as achievement and pride.”

The full statement can be found here: <https://president.ubc.ca/blog/2021/05/31/statement-to-the-community/>

Supports can be found here: <https://students.ok.ubc.ca/health-wellness/counselling-mental-health/>

June 7th–10th: (Virtual) Meeting of the Canadian Society of Plant Biologists,
<https://event.fourwaves.com/cspb-scbv2021/pages>

July 25th–30th, 2021: (Virtual) 60th Meeting of the Phytochemical Society of North America, <https://psna.2021.ca>

August 13th–20th, 2021: (Virtual) 51st IUPAC General Assembly, 48th World Chemistry Congress, and 104th Canadian Chemistry Conference & Exhibition,
<https://www.cheminst.ca/conference/ccce2021/>

We would like to acknowledge that the land on which we gather is the unceded territory of the Syilx (Okanagan) Peoples.

If you would like to contribute to, or have any suggestions for, our Department’s upcoming newsletter, please contact Thuy Dang (thuy.dang@ubc.ca).

Invited speakers:

- Dr. Natalia Dudareva
- Dr. Sarah O'Connor
- Dr. Jing-Ke Weng
- Dr. Joerg Bohlmann
- Dr. Paula Brown
- Dr. Lloyd Summer
- Dr. Reuben Peters



PSNA
2021

ONLINE
ONLY
07/25-30

PHYTOCHEMICAL SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA
SOCIÉTÉ PHYTOCHIMIQUE DE L'AMÉRIQUE DU NORD
SOCIEDAD FITOQUÍMICA DE AMÉRICA DEL NORTE

Contact: S. Mahmoud, soheil.mahmoud@ubc.ca
[PSNA2021.CA](https://psna2021.ca)

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