

# Department of Chemistry Newsletter

## February Issue, 2024



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

## Announcement

### Leadership change:



From February 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024, **Dr. Robert Szilagyi** was no longer Head of the Department of Chemistry. We would like to thank Robert for his dedication and supports to the Department in the past years.



Since March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, **Dr. Susan Murch** has been the Department's Head *pro tem*. We would like to thank Susan for stepping in the new role and look forwards to working with her in the coming year.

### Congratulations to:



**Dr. Robert Godin** for receiving an NSERC *Alliance International Catalyst* grant (\$ 25,000) to initiate an international collaboration with Dr. Andrey Klymchenko at the University of Strasbourg (France) on a project entitled "Development of a photocatalytic system-based dye-loaded light harvesting nanoparticles".

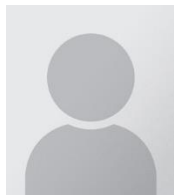


**Pawanjit Sandhu** and **Alisha Greene** (Dr. Susan Murch's group) for winning the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> places, respectively, of the I.K. Barber Faculty of Science's *Three-Minute Thesis* (3MT) on February 26<sup>th</sup>. Alisha also received the "People's Choice" award. Pawanjit will advance to the next 3MT round.



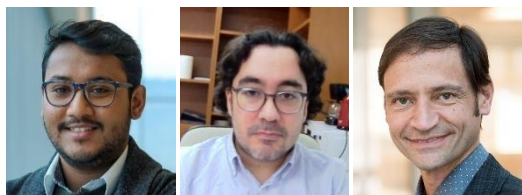
**Sutripto Khasnabis** (Dr. Robert Godin's group) for winning the "Best Speaker" prize with his oral presentation at the research network event of the "Solar Energy for Net Zero" Eminence Cluster on February 8<sup>th</sup>.

## New member:

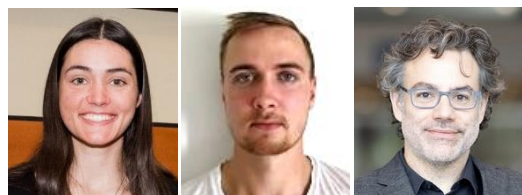


Dr. Frédéric Ménard's group welcomed **Zhenhao Chen** in January 2024 as their new MSc student.

## Recent publication



**Viki Kumar Prasad, Alberto Otero-de-la-Roza, Gino DiLabio** (2024). Bridging the gap between high-level quantum chemical methods and deep learning models. *Machine Learning: Science and Technology*. DOI: 10.1088/2632-2153/ad27e1.



**Megan D. Schroeder, Victor Hellgren, Frederic Menard** (2024). Synthesis of a fluorescent chemical probe for imaging of L-type voltage-gated calcium channels. *Canadian Journal of Chemistry*. DOI: 10.1139/cjc-2023-0149.

## Recent events

### “Solar Energy for Net Zero” events

The “Solar Energy for Net Zero” Eminence Cluster led by Dr. Robert Godin and Dr. Alexander Uhl (School of Engineering) kicked off their first year with a research network event for students in the Cluster on February 8<sup>th</sup>.

On February 13<sup>th</sup>, the Cluster hosted UBC's President, Dr. Benoit-Antoine Bacon, for an informational session on the Cluster's research.



### Department's 2023 holiday gathering

By Ever David — Our Department had a wonderful Christmas gathering with delicious foods and drinks, and a splendid tree prepared by our laboratory technicians on December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023. We would like to thank everyone who donated to the Chemistry Holiday Hamper. Each of our 16 graduate students

could buy \$ 50 worth of groceries at Superstore and received some UBC treats (tote bag and keychain), which were especially meaningful for those who were not with their families during the holidays.





## Three-Minute Thesis (3MT) competition

A big shout-out to the Department of Chemistry for sending in four out of five contestants for the I.K. Barber Faculty of Science's 3MT competition this year! Our eloquent and courageous participants were Adeyemi Adebawale, Alisha Greene, Zhehan Jia, and Pawanjit Sandhu.

Winning the 1<sup>st</sup> place, Pawanjit will represent our Faculty at the UBC Okanagan's 3MT Final. Please join Pawanjit at the 3MT Final on April 9<sup>th</sup> (Tuesday) at 5 PM in the Mary Irwin Theatre (421 Cawston Avenue) to support her and learn from all contestants across the Okanagan campus.

## Upcoming events



*Distinguished Speaker Series: “From molecule to medicine: How modern chemistry is transforming the way we treat disease”.*

Speaker: **Dr. Morten Meldal** – 2022 Nobel Prize in Chemistry Laureate and Professor of Chemistry, University of Copenhagen

Date: **April 2<sup>nd</sup> (Tuesday) evening**



*Distinguished Speaker Series: “Harnessing the potential of diversity and gender equality in business”*

Speaker: **Dr. Phaedria St. Hilaire** – Executive Coach and former Director, Novo Nordisk

Date: **April 3<sup>rd</sup> (Wednesday) evening**

The two speakers will also have a **joint talk on campus on translating research and innovation into commercialized products** in the morning of April 3<sup>rd</sup> (Wednesday).

Detailed of these events will be announced in the coming weeks. Information about Drs. Meldal and St. Hilaire can be found at <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/chemistry/2022/meldal/biographical/>.

**We acknowledge that the land on which we gather is the unceded territory of the Syilx (Okanagan) Peoples. Kukwstsetsemc / kʷu kʷukʷstp !**

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](mailto:thuy.dang@ubc.ca)).