Ramzi Farran gives Ryder Lecture

On Friday April 21, 2017 Mr. Ramzi I. Farran (M.S. ’71, House) delivered the 2017 Dr. Bernard L. Ryder Distinguished Alumni Lecture. Mr. Farran taught high school chemistry at Fenwick High School in Oak Park, IL from 1981 until his retirement in 2016. He shared his personal history with the students, faculty, staff, and guests present and talked about the success that his Fenwick students achieved in their science competitions. This award is one of many for Farran, including a Golden Apple award in 1984, a U.S. Presidential Scholar Award in 2005, and Fenwick’s Lumen Tranquillum award in 2017.

The lecture marked the revival of the Dr. Bernard L. Ryder Distinguished Alumni Lecture, named for the Department of Chemistry’s first Chair. The lecture also marked one of the final events of our 50th Anniversary celebration of the founding of the Department. Dr. Mary Ryder was able to join the celebration as a representative of her family.

Hansen Honored

Dan Steadman of the Friends of the Constitution Trail in Normal shared two photographs (right) of a new park bench installed on the trail in memory Dr. John F. Hansen. He wrote, “It is located on the west side of the trail by Fairview Park next to the golf course as the trail feeds in to the north branch from the park. The family said that he was a big fan of the Pogo comic strip and asked that a quote be included.” Dr. Hansen was a fixture on the Constitution Trail and many can attest to his many found treasures over the years.
Chem Club Happenings

Chem Club has had another fun and productive year. As has become tradition over the past few years, they received a chapter award from the American Chemical Society. Chapter officers collected the award at the Chem Luminaries in San Francisco in April of 2017. The Chem Club is currently advised by Dr. Andy Mitchell and our undergraduate advisor, Hope Fine. Of late, the Chem Club has been supporting research and travel for its members through the sale of laboratory manuals and safety glasses for the undergraduate lab courses. They have been as busy as ever with outreach and participating in demo shows and Festival ISU, among many others. Many of our readers have likely enjoyed participating in Chem Club activities over the years. Long live the Chem Club!

One other tradition of Chem Club has been t-shirts. As the 50th Anniversary year wrapped up, we had ChemClub t-shirts on display from across approximately 20 years. Do you recognize any of the shirts below? Do you have any Chem Club shirts clogging your closet that you’d want us to place in the archives? If so, please contact us at Chemistry@IllinoisState.edu. We would love to hear from you.

Selected designs from the ISU Chem Club t-shirt collection on display during the 50th Anniversary celebration. The shirts were donated by Dr. Marge Jones.

Note from the Chair

Greetings Alumni and Friends! As I write this, July is nearly over and the school year and Washington, D.C. American Chemical Society national meeting loom. We have had another productive school year and summer, with many students working in labs, presenting their results locally and nationally, and many publications coming out of the Department. We have also had quite a bit of fun in between! Our two newest faculty members, Drs. Isabel Green and Michael Webb, are getting settled and we are all getting excited for another fantastic year. As we enter our 51st year as a Department, we are excited to continue our traditions of excellence in the classroom and research laboratory and to continue to prepare our students for the world beyond ISU. Celebrating for the past year has been a lot of fun and I hope to continue that enthusiasm going forward. We have an exciting year ahead of us and I look forward to hearing from and seeing even more of our alumni and friends as we progress throughout the year. Thanks for reading.

Cheers, Craig C. McLauchlan
Three Chemistry Faculty and Staff received Impact Awards for 2017 from ISU’s University College (UCollege). According to UCollege, “This award is designed to show appreciation for the impact individual members of the campus community have on our new students and on student retention. Freshmen and new transfer students are contacted to nominate an individual at Illinois State who has made a difference in their education and academic success.” Dr. John Friesen, Dr. Steve Peters, and Ms. Elisha Swanson were all honored. In previous years several faculty and staff have been so honored, including Dr. David Cedeño, Ms. Ally Cherveny, Dr. Greg Ferrence, Dr. Rick Nagorski, and Dr. Thomas Zona.

George Van Den Driessche, an alumnus of Illinois State University, is the winner of the Midwestern Association of Graduate Schools (MAGS) Masters Thesis Award. This is first time an alumnus of Illinois State has captured the award.

Earning a bachelor’s degree from Aquinas College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, Van Den Driessche conducted a senior research project with Assistant Professor of Chemistry Jonathan Fritz. When he began to pursue his master’s degree in chemistry at Illinois State, Van Den Driessche transitioned from experimental chemistry into the field of theoretical chemistry by joining Professor Jean Standard’s lab.

While at Illinois State, Van Den Driessche received an Outstanding Poster Award from the Journal of Physical Chemistry at the 46th annual Midwestern Theoretical Chemistry Conference in 2014. He was also a very active member in the Illinois State American Chemical Society chapter serving as secretary and treasurer. After completing his master’s degree, Van Den Driessche moved to Raleigh, North Carolina, to pursue his Ph.D. in chemistry at NCSU where he now works with Assistant Professor of Chemistry Denis Fourches. Van Den Driessche has one publication in the Journal of Cheminformatics and was also a recipient of the ACS CINF Scholarship in Excellence at the Fall ACS meeting in 2016. Upon completion of his Ph.D. Van Den Driessche plans on pursuing a career in industry with a pharmaceutical company.

Reprinted from ISU News, Mar 8, 2017
2017 Senior Banquet & Awards Ceremony

ACS Outstanding Student Chapter Award: Chem Club

ACS Illinois Heartland Collegiate Scholars: Bill Darrow, Nora Fredstrom

ACS Division of Inorganic Chemistry Research Award: Nora Fredstrom

ACS Undergraduate Award in Organic Chemistry: Bill Darrow

ACS Undergraduate Award in Physical Chemistry: Bill Darrow

CRC General Chemistry Achievement Award: Justin Chhouen

Outstanding Analytical Chemistry Student: Chase Deberry

Outstanding Biochemistry Student: Jade Katinas

Outstanding Chemical Education Student: Anna Stamer

Outstanding Inorganic Chemistry Student: Tyler Smolczyk

Outstanding Physical Chemistry Student: Sara Bell

Hypercube Award: Sara Bell

POLYED Award in Organic Chemistry: Jake Grabowski

James B. “Ben” Sedgwick Scholarship: Taylor Arledge

Sol Shulman Scholarship: Sara Bell, Jasmine Chantaboury, Bill Darrow, Josie Ehlbeck, Emma Hartness, Ryan Quinlivan, Alyssa Rainey

Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant: Jade Katinas
Chemistry Teacher Education (CTE) majors have been hard at work preparing for the newest teacher certification test required by the state, the edTPA, and all their hard work is paying off. CTE majors have a 100% pass rate since it became an additional requirement for graduation and teacher certification on September 1, 2015; all ISU teacher education majors have a 99.5% pass rate in 2015-2016. The edTPA is a performance assessment requiring students during their student teaching semester to plan for instruction and then analyze their lesson plans, videos of their instruction, and the assessments they use. Students submit all these materials (lessons, videos, assessments, and analysis) to be scored nationally. The requirements for edTPA are a positive reflection of what teachers do in the classroom, providing an assessment of the students “in action,” but it is additional expense for the students to achieve their goals of becoming a teacher in a public school in Illinois. The edTPA currently costs $300 per student. Following a model of other ISU departments, we have been piloting a scholarship program for these students’ exams and supported three students in 2017. Students continue to take the two previous certification exams and meet the other requirements for teacher certification (e.g. travel to clinical placements, GPA requirements, background checks) many of which cost students money on top of their educational expenses. Through course assignments in CHE 161 and CHE 301, clinical experiences, and supports during student teaching, we are working hard to make sure students are well prepared, and the CTE majors, as always, are up to the challenge. Our CTE majors continue to show pride in their education and their abilities in the classroom. Schools contact us each year hoping to hire our well-prepared, capable graduates.

Chemical Education Update

Chemistry Teacher Education (CTE) majors have been hard at work preparing for the newest teacher certification test required by the state, the edTPA, and all their hard work is paying off. CTE majors have a 100% pass rate since it became an additional requirement for graduation and teacher certification on September 1, 2015; all ISU teacher education majors have a 99.5% pass rate in 2015-2016. The edTPA is a performance assessment requiring students during their student teaching semester to plan for instruction and then analyze their lesson plans, videos of their instruction, and the assessments they use. Students submit all these materials (lessons, videos, assessments, and analysis) to be scored nationally. The requirements for edTPA are a positive reflection of what teachers do in the classroom, providing an assessment of the students “in action,” but it is additional expense for the students to achieve their goals of becoming a teacher in a public school in Illinois. The edTPA currently costs $300 per student. Following a model of other ISU departments, we have been piloting a scholarship program for these students’ exams and supported three students in 2017. Students continue to take the two previous certification exams and meet the other requirements for teacher certification (e.g. travel to clinical placements, GPA requirements, background checks) many of which cost students money on top of their educational expenses. Through course assignments in CHE 161 and CHE 301, clinical experiences, and supports during student teaching, we are working hard to make sure students are well prepared, and the CTE majors, as always, are up to the challenge. Our CTE majors continue to show pride in their education and their abilities in the classroom. Schools contact us each year hoping to hire our well-prepared, capable graduates.

Dr. Sarah Boesdorfer presents the 2017 Outstanding Chemical Education Student Award to Anna Stamer ’17 at the Senior Banquet and Awards Ceremony
Updates from Alumni

Matt Beio (B.S. ‘11, Jones) was awarded a Citation for Excellence in Teaching Chemistry from University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Matt is currently a Ph.D. student at UNL and has accepted a position at Doane University in Crete, NE.

Don Gore (B.S. ‘62) passed away at home on May 2, 2017 after a year of struggling with mesothelioma and the chemotherapy. His wife Bonne wrote, “After the introductory year, his 34-year teaching career was centered at Normal Community High School in Normal, Illinois. He continued studies at the university, earning a master’s degree in educational administration. He was able to pass on his expertise as a master teacher through his tenure at his alma mater teaching those who would follow in his footsteps as teachers of chemistry.” His life will be celebrated in September, when he would have celebrated his 80th birthday. Rest in peace, Don.

Dr. David Huffman (M.S. ‘89, West) just got back from a Fulbright experience at the University of Copenhagen, doing teaching (Bioinorganic) and research (CRISPr on Arabidopsis). He is currently a Professor of Chemistry at Western Michigan University.

Judd Kiddie (B.S. ‘08, McLauchlan) is purchasing manager of EMCO Chemical Distributors. He and his wife are celebrating the birth of twins early in 2017. Congratulations!

Britt Lewis-Morris (B.S. ‘09) stopped by ISU over the summer and shared that she is now a Biology/Chemistry tutor at Malcolm X College in Chicago.

Samantha Richdale (B.S. ‘06) will be inducted in to the ISU Athletics Percy Family Hall of Fame class of 2017 in October. She is currently playing golf professionally.

Dr. Dana Tilley (B.S. ‘08, M.S. ‘12, Friesen) is now Chief Neuroscientist at PixarBio Corporation.

Stay in Touch!

Alumni of the Department of Chemistry are an important component to the continued success of our program. By going forth and "Spreading the Red" and making us proud, our alumni represent the Department well around the city, state, country, and world. We are always excited to hear what our alumni are up to now and to keep them involved in the happenings in and around the Department. Drop a line to Chemistry@IllinoisState.edu or alumni liaison Dr. Greg Ferrence (ferrence@ilstu.edu).

Like us. Join us. Follow us.
Diversity initiatives rarely happen in a bubble. They generally pull together a combination of experts, areas, and funding. The Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation, known as LS-AMP, at Illinois State is no different.

Strange Oscillations and Vibrations of Sympathy
at University Galleries
Anthony Walesby named director of the Office of Equal Opportunity and Access
Climate Task Force begins work
Counseling launching Students of Color Process Group in spring
Asking for help can be hard, particularly for Latina/o students
Campus Climate Task Force appointed
Administered through University College, LS-AMP offers support for students pursuing careers in science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM), any other STEM program, or teacher education in these fields. Drawing from the work of those in University College, and the Center for Mathematics, Science and Technology (CeMaST), LS-AMP connects students to faculty researchers, and opens up the world of academic research to underrepresented students.

"The Louis Stokes program offers an opportunity for Illinois State students to join a community of supportive peers, mentors, staff, and faculty who will help them reach their short-term and long-term goals in the STEM fields," said Coordinator Christa Platt of Targeted Retention Services in University College, where the program is housed.

The faculty mentorship program specifically provides students one-on-one meetings with faculty members in the STEM discipline, where they can discuss academic needs, potential research projects, and explore prospective career options.

Faculty members who teach in the STEM field become involved in LS-AMP after taking a brief survey that outlines their style of mentorship, availability, and questions relating to the number of mentees they desire and year in school preferred. Students complete a similar survey, where they may indicate an interest in interdisciplinary research, three professors they are interested in working with, and what qualities they are looking for in a mentor. From there, Platt steps in to further establish the mentorship process.

"I meet with the student and follow up with them on their application. We discuss and decide a mentor based on the faculty they identified," said Platt. "If a student identifies a faculty member who has completed a survey as a possible match, there is plenty of information to know if the student fits the faculty member's preference."

Professor of Chemistry Lisa Szczepura has been involved with LS-AMP as a faculty mentor since 1998, guiding her mentees through their coursework at Illinois State, discussing research and scholarship opportunities, and helping students plan for STEM-based careers post-graduation.

Szczepura believes the mentor/mentee relationship is an enriching experience for both the faculty member and the students because it is more personalized. "I ask my mentees what they would like to get out of this experience and what their interests are so our meetings can be more focused," she said.

"As a society we have a need for college graduates who have majored in STEM fields, and we need diverse perspectives if we are going to solve many of the complex problems we face today," says Szczepura. "LS-AMP really helps students network with other students and with faculty members in their field of interest. This is important as mentorship and undergraduate research have been cited as helping to increase the success rate of students in these challenging disciplines."

According to Willy Hunter, director of CeMaST and principal investigator of the National Science Foundation-funded program, Illinois State has been part of the LS-AMP Illinois Alliance since it was established in 1993. Fourteen four- and two-year institutions are part of the alliance, with Chicago State University serving as the lead institution.

"LS-AMP offers a host of support programs and services to participating students, including academic success monitoring and workshops, financial assistance for those who partake in faculty-supervised research projects, opportunities to attend conferences and present their own research, and the faculty mentorship program," said Hunter. "Through the support and experiences of LS-AMP, students are given the chance to strengthen their academic and professional goals in the STEM field while simultaneously joining the large, encouraging STEM community."

Dr. Lisa Szczepura (right) at work with a student in lab.
We hope to see you at an upcoming gathering of fellow Redbirds. You can look for us at some of the following upcoming events:

- American Chemical Society National Meeting in Washington, DC—Aug 21
- ISU Homecoming—Oct 20/21
- ACS Rocky Mountain Regional Meeting—Oct 27

Watch Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and our website for details.

Interested in helping host or organize an event closer to you? Please let us know!

Homecoming.IllinoisState.edu