

THE SEA GULL Chemist

2025-2026

Salisbury
UNIVERSITY

Greetings Sea Gull Chemists!

Another exciting year has come and gone, but we have so much news and of exciting happenings to share from the Salisbury University Department of Chemistry. We are so proud of all our students and faculty and their accomplishments in the classroom, in their research labs, and in the community from this past year. The next few pages will give you a very brief overview of some of these efforts. In particular, we will tell you about:

- **Our Students.** Every year, we are proud of what our student accomplish. We are highlighting a few achievements and the results of their outstanding work.
- **Our Faculty.** This year we are featuring Dr. Stephen Habay, chair of the department. He is in his last year of service, so we caught up with him to provide some perspective on his time as chair. In addition, we welcome Dr. Mary Laubacher to the department.
- **Our Recent Happenings.** A new Bachelor of Science in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Program has officially kicked off. In addition, we have selected a few events and activities to highlight from this past year. We can't share it all, but we have selected a few of the highlights from our department.
- **Our Alumni.** Every year when we hear back from alumni, it makes us proud of what you all have done after leaving SU. It is great to have you part of *The Sea Gull Chemist* family; so, if you have not done so recently, send us a note or stop by to let us know how you are doing.



Luke Davis and Jenna Doleschal

Student Achievements

The **Allen R. Dudley Memorial Award in Chemistry** is given each year to a senior chemistry major who has demonstrated consistent academic excellence and who has the potential for an exceptional future in chemistry.

- **Luke Davis** (pictured bottom left) is the 2025 recipient of the Dudley Award. Luke graduated with an ACS-certified B.S. in chemistry and is currently in the first year of a Ph.D. program at the University of Delaware.

The **James F. Glenn Chemistry Award** is given to a senior chemistry major with outstanding academics who has made significant contributions to chemistry education.

- **Jenna Doleschal** (pictured bottom left) is the 2025 recipient of the Glenn Award. Jenna graduated with an ACS-certified B.S. in biochemistry and is currently working as a lab Technician at Clean Harbors, and she will be pursuing a Ph.D. program in the future.

The **Dorothy Ruxton Chemistry Student Research Fund** was established by SU's past president Dr. Charles Wight and his wife Victoria Rasmussen in honor of Dr. Wight's mother. The endowment provides travel grants for students involved in chemistry research to present their work at professional conferences and network with other scientists in the field. Our most recent Ruxton Award recipient, along with the conference they presented at, is:

- **Cleo McLaughlin**, Annual Conference on Mass Spectrometry and Allied Topics, Spring 2025

The **Irving and Sylvia Cort Scholarship in Chemistry** was established by Bruce Cort (SU Class of 1971) in honor of his parents, Irving and Sylvia Cort. The award is given to entering first-year chemistry majors based on academic excellence in high school.

The current Cort Scholars are **Rhona Lynch** (2026), **Taina Paige** (2026), **Daniella Weinstein** (2026), **Marcus Gjini** (2027), **Bryce Greenlee** (2027), **Emily Hoard** (2027), **Leah How** (2028), **Ayn Doye** (2029), and **Julianna Wolske** (2029).

Featured Faculty

Dr. Stephen Habay, Chemistry Department Chair

Serving as chair in his sixth and final year, we caught up with Dr. Habay and asked him to reflect about his time serving the department in this capacity.

What were some of the biggest accomplishments of the department since you have been chair?

There are so many! We really do have the most amazing chemistry team. In addition to making it through the pandemic, we opened the new Chemistry Support Center in Henson Science Hall, greatly increased our grant funding, scholarships, and major research instrumentation, completed our seven-year academic program review, revamped our introductory chemistry curriculum, improved student success in our courses, introduced a new B.S. in biochemistry and molecular biology, and graduated over 70 Sea Gull Chemists – and there is still more to come! For example, we expect to launch a B.S. in forensic science in fall 2026. It is an exciting time in the SU Chemistry Department!

What were some of the biggest challenges you faced as department chair?

Definitely, the COVID-19 pandemic was THE biggest challenge. In my first semester as chair, the department had to figure out, pretty quickly, how to teach chemistry lectures and labs in de-densified rooms while wearing face masks. In addition, we had masking, testing, and vaccination mandates on campus. Faculty and students would sometimes test positive, and they would have to isolate for 10-day periods. You can imagine how disruptive that was to instruction when a student or instructor was out for that amount of time. At the same time, some labs were transitioned to at-home activities. So, the faculty had to restructure course assignments and assessments as well as figure out how to get materials to students so they could do things at home. It was a huge challenge, but our incredible faculty really stepped up and handled it well. The high level of trust and collaboration among the faculty in the department is one of our greatest strengths. That persists to this day.

What are you most proud of, personally, since you have been chair?

I think I'm most proud of our Chemistry Support Center (CSC). It really grew to become a central hub of activity in the department. We now see hundreds of students coming each month to get help with their chemistry coursework. The faculty all donate their time to staff the center, and we employ student tutors to help expand the hours we are open. Not only is the CSC lowering the barrier for students to get assistance and improving student success, but it also has built a community focused on a common cause of helping students succeed. The CSC also gives faculty and students space to hang out and be social. We host our annual Golden Goggle Games pop trivia night there as well as game and movie nights, new student welcome events, our semesterly student research symposium, and more.

How did serving as chair impact your own teaching and research?

After becoming chair, I found there was much less time to prepare for class, so I had to be ready to walk into the classroom at a moment's notice and deliver a good lesson for the students. I think serving as chair made me more efficient in how I prepare for and manage my classes. As for research, there is no doubt that my time in the lab decreased. You have a lot more meetings and emails and other things going on that need your attention, so I wasn't able to be as productive as I would have liked. I did still find some time to mentor research students, particularly during the summer. Mentoring is the most important part of research for me, so I'm glad that I was still able to do that.

Is there anything you never had a chance to say as chair that you'd like people to know now?

It has been a true honor to serve as the chair for the Department of Chemistry. This department – and this University – is an amazing place that has given me a rich and rewarding career, as well as great friends and colleagues. Serving as chair was one way I could pay it back to SU for everything I've been given.

Thank you Dr. Stephen Habay for your dedication to the department and exemplary service for the past six years!

Alumni Updates

If you are interested in being included, please send a brief email to chemistry@salisbury.edu letting us know the year of your graduation and what you have been up to since then. We really do want to know what you are doing!

Matt Bowler, Class of 2015, completed a National Institutes of Health post-baccalaureate in 2017 and earned a Ph.D. in 2023. He is currently a senior scientist at Johnson & Johnson Innovative Medicine working on preclinical peptide-based drug discovery.

Conner Masteran, Class of 2019, is seeking a Ph.D. from Virginia Tech in theoretical/computational chemistry. He is engaged to Nicole and is a dog dad!

Bradley Layne, Class of 2022, is seeking a Ph.D. in materials chemistry from the University of California, Irvine. As a member of Shane Ardo's lab, Bradley is researching how to use semiconductor nanoparticles to turn sunlight into solar fuels – namely hydrogen.

Giving Day Is Coming!

If you are able to make a contribution to the Department of Chemistry, please consider doing so on Giving Day, which this year is Tuesday, April 7. We appreciate your generosity at any time; however, alumni donations made on Giving Day are matched up to \$50 per contribution. Be sure to specify that your donation be directed to one of the following areas:

- Department of Chemistry
- Dorothy Ruxton Chemistry Student Research Fund
- Allen R. Dudley Memorial Award in Chemistry
- Irving and Sylvia Cort Scholarship in Chemistry

Also let us know if you would be willing to offer our students support through networking, job seeking advice, or general life guidance. We appreciate anything you can do to help our students!

News & Events

A new Bachelor of Science in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Program. The Chemistry Department, in collaboration with the Biological Sciences Department, has successfully launched a new Bachelor of Science in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (BMB) Program. It is designed to give students a broad foundation in the physical sciences and requires two semester each of General Chemistry, Introductory Biology, General Physics, and Calculus. Students then focus on gaining more advanced knowledge in chemistry and biology through intermediate-level courses. Their academic careers end with advanced courses in biochemistry, molecular biology, and research.

Although this new program is excellent for students interested in biochemical, medical, or pharmaceutical research, the BMB Program is flexible enough that students can explore other disciplines to tailor their academic experience to their specific career goals. The two focus programs are specifically designed to deepen a student's understanding of biology or chemistry, but students may also choose to follow the traditional degree and minor in another program such as business administration (for program management careers) or communication (for science communication careers).

Our new BMB Program is modeled after the American Society of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology's (ASBMB) requirements and has been granted accreditation by ASBMB.

Alumni Seminars. This past year, in addition to all of the chemistry and forensics seminars, our department welcomed back one of our alums to give a seminar:

On April 24, SU chemistry alum **Michael Marciniak** returned to campus to give a seminar titled "Stealth Gold Nanoparticles: Development of a Branched PEGylated Coating for Systemic Drug Delivery Applications." Michael is currently a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Maryland Baltimore County.

We always love having alums return to campus. If you would be interested in giving a seminar or presentation back at your alma mater, please contact Dr. Alison Dewald (ahdewald@salisbury.edu).

GET CONNECTED

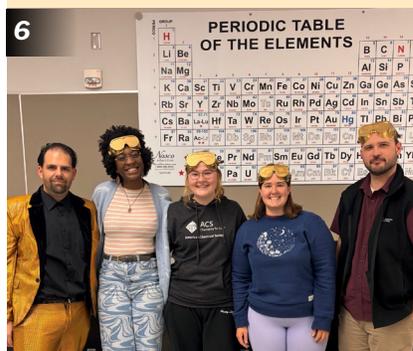
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SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

During Salisbury University's Centennial celebration, the Chemistry Department participated at Fun Fest in the Nest! with our Fire and Ice show (1 and 2). This past year, the Chemistry Department said good-bye to some very talented seniors (3) and welcomed in some enthusiastic first year students (4 and 5). The Chemistry Department faculty and students had lots of departmental events, including a liquid nitrogen ice cream senior send-off party, fall semester welcome back breakfast, the eighth annual Golden Goggles Trivia Night (6), our annual spring faculty versus students kickball game (7), and participated in the Henson School's Spooky Science Spectacular for Halloween (8). Students also presented their research at the Chemistry Department symposium and the Salisbury University Research Conference.





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