

2025 DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY AWARDS & BANQUET

Missouri S&T's Department of Chemistry
Dr. Chariklia Sotiriou-Leventis, Chair and Professor

April 25, 2025, at 6:00 PM
Carver/Turner Room A&B, Havener Center

2024-2025 Outstanding Sophomore Awards

Mercury Lusk
Donovin Palmer
Rachel Smith

2024-2025 Outstanding Junior Awards

Kylee Copeland
Caleb Ehler
Daniel Green
Ryan Schuler
Catherine Skaggs

2024-2025 Outstanding Senior Awards

Jada Ayars
Jamie Christensen
Katharine Gray
Finnegan Jokerst
Ethan Keuhn
Emily Ohlendorf
Christopher Ryan
Bennett Scott

2024-2025 Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant Award (\$250)

Amarachi Nnachor, Chem 1319 (Nominator: Dr. Cynthia Bolon)

Amarachi worked as a CHEM 1319 GTA with Dr. Bolon in Spring 2024 and Fall 2024. Amarachi did an excellent job of helping to train the other TA's to be more interactive with the students and highly encouraged her peers to promote a more student-oriented environment. Amarachi went out of her way to make sure the students in the sections she covered felt as comfortable asking her questions as the students in her own sections. More importantly, she always worked to ensure that the students not only completed their assignments, but also that they understood the material covered. Amarachi set an example for being a very effective, meticulous, dedicated and sincere TA for which she deserves this recognition.

Margaret Taiwo, Chem 1319 (Nominator: Dr. Cynthia Bolon)

Margaret worked as a CHEM 1319 GTA in Spring 2024 and Fall 2024. Margaret acted as a mentor specifically, overseeing the training of two of the new TA's. She was able to be authoritative with her peers without becoming an authoritarian. She listened to the new TA's concerns and gave them guidance and reassurance that they would be able to fulfil their responsibilities. Margaret exhibited strong capabilities as a leader and as a cooperative member of the group. Her kindness and generosity with her time and knowledge were exemplary of her good nature and her excellence as an educator and makes her highly deserve this recognition.

Heath St. Dennis, Chem 2219 (Nominator: Dr. Terry Bone)

Heath was a GTA for the organic lab with Dr. Bone. Although Heath was new to the organic labs, he came up to speed rapidly in helping with the experiments and general execution of the lab course. He was very punctual in the lab and passionate about his duties. He volunteered for any extra tasks as needed. He also made the laboratory atmosphere more congenial by interacting and working well with the students and other TA's.

2024-2025 Outstanding Graduate Research Assistant Award (\$250)

Joshua Isert (Advisor: Dr. Garry Grubbs)

Josh, a 5th year graduate student in Dr. Grubbs lab has made impactful contributions to molecular spectroscopy throughout his tenure at Missouri S&T chemistry department. Josh's research focuses primarily on using rotational spectroscopy as a tool to understand heavy-element containing chemistry – particularly actinide molecules. Within this heavily unexplored area, Josh must navigate much of his studies with chemical intuition and spectroscopic know-how. His skillful methods and tenacity have been rewarded with five publications in peer-reviewed journals including cover art and several oral and poster presentations. Throughout his graduate studies Josh has been an exemplary ambassador for high-level research at Missouri S&T and highly deserves this award.

Sutapa Bhattacharya (Advisor: Dr. Amitava Choudhury)

Sutapa, a 4th year graduate student in Dr. Choudhury's group has demonstrated an exceptional level of dedication and excellence in Li-ion battery research. Sutapa's research productivity is evident through her impressive record of four peer-reviewed journal publications and numerous presentations in national and regional meetings. Over the past four years, she has evolved into a highly capable and independent researcher, consistently demonstrating the ability to think critically and carry out well-designed experiments. Sutapa's future aspirations lie in academia, where she plans to pursue post-doctoral research before seeking a faculty position. Her exemplary achievements during her graduate studies make her highly deserve this recognition.

2024-2025 Outstanding Graduate Service Award (\$250)

Himanshu Bhatia (Advisor: Dr. Jeffrey Winiarz)

Himanshu, a PhD graduate student in Chemistry, has been selected for the Department of Chemistry 2025 Graduate Service Award. This award recognizes a service that supports the teaching and research missions of the department beyond standard duties. Himanshu's contributions have been especially impactful in the area of course development, particularly in Chem 1310 and now in the planning of Chem 1305—and his service clearly fits both the spirit and the letter of this award. Himanshu has played a major role in planning the overall content and structure of the 1310 course. He has a clear talent for this work—his insights are sharp and deeply informed by his on-the-ground experience with the students. He has helped shape everything from the point distributions across categories of assignments to the presentation style of the material itself. For the last several years, Himanshu has had an enormous impact on almost every aspect of this course. His dedication, creativity, and insight have made a lasting mark on our department, and his service has gone well beyond the expectations of graduate students, making him highly deserve this award.

2024-2025 Outstanding Dept. of Chemistry Staff Award (\$400)

David Satterfield, Electronics Technician III

Dave is the person to go to when issues arise with the building or instrumentation. He deserves this award, specifically in calendar year 2024, since he has been involved directly in the renovation of Schrenk East and the migration of the General Chemistry Teaching Labs.

2024-2025 Wilbur Tappmeyer Excellence in Teaching Award (\$500)

Dr. Jeffrey Winiarz, Associate Professor – Chem 1310 (General Chemistry I)

Jeff taught an incredible number of undergraduate students last year with solid student evaluations. Focusing on student success, his proposal (IGSET) has received funding for developing a new general chemistry service course for non-majors requiring only one semester of general chemistry.

Dr. Manashi Nath, Professor of Chemistry – Chem 3310 (Inorganic Chemistry I)

Manashi received a perfect score (4.0) in her inorganic chemistry I course. In addition to inorganic chemistry I, Manashi, has taught a variety of courses ranging from general chemistry recitations to a graduate level course in nanomaterials.

Dr. Risheng Wang, Associate Professor – Chem 4610 (General Biochemistry)

Risheng received well above average student evaluation scores for her biochemistry class. Students in this class say that: She is very attentive to student needs and has a positive attitude. She seems genuinely passionate about biochemistry and tries to get students interested in the content. The course is well-structured, so students know exactly what to expect. She is highly knowledgeable on the topic and gives in-depth explanations.

Dr. Michael Eze, Assistant Professor – Chem 5510 (Introduction to Chemical Analysis)

Michael has been very successful at starting his career as a solid educator with analytical chemistry lectures and labs. His student evaluations are quite strong for being only in his second year as a tenured-track faculty.