

COLLEGE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

CHEMISTRY

NEWSLETTER

Millersville University, Dept. of Chemistry ♦ <http://www.millersville.edu/chemistry/> ♦ Fall 2026

Greetings from the Chemistry Department! We are very excited to report that we had another busy and successful year! We would also like to share great news from faculty, students, and alumni activities and achievements!

First, we would like to take this opportunity to thank all our donors for their support! As the needs of the department have been increasing over the years, funding student educational experiences & research has always been prioritized, as they offer prospects for professional development. Well-rounded teaching and research cannot be accomplished without modern instrumentation. The importance of acquisition of new instrumentation as well as maintenance of older pieces of equipment is critical for our programs and the students' overall growth. Dr. Robert (Bob) Wismer (Professor Emeritus of Chemistry) recognized this important need for the department & its students.

Thus, Dr. Bob Wismer and Dr. Debbie Wismer initiated a new endowment to support instrument maintenance and repair for the Chemistry Department.

The department would like to sincerely thank Drs. Bob & Debbie Wismer!

Murley Undergraduate Research Fellowship – Summer 2026



Murley Summer Fellowship - 2026

Keira Welch, Ms. Karen Murley, Alyssa Adelman, Dr. Kristen Baker (left to right)

research was supported by the Organic Syntheses Research Grant.

We are pleased to announce that this is the 8th consecutive year of the Murley Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowships! In the summer of 2026, the Murley Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship was awarded to two top Millersville Chemistry applicants. **Keira Welch & Alyssa Adelman** carried out intensive summer research with Millersville chemistry faculty thanks to the generous support of **Ms. Karen Murley**. Both students did their research with **Dr. Kristen Baker** on “Regioselective Trifluoromethylation of Alkyl Radicals” & “Synthesis of Benzisothiazoles”, respectively.

In addition, this summer, **John Patterson** (MU chemistry major-right photo) continued his research in **Dr. Kristen Baker's** lab. His



MU 2025 Young Alumni Achievement Award!

Dr. Pineal Bekere (MU-2016), MD., Loyola University, Chicago. **She was selected to receive the 2025 Young Alumni Achievement Award at Millersville University!** **Dr. Pineal Bekere**, excelled academically at Millersville, graduating with honors while also serving in leadership roles in student organizations. She went on to earn her medical degree from Loyola University Chicago Stritch School of Medicine, where she also completed a global health certification. Bekere completed her family medicine residency at Lancaster General Hospital during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, caring for patients in one of the most challenging times in modern healthcare. Today, she practices family medicine in New Hampshire, where she combines compassionate care with a global perspective gained from medical outreach in Latin America and Africa.



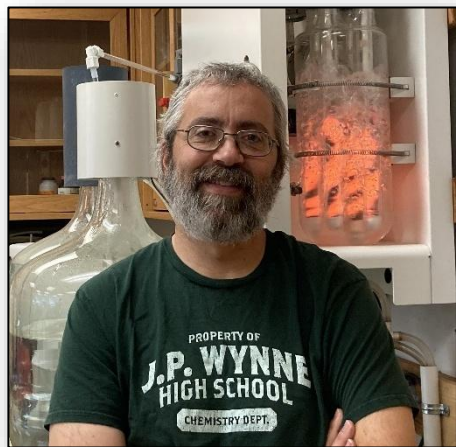
***Congratulations
Dr. Pineal Bekere! (receiving the award
from Dr. Wubah – MU President)***

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New Faces in the Department – Spring-Summer 2026

This year, we added two new staff members to the department (**Mr. David (Dave) Beck** and **Mrs. Linda Mellinger**) as we had to say goodbye to Mr. Stephen Nolte (lab technician) and Mrs. Madison (Maddie) Nitroy (administrative assistant). We thank both Stephen and Maddie for their support and we wish them the best in their new positions.



Mr. David Beck

Dave joined the Department of Chemistry in March 2026. Before coming to Millersville, he spent 25 years in analytical chemistry testing water, soil, pharmaceuticals, food, and cosmetics for trace metal impurities using ICP-OES and ICP-MS instrumentation. He brings his extensive knowledge of analytical problem solving and instrumentation maintenance/troubleshooting to his current role as the Chemistry Department's lab technician. Outside the lab, Dave stays active by working out 'in the gloom' with F3 Lanco, a free men's workout group in Lancaster County. He is passionate about personal growth and mental health awareness, and he actively pursues knowledge regarding the underlying issues impacting depression and anxiety. He also looks forward to his Friday mornings, catching up over coffee with the 'Knights of the Round Table'—a small group of friends who encourage one another

through the shared journeys of being husbands, fathers, and men.

His favorite quote is: "Anxiety freely accepted translates into strength difficult to dislodge." - Peter Koestenbaum."

Linda joined the Department of Chemistry in June 2026. She came to MU in 2019 and provided administrative support to the AVP of Student Affairs for three years and then to the Department of Mathematics for four years. Linda enjoys working in the Department of Chemistry and providing customer service to students and faculty. She seeks new ways to market our department to prospective students and looks to engage our alumni with current chemistry majors.

Linda moved to Millersville from New Jersey where she had worked in special services, guidance and business offices at regional school districts for many years. Linda received a BS in Business Administration with a concentration in Marketing from Albright College and went back to school to get a second BS degree and received NJ State certification as an Elementary School Teacher with Mathematics Specialization: in Grades 5 – 8.

In her time away from MU she enjoys spending time with her husband, playing golf, playing Sequence, doing puzzles, participating in church activities and traveling. Her favorite places are the northwest (even more now that her son and daughter-in-law moved to Utah) and almost any beach.



Mrs. Linda Mellinger

MU Chemistry Faculty Milestones & Achievements!

Congratulations to Dr. Daniel Albert for his promotion to the rank of Full Professor!

- Drs. Rajaseelan and Albert published a paper in *IUCrData* with Lancaster Country Day student Ben Kienle and alumnus Dr. Mike Gau titled “ [\[\(1,2,5,6-η\)-Cycloocta-1,5-diene\]bis\(1-methyl-3-propylimidazol-2-ylidene-κC\)iridium\(I\) tetrafluoroborate](#)” that was chosen as the cover illustration for the February issue of the journal. (see chemical structure under Dr. Rajaseelan)



Congratulations Dr. Daniel Albert!

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Congratulations to Dr. Kristen Baker:

- Dr. Baker published a peer reviewed laboratory experiment “[Absolute Configuration \(R/S\) Using the Cahn-Ingold-Prelog Rules: An Active Learning Module for Organic Chemistry I](#)” in OrganicERs. It was accepted for publication on July 25, 2026.
- Dr. Baker and her research students hosted chemistry students and faculty from Palmyra High School as part of a summer outreach event.
- Dr. Baker mentored three undergraduate students in 10-week summer research projects.
- Dr. Baker presented a poster titled “[Student Learning Gains and Perceptions from a Sandmeyer Reaction Laboratory](#)” at the Spring 2026 National ACS Meeting.
- Dr. Baker accompanied 11 students to the National American Chemical Society Meeting in Atlanta, GA (Spring 2026) where they presented the results of their faculty mentored undergraduate research projects.

Congratulations to Dr. Jeremiah Mbindyo:

- Dr. Mbindyo presented a talk titled “[High-Impact Internship Pathways in the Undergraduate Chemistry Curriculum](#)” at the Biennial Conference on Chemical Education in Madison, Wisconsin.
- Dr. Mbindyo presented a talk titled "The Climate Change–Health Interface: Innovations, Adaptations and Equity for Resilient Climate Ready Health Systems", at the School of Medicine and Health Sciences International Research Conference, Kabarak University in Kabarak, Kenya.
- Dr. Mbindyo presented a talk titled “[Removal of Nanoparticles from Solutions Using Functionalized Mesoporous Silica and Activated Carbon](#)” at the Spring 2026 National ACS Meeting.

Congratulations to Dr. Aimee Miller:

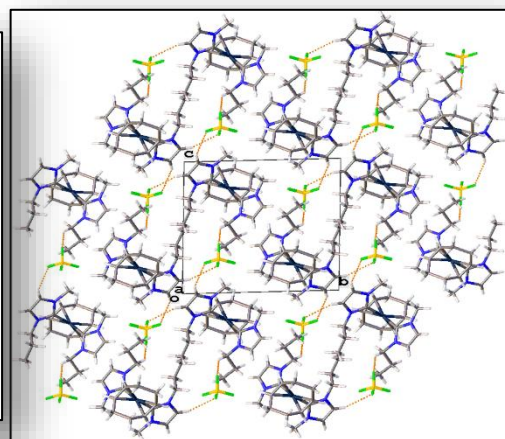
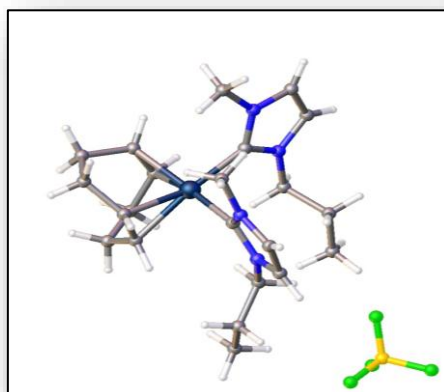
- Dr. Miller was a program co-chair for the Division of Chemical Education at the Fall 2026 National American Chemical Society Meeting in Chicago, Illinois.

Congratulations to Dr. Melissa Mullen Davis:

- Dr. Mullen Davis presented a talk titled “[Bridging the Gap Between Experiment and Analysis Through Collaborative Lab Meetings in an Upper-Level Biochemistry Course](#)” at the Biennial Conference on Chemical Education in Madison, Wisconsin.
- Dr. Mullen Davis presented “Strategies for Balancing Inclusive Course Design, Student Accountability, and Instructor Capacity” at the Online Learning Consortium Accelerate 2025 Conference in Orlando, Florida.

Congratulations to Dr. Edward Rajaseelan:

- Drs. Rajaseelan and Albert published a paper in *IUCrData* with Lancaster Country Day student Ben Kienle and alumnus Dr. Mike Gau titled “[\[\(1,2,5,6-η\)-Cyclo-octa-1,5-diene\]bis\(1-methyl-3-propylimidazol-2-ylidene-κC\)iridium\(I\) tetrafluoridoborate](#)” that was chosen as the cover illustration for the February issue of the journal.



[(1,2,5,6-η)-cycloocta-1,5-diene]bis(1-methyl-3-propylimidazol-2-ylidene-κC)iridium(I) tetrafluoridoborate,
[Ir(C₈H₁₂)(C₇H₁₂N₂)₂]BF₄

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- Dr. Rajaseelan mentored Lancaster Country Day student, Ben Kienle, on research that earned Ben [1st Place in Chemistry at the International Science & Engineering Fair in Phoenix, Arizona](#). Ben was also awarded many additional awards including the Dudley R. Herschbach Award which provides for him to participate in the Stockholm International Youth Science Seminar during Nobel Week.

Congratulations to Dr. Lyman Rickard:

- Dr. Rickard worked with students to present monthly demonstrations at the Lancaster Science Factory.

MU Student/Chemistry Majors News

In Fall 2026, the Chemistry Department welcomed 23 first-year students coming in as chemistry majors at Millersville and 12 transfer students joining us from other institutions – a total of **35 students**.

Chemistry faculty and students continue to actively engage in research, grant writing, and present their work at conferences as well as visiting local industries. This year, multiple chemistry majors accompanied by **Dr. Daniel Albert** had the opportunity to visit the facilities of Peach Bottom Nuclear Power Plant. In March, eleven (11) students traveled in person with **Dr. Kristen Baker** and **Dr.**

Jeremiah

Mbindyo to the 2026 National ACS Conference in Atlanta, GA to present their research posters.



ACS Student Chapter
Visited Peach Bottom
Nuclear Power Plant
on April 17th

Spring 2026 National American Chemical Society Meeting



Photo on the right (left to right): Stefano Astudillo, Olivia Terrazas, Chaz Eavenson, Emma Killmeyer

Back (left to right): Lucia Consigliere Picco, Stefano Astudillo, Rachel Bonner, Modebareoluwa (Josh) Obadofin, John Patterson, Mitchell Hoffman

Front (left to right): Emma Killmeyer, Amo Ho, Chaz Eavenson, Olivia Terrazas, Anneka Siegrist,



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ACS National Meeting March 2026, Atlanta, GA – Poster Session



Congratulations to the ACS Student Chapter! They received a Commendable Award for the 2024-2025 academic year!

Student Prestigious Milestones

- Timothy (Tim) Lerch, is a graduating Chemistry senior, who has exhibited excellence in his pursuit of knowledge. Tim has been the recipient of 24 fellowships, scholarships, class honors, prizes, and research grants.
Tim completed two NSF – REUs at Kent State and SUNY – Binghamton Universities. He was awarded the Dr. Judith Bond Scholarship (awarded to the top senior for academic merit and accomplishment in chemistry research). He also received the Murley Endowed Scholarship for Seniors for excellence in scholarship and successful STEM research.
- In addition, Tim published six first author articles in the peer reviewed *Journal of International Union of Crystallography* for the synthesis of new Green Chemistry Organometallic Catalytic complexes. This research was accomplished under the direction of **Drs. Edward Rajaseelan** and **Daniel Albert** at Millersville University.
- Tim presented his research three times at the National ACS conference and seven times at regional and local conferences.
- He served the department as a tutor, lab assistant, peer mentor, as a well as vice president of the ACS Student Chapter at MU. Tim served in many leadership positions and as a volunteer for the local community.



Tim Lerch and Dr. Ed Rajaseelan

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- Tim was the 2026 Millersville University Nominee for the Syed R. Ali-Zaidi Award for Academic Excellence! (He was one of the finalists!)
- Tim also earned a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Program Honorable Mention award!
- He successfully defended his University Honors and Department Honors thesis in a full room of attendees. The picture on the right includes Dr. Wubah (MU President), Tim Lerch, and Ms. Murley on the day of Tim's thesis defense.
- Tim is enrolled in a Ph.D. in Chemistry program at the University of Illinois.

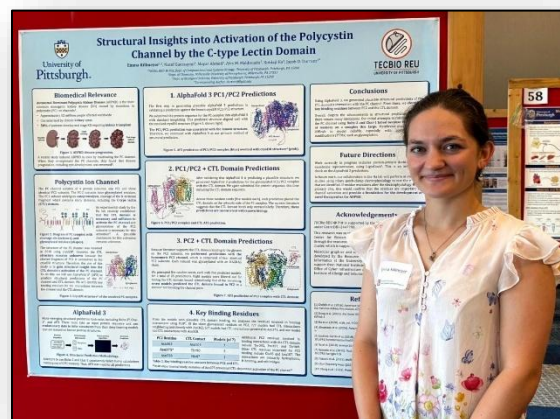
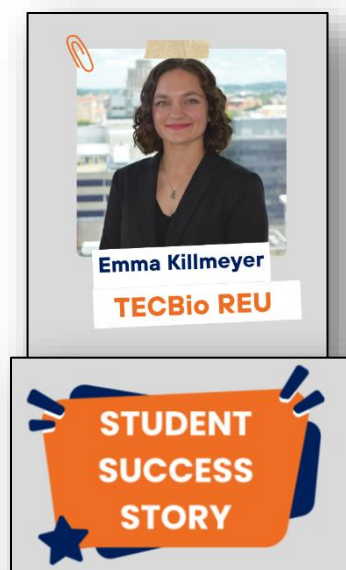


Congratulations Tim!

- Ms. Emma Killmeyer, who currently is a senior chemistry major with biochemistry concentration, was named a Student Trustee for the Millersville University Council of Trustees.
- Emma also serves as the new president of the ACS Student Chapter at MU.
- In addition, Emma Killmeyer spent 10 weeks of her summer in Pittsburgh for the TECBio REU, an immersive, graduate-level research experience for undergraduate students.

She worked in the Durrant lab, which uses computer-aided drug design

techniques to study infectious diseases and cancer. Her project focused on developing structural protein predictions with AlphaFold software to understand polycystic kidney disease progression. For the full student spotlight click on the link below.



Congratulations Emma!

<https://www.tecbioreu.pitt.edu/student-spotlight-emma-killmeyer-2026/>

Summer 2026 Summer Research Placements

Five Millersville chemistry majors were selected to participate in summer research programs – (NSF-REU, Organic Syntheses Research Grant, and Murley Summer Research).

Student	REU	Institution
Alyssa Adelman	Murley Summer Research	Millersville University
Emma Killmeyer	TECBio REU	University of Pittsburgh
John Patterson	Organic Research Grant	Millersville University
Jacob Sherry	Southeast Agricultural Research & Extension Center	Penn State University
Keira Welch	Murley Summer Research	Millersville University

Company Internships During 2025-2026

Two Millersville chemistry majors engaged in internship or chemistry-related work experiences with regional companies.

Student	Company	Location
Aaron Breckbill	Eurofins	Lancaster, PA
Callie Martiello	Turkey Hill Dairy	Conestoga, PA

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Congratulations to Millersville Chemistry Students – Spring 2026

At the end of the Spring 2026 semester, the Chemistry Department celebrated our graduating seniors and chemistry majors with an awards' ceremony and a picnic in the Caputo/Roddy courtyard.



2026 Chemistry Department Awards

This year's student recipients of Chemistry Department Awards were as follows:

- Excellence in Introductory Chemistry Award – **Mark Ovalles**
- Cecil M. Upton Organic Chemistry Award – **Keira Welch**
- Murley Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship – **Alyssa Adelman & Keira Welch**
- Organic Syntheses Summer Research Fellowship – **John Patterson**
- American Institute of Chemists Award – **Amber Nickey & Jessica Rarick**
- MU ACS Student Chapter Award – **Rachel Bonner**

American Chemical Society Division Undergraduate Awards:

- Analytical Chemistry – **Emma Killmeyer**
- Inorganic Chemistry – **Timothy Lerch**
- Organic Chemistry – **Timothy Lerch & Amber Nickey**
- Physical Chemistry – **Timothy Lerch**
- Environmental Chemistry – **Timothy Lerch**
- Biochemistry – **Jessica Rarick**
- Chemical Safety and Ethics – **Timothy Lerch**

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ACS Southeastern PA Section (SEPSACS) Award:

- Outstanding Senior Chemistry Major - **Timothy Lerch**

2026 Chemistry Department Scholarships

- Richard Sasin Endowed Scholarship in Chemistry – **Andrew Kerns & Daniella Ranieli**
- Gerald S. Weiss Scholarship – **Keira Welch**
- Yvonne and Sandra L. Turchi Biochemistry Scholarship – **Emma Killmeyer**
- Sandra A. Yeager, Ph.D. Chemistry Scholarship – **Amy Ho**
- Dr. R. Edward Rajaseelan Excellence in Chemistry Scholarship – **Modebareoluwa (Joshua) Obadofin**
- Barbara Rogers '63 Scholarship for Excellence in Chemistry Endowment – **John Patterson**



Top (left to right):
Timothy Lerch, Mitchell Hoffman, Chaz Eavenson, Nathan Ferguson, Stefano Astudillo, Sam Bauer

Bottom (left to right):
Andrea Forry, Rachel Bonner, Olivia Terrazas, Jessica Rarick, Amber Nickey

Spring 2026 Chemistry Graduates

Back (left to right): Chaz Eavenson^{b,c}, Timothy Lerch^{a,c}, Rachel Bonner^c, Jessica Rarick^b, Nathan Ferguson^{b,c}

Front (left to right): Amber Nickey^c, Andrea Forry, Olivia Terrazas^c, Sam Bauer

a - Completed a Departmental and University Honors Thesis

b - Completed a Departmental Honors Thesis

c - ACS Certified Degree



In May 2026, nine additional chemistry majors joined the ranks of our alumni. The Chemistry Department is very proud of our Spring 2026 graduates! Our graduates continue their careers in chemistry-related field or are attending graduate and professional school programs after graduation. Some are listed here:

- **Sam Bauer** – employed at Eurofins
- **Chaz Eavenson** – Ph.D. in Chemistry at the University of Rhode Island
- **Andrea Forry** – employed at Arx Pharma
- **Timothy Lerch** – Ph.D. in Chemistry at the University of Illinois
- **Amber Nickey** - enrolled in a Millersville program for her teaching certification. She was selected as a Noyce Scholar
- **Jessica Rarick** – employed at Eurofins

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Spring 2026 Graduation

Left (top to bottom): Amber Nickey, Jessica Rarick, Sam Bauer & family

Middle (clockwise): Chaz Eavenson, Timothy Lerch, Nathan Ferguson

Right (top to bottom): Rachel Bonner, Andrea Forry, Olivia Terrazas & family



Spring 2026 Chemistry Graduates

Standing (left to right): Amber Nickey^c, Sam Bauer, Timothy Lerch^{a,c}, Jessica Rarick^b, Rachel Bonner^c
Seating (left to right): Nathan Ferguson^{b,c}, Chaz Eavenson^{b,c}, Olivia Terrazas^c, Andrea Forry

a - Completed a Departmental and University Honors Thesis

b - Completed a Departmental Honors Thesis

c - ACS Certified Degree

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Notable Alumni Achievements/Updates

1. **Dr. Rebecca Agapov** (MU 2008) was named a “Top 50 Women Leader of Delaware” <https://thewomenweadmire.com/2026/02/the-top-50-women-leaders-of-delaware-for-2026/> & <https://thewomenweadmire.com/leaders/rebecca-agapov/>
2. **JaQui Archey** (MU 2012) was elected as the President of the Board of Directors of Advantage Lancaster: <https://www.advantagelancaster.org/staff-board> <https://www.instagram.com/p/DOtdsgCDk2v/>
3. Congratulations to **Dr. Autumn Peters** (MU 2021) who earned her Ph.D. in Materials Chemistry from Colorado State University.
4. **Madison (Ventana) Cherubin** (MU 2023) earned a Graduate Student Teaching Award at Penn State University!
5. **Joshua Rushlow** (MU 2023) and current Inorganic Chemistry PhD student at Texas A & M was one of [35 young researchers from the United States chosen to attend the 75th Lindau Nobel Laureate Meeting.](#)



Dr. Rebecca Agapov

Fall 2026 – Seminar Series

The Fall 2026 Seminar Series, hosted this year by **Dr. Melissa Mullen Davis**, includes speakers from UMBC, University of Delaware, St. Joseph’s University, Millersville University, as well as this year’s Murley student presenters. Seminars take place on Mondays from 4-5 pm, in Roddy 149. The complete list of seminars can be found here: <https://www.millersville.edu/chemistry/curriculum/seminars.php>

We are very proud of the successes of all our graduates over the years. Our alumni reflect our efforts, dedication, and quality of teaching. ***You are Millersville Chemistry, and we celebrate you this and every year. Thank you!*** We are always delighted to hear from you. Please stop by and visit us when you are in the area or send us an update.

Alums! We LOVE to hear from you!

Update your contact information online at: <http://www.millersville.edu/chemistry/alumni/index.php>

Click on the “**Updates Form**” button
to update your information for us.

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