History

The development of chemistry in the United States is tied closely to the development of chemistry at Columbia University. For more than a century, Columbia chemistry faculty have produced breakthroughs in research, trained many of the leading chemists in the country, and led the growth of chemistry as both an academic discipline and a profession.

Columbia has been home to many renowned chemists, among them Nobel Laureates Harold Urey, the discoverer of deuterium, and Edward Kimball, a pioneer in the study of cortical steroids. Louis Hammett, the father of physical organic chemistry, and Victor LaMer, the father of colloid chemistry, were longtime members of the department.

This tradition of excellence continues today. Among our faculty we count many members of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the National Academy of Sciences.

Departmental Endowments

ARUN GUTHIKONDA MEMORIAL FELLOWSHIP IN ORGANIC CHEMISTRY
Awarded to a student demonstrating excellence in Organic Chemistry
2019________________________________________Benjamin Ravetz (Rovis Group)
2020________________________________________Chengbo Yao (Norton Group)

KATHY CHEN FELLOWSHIP IN ORGANIC CHEMISTRY
Awarded to a rising 5th year graduate student demonstrating excellence in Chemistry________________________Yeongsu Cho (Berkelbach Group)

THE GUTHIKONDA, WALLING, NAKANISHI AND BREISLOV FELLOWSHIP IN ORGANIC CHEMISTRY
Awarded to a student demonstrating excellence in Organic Chemistry______________Yizhuo Yang (Mcdermott Group)

THE GUTHIKONDA, KATZ, TURROR AND FARFUSESKY FELLOWSHIP IN ORGANIC CHEMISTRY
Awarded to a student demonstrating excellence in Organic Chemistry___________________Chengming He (Mcdermott Group)

BLANCHE R. & DAVID KASINDORF FELLOWSHIP
Awarded to a student demonstrating academic excellence in Physical Chemistry_____________Yufeng Liu (Zhu Group)

EDITH & EUGENE BLOUT FELLOWSHIP
Awarded to an exceptional student________Jack Weber (Friesner/Reichman Groups)

ALFRED BADER FELLOWSHIP
Awarded to a student demonstrating excellence in Organic Chemistry__________________________Tomas Fiala (Sames Group)

COLUMBIA—UPJOHN FELLOWSHIP
Awarded to a student who exemplifies academic excellence ______________Paul (PJ) Robinson (Reichman Group)

Ferguson Fellowship
Awarded to a student demonstrating excellence in Synthetic Drugs/Medicines_________________Wei-Li Lee (Sames Group)

RUTGERS FELLOWSHIP
Awarded to a student demonstrating academic excellence ______________________Pierre Devlaminck (Friesner Group)

FOURMAN FELLOWSHIP
Awarded to a student demonstrating excellence in Organic Chemistry________________________David Vaccaro (Parkin Group)

TRAUBE FELLOWSHIP
Awarded to a student demonstrating outstanding talent in photochemistry______________________Xinwen Liu (Min Group)

STANLEY F. FREIDMAN FELLOWSHIP
Awarded to a student demonstrating excellence in Chemistry____________________________________Xichun Zhang (Friesner Group)

CHARLES CANTOR FELLOWSHIP
Awarded to international student demonstrating excellence in Chemistry________________________Enda Xiao (Marianetti Group)

SUSAN BAHARY FELLOWSHIP
Awarded to a student demonstrating excellence in Biological Chemistry_______________________Han Yang (Kaufman Group)
Professor and Dean George Pegram received the second PhD in physics from Columbia University and is perhaps as singularly responsible for physics at Columbia as Chandler is for chemistry. As Chairman of the department for 25 years, and then Dean of the Graduate School, he was responsible for modeling graduate studies as we know them today. He brought Bohr, Einstein, and Fermi to Columbia for the first time in the 1920s. The awards given in his name, the Pegram Awards, are for graduate students in their final year, in recognition of their outstanding achievements in the chemical sciences.

The 2020 award recipients are:

David Vaccaro (Parkin Group)
Roxar Kay (Cozens Group)
Adrian Lee (Cozens Group)
Christopher Huang (James Group)
Jaesik Hughes (Leighton Group)

The Pegram Awards recognize excellence in teaching by graduate and postdoctoral students as well as by graduate and undergraduate students as well as by graduate and undergraduate students.

Jack Miller Awards

Professor Jack Malcolm Miller was a nuclear chemist who greatly influenced the field through his passion for teaching undergraduate and graduate students as well as by graduate and undergraduate students. The awards given in his name recognize excellence in teaching by graduate students.

The 2020 award recipients are:

Isaac Hughes (Leighton Group)
Christopher Hwu (Sames Group)
Arden Lee (Cornish Group)
Korak Ray (Gonzalez Group)
David Vaccaro (Parkin Group)

Hammett Award

Perhaps best known for founding the field of physical organic chemistry, Columbia chemistry Professor Louis Hammett defined a new level of rigor in understanding chemical reactivity. The award given in his name is for the most outstanding Ph.D. student in their final year in recognition of excellent fundamental studies in chemical research.

The 2020 award recipient is:

Ben Ravetz (Rovis Group)

The Chandler Society Award

Established in 2009 by friends and colleagues of Professor Katz, this prize is awarded to the Columbia College, General Studies, or SEAS student majoring in the chemical sciences who is deemed by the faculty to have demonstrated outstanding promise and dedication to the spirit of scholarship and dedication to the field of chemical research.

Kevin Qian

The Richard Bersohn Prize

Established in 2009 by Professor Louis Brus, who was a student of Professor Bersohn, this prize is awarded to the Columbia College, General Studies, or SEAS student majoring in the chemical sciences who is deemed by the faculty to have demonstrated outstanding promise and dedication to the field of chemical research.

Matthew Bowers

The Bent Award

The Bent Award is awarded to the most outstanding undergraduate teaching assistant. This award was established in the memory of former Chemistry faculty member, and outstanding surface scientist, Brian E. Bent, after his unexpected passing in 1996 at age 35, to honor his passion for teaching.

Caleb Cook

Kevin Qian

The Chandler Society Award

Awarded to the undergraduate student demonstrating the most outstanding performance and dedication to the spirit of the Chandler Society, a club run by undergraduates for the purpose of promoting and cultivating the most outstanding postgraduate students in the Department of Chemistry.

Brianna Alico

The Thomas J. Katz Prize

Established in 2009 by friends and colleagues of Professor Katz, this prize is awarded to the Columbia College, General Studies, or SEAS student majoring in the chemical sciences who is deemed by the faculty to have demonstrated outstanding promise and dedication to the spirit of the Chandler Society.

Matthew Bowers

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