



the chemical bond

SPRING 2010
University of Florida
Department of Chemistry



...on the cover

Kudos to Our New Graduates and Outstanding Undergraduates

The Gator Nation continues to swell with Chemistry graduates. A total of 133 students completed the BS in 2009–2010 (25 in Summer 2009, 19 in Fall 2009, and 89 in Spring 2010), including 78 with Honors, High Honors, or Highest Honors. Congratulations to all of our new graduates.

Each year, the department chooses one or more outstanding seniors for the Colonel Allen R. and Margaret G. Crow Award. Our 2009–2010 winners are Mallory Gerace and Joshua Jackman. Mallory worked with Prof. Adrian Roitberg for her senior thesis in computational chemistry. This fall, she will be starting on her Ph.D. in Chemistry at Cornell University. Joshua will also be heading north to earn a Ph.D. in Medical Engineering and Medical Physics in the Harvard-MIT Division of Health Sciences and Technology. He worked in Prof. David Wei's research group for his senior thesis.

The department also awards several outstanding junior chemistry majors with funding provided by private donors. The 2010 Howard and Brenda Sheridan award goes to Joseph Papin. The winner of the Joseph P. Laforana award is Andrew Scheuermann. The Gordon M. and Joyce L. Smith award goes to Rahul Patel. The Chemical Physics scholarship winners are Francisco Birk, Mohammad Ehsan, and Michael Durante. Congratulations to these undergraduates as they continue their excellent performances as chemistry majors.

A note from The Chair

In May, I again had the honor of leading our spring semester graduates in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences graduation ceremony. The event is one that I have come to look forward to every year. With all of our majors lined up waiting our turn (see the cover photo), I get the chance to chat with everyone and learn about their plans and ambitions. New jobs, graduate school, medical school, pharmacy, occupational therapy, even law school; a chemistry degree opens many doors, and our graduates are making the most of their opportunities.

In three graduation ceremonies this year, we awarded degrees

to nearly 150 majors, a number that continues to rise. About two thirds of our majors now choose our Biochemistry Track, an option we introduced in the 1990's that has steadily grown in popularity.

This growth more than justifies our initiative to expand biochemistry in the Department of Chemistry. This spring we welcome Professors Rebecca Butcher and Steven Bruner, who are making immediate contributions to our graduate and undergraduate biochemistry programs. Please take a moment to read their brief bios in this issue.

We also are moving forward



with our plan to improve facilities. The planning process for our new Chemistry and Chemical Biology Building is almost complete. See some great images and keep up with the plans on our web page at www.chem.ufl.edu.

—Daniel R. Talham

Our Wonderful Staff!

In March, the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences held a ceremony and reception in the Keene Faculty Center to honor staff who have attained between 5 and 30 years of continuous service to the University of Florida. Seven staff members from the Department of Chemistry were recognized for having achieved one of these milestones. **Dianne James** (10), **Oleg Matveev** (10), **Joanne Jacobucci** (15), **Julie Ann Steffens** (15), **Beth Eddy** (20), **Diana Davis** (30), and **Beth Douglas** (30). Congratulations and thank you for your dedicated service to our department.



Paul D'Aneri, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, congratulates Beth Douglas on her 30 years of service.

Welcome New Faculty

Dr. Rebecca A. Butcher joined our department on January 31, 2010 as an Assistant Professor in our Biochemistry Division. Her research interests are focused on identifying novel natural products from biological systems and studying their biosynthesis and mechanism of action. Rebecca received her Ph.D. from Harvard University with Stuart Schreiber, during which time she was supported by an NSF Graduate Fellowship. She received further training as a postdoctoral researcher at Harvard Medical School with Jon Clardy, on an NIH Postdoctoral Fellowship. She was also awarded a prestigious NIH Pathway to Independence award which funded the last year of her postdoctoral studies and will also provide funding during her first three years as an assistant professor. She is developing new undergraduate and graduate coursework in the field of chemical biology, the use of chemical methods to study biological systems and processes.

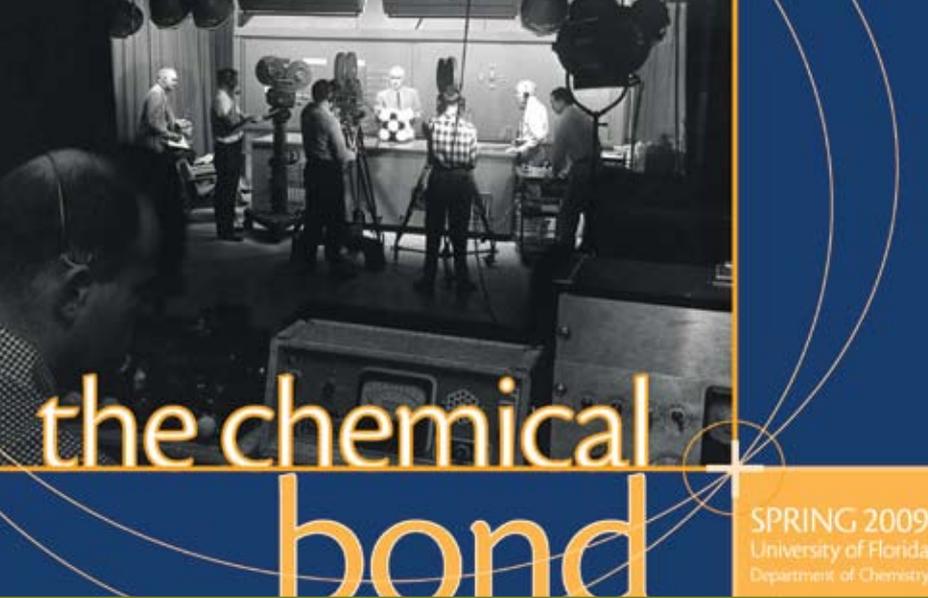


Dr. Steven D. Bruner joined our department on December 31, 2009 as an Associate Professor in our Biochemistry Division. Steven received his Ph.D. from Harvard University with Prof. Gregory Verdine studying repair of DNA and trained as a post-doctoral associate with Prof. Chris Walsh at Harvard Medical School examining the biosynthesis of antibiotics. Steve joined Boston College as an Assistant Professor in 2003 and was promoted to Associate Professor in 2009. His research program incorporates an interdisciplinary approach using synthetic organic chemistry, protein structural biology and mechanistic enzymology to understand the biosynthesis of antibiotic and anticancer natural products. Steve's research accomplishments have been acknowledged with the Damon Runyon Cancer Research Fund Scholar Award, Camille Dreyfus New Faculty Award and an NSF CAREER award.



CHOICES FOR SUCCESS WATCH THE ANIMALS

On February 22nd, Dr. Howard Sheridan visited our department and presented a talk entitled, "Choices for Success—Watch the Animals." Dr. Sheridan presented his own spectacular photographs of wildlife behaviors to illustrate choices affecting our professional, personal, and business life and their impact on our careers. Dr. Sheridan received his BS in chemistry at UF in 1965 and graduated from Tulane University School of Medicine in 1969.



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The Spring 2009 Cover Story Brings Back Memories...

I spent many hours working in that Movie Lab preparing the materials for Dr. Baxter's classes. I had graduated that summer and had a three-month wait to go onto active duty through the ROTC program. Since my dad (Dr. Woodson C. Tucker, Jr.) and Dr. Baxter split the teaching of Freshman Chemistry classes for many years, I was well known in Leigh Hall. I had the job of running the planned experiments under the movie lights so we could get the timing right. Since the lights drove the counter top up to about 100+ degrees F, it changed the length of time the experiment took to occur and the chemicals had to have the right strengths if we wanted a delayed reaction while Dr. Baxter talked about what was to happen. In one case it took five tries to get the amounts correct. Your picture brought back many memories of those days. I enjoy reading about the old days at UF.

—Woodson C. Tucker III, class of '58 BS with a group Major Chemistry, Math, and Physics.

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