

NYU
DEPARTMENT OF
CHEMISTRY

CHEMISTRY Notes

SUMMER 2021 | ISSUE 6



ISSUE

6

Letter from the Chair

Feature Story

Department News & Events

Student & Alumni News

Research News

Graduate Admission

welcome LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

We at NYU Chemistry hope this newsletter finds you healthy and sound as most people begin to experience some relief from the austere conditions faced during the pandemic. We are happy to report that our research labs have returned to full capacity, and we look forward to the fall when classes and other live activities will resume in force. Although we don't expect the fall semester to be fully "post pandemic" we do anticipate that most restrictions for vaccinated individuals will be lifted.

Instruction has been incredibly challenging over the past 18 months, and all of our instructors have served heroically, even while our students have also been amazingly patient and helpful under severely challenging circumstances. While I could relate many incredible stories, I would like to call out especially Prof. Alexej Jerschow, who stayed an extra year as DUS in order to help the Department weather the storms encountered during the pandemic. Staff member Carol Hollingsworth and her team also deserve recognition as they dealt with thousands of issues on an individual basis.

The past two classes finished their studies and celebrated their graduation online. Students that can finish their studies in New York City during a worldwide pandemic surely can overcome any challenges that come their way in the future! We are extremely proud of each and every graduate, and look forward to all the great things they are going to do.



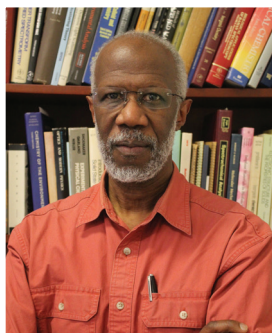
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FEATURE STORY



Spotlight on Marc Walters



Marc Walters is set to take on the role of Director of Undergraduate Studies, starting in Fall 2021, and he has already hit the ground running, joining outgoing DUS Alexej Jerschow on his rounds, as it were. It is a time as exciting as it is challenging, a year into a pandemic

situation with enrollment figures soaring. The entering class of undergraduates is not only setting records in quantity, but in quality and diversity as well.

Marc earned his B.S. at City College, his Ph.D at Princeton, and conducted his postdoctoral research at MIT. His varied teaching resume includes Inorganic Chemistry, Advanced General Chemistry, Energy & The Environment, Senior Honors and the Graduate Seminar course, as well as the Analytical Chemistry course that he developed with Clinical Professor Trina Mandal. Marc's research focused on bioinorganic chemistry, the study of redox

potentials in electron transfer proteins, and the influence of polarity and hydrogen bonding on redox potentials. His latest project involves the development of chemical reagents for the non-surgical treatment dental caries.

In addition to teaching, research, and administration, Marc has devoted his efforts to the Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) initiative. He chairs Chemistry's DEI Committee and has contributed to the mission of NYU Chemistry to increase diversity by representing the department at conferences such as NoBCCHE (the National Organization for Black Chemists and Chemical Engineers) and ABRCMS (the Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students).

In his spare time, Marc enjoys playing guitar, and listening to lots of music: new, old, jazz, blues, R&B, classical, New Age, Indian, East and West, which leaves a bit of time for baking bread, cakes and pies and sometimes a real meal to give his spouse a break.

We are excited to welcome Professor Walters to his new administrative role, and to congratulate him on his recent promotion as well!

Letter from the Chair, continued from the last page

Clinical Associate Professor Ron Callahan, who has taught thousands of students in the department over the years, has retired. Ron's service to NYU has been stellar. We will miss him!

We are looking forward to new departmental leadership starting September 1. Mark Tuckerman will assume the duties of Department Chair, Daniela Buccella will create a new role of Associate Chair, and Marc Walters will replace Alexej Jerschow as Director of Undergraduate Studies. Prof. Nate Traaseth will continue for another year as Director of Graduate Studies. We are grateful for these faculty members to serve the Department in leadership roles!

As you peruse this newsletter, please notice the strong activities that have been ongoing in the Department and the many achievements even during challenging times. In order to continue our strong upward trajectory, we could use your support! To learn more: as.nyu.edu/chemistry/alumni/giving-opportunities



DEPARTMENT NEWS & EVENTS

Ron Callahan
*is retiring in
August 2021*



NYU Chemistry Welcomes New Faculty



We eagerly anticipate the arrival of **Claudia Avalos**, who will join the NYU Chemistry research program in materials in August 2021. Claudia joins MDI colleague **Stephanie Lee** who hit the ground running as Associate Professor of Chemistry in January.

DEI Update:

In addition to establishing a DEI committee chaired by Marc Walters and appointing Daniela Buccella Director of DEI, NYU Chemistry has turned its eye to inclusiveness, adding students, postdocs and staff to departmental committees, hosting listening sessions, and developing its web presence for the DEI initiative. In December, we hosted a virtual screening of the Tribeca Film Festival feature, “Picture a Scientist,” which examines the injustices and hurdles several female-identified scientists face as they establish themselves in the field.

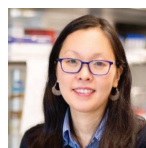


[X-Ray Crystallographer Tony Hu was featured in C&E News speaking out against anti-Asian assaults in our community by bravely sharing his own story.](#)

Faculty Award Winners



■ **Tania Lupoli** was selected as a 2021 Beckman Young Investigator



■ **Jin Montclare** was named Fellow of National Academy of Inventors



■ **Dubravko Sabo** won the 2021 CAS Golden Dozen Teaching Award



■ **Stephanie Geggier** won the 2021 CAS Teach/Tech Award



■ CAS Teaching Innovation Awards went to **Tania Lupoli** (picture above), **Somdeb Mitra** and **Rohini Qamra**

Renovation Update:

The Department’s administrative offices have completed their relocation to Waverly 3, the Clinical Faculty offices have relocated to Waverly 4, and the sister-space on Waverly 5 houses some conference and seminar facilities shared with Biology. The new labs on Brown 4 are in full swing, with the Parasram Group presiding. **Photos of the new Brown 4 labs are featured throughout this issue.**

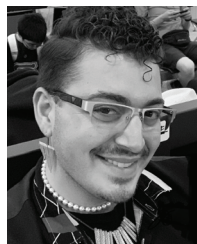


STUDENT & ALUMNI NEWS



STUDENT NEWS

- **NSF Fellowships** awarded to Benjamin Ben-Zvi (Diao Lab) and Patrick Tate (Kirshenbaum Lab)



- Congrats to the **Graduate Student Award** Recipients
- Congrats to the **Undergraduate Student Award** Recipients
- **Spotlight on Chemistry** (a virtual edition of Infonight) took place on March 2 and we were delighted to welcome back alumni Bret Schumacher, Sydney Hiller, James Tranos, Chloe Vanbourgondien, Axel Epie, Olivia Maffei and Rhea-Donna Reyes to help faculty and current student leaders shine a light on the undergraduate program.



Photo credit: Melissa Lucas-Ludwig



Congratulations 2021 Graduates!

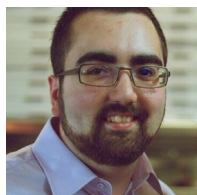
Check out the [2021 Graduation Tribute Page](#), celebrating our wonderful graduating students!

- The **Phi Lambda Upsilon Induction Ceremony** was held on May 7, 2021. Congrats to the outstanding students who joined NYU's Alpha Lambda Chapter of the national honor society in chemistry. Shout outs to President David Sung and Vice President Eric Zhu for organizing the second virtual ceremony in history!
- The GSO presented a **Non-Traditional Careers Panel**, featuring department alumni James Banigan (Traaseth 2015), Laura Poloni (Ward 2016) and Matthew Miner (Woerpel 2016). The panel discussed their careers in industry and law with organizer Yudong "Gary" Liu (Woerpel Lab).



ALUMNI NEWS

- **Billy Marsiglia** (Ph.D 2018, Traaseth Lab) joined the faculty at University of Alabama-Birmingham



- **Abel Navarro** (Ph.D 2011, Kallenbach Lab) received the 2021 Outstanding Two-Year College Chemistry Teaching Award from the ACS New York Section



- **Alan Wang** (CAS 2014) was interviewed in the NYU Alumni Blog, where he gave a major shout-out to Professor John Halpin for being a great teacher, an inspiration, and eventually a professional connection during his medical residency interview where he found that his interviewers shared his sentiments. The Halpin Reach is out there!



- Marie Maynard Daly (1921-2003), who earned her Masters Degree from the New York University Department of Chemistry in 1943, became the first African American Woman to earn a Ph.D in Chemistry (from Columbia University). She was featured in NYU Brave Conversations as a spotlighted individual in March 2021.



Image: Brave Conversations Slide



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In Memoriam

This winter, we lost Bill Probst, a beloved Schuster Group alum from the 1990's who stayed connected, attending milestone celebrations through the decades.



RESEARCH NEWS

THE SCHLICK GROUP IS HOT



■ Schlick Group Study of **Nucleosome Clutches** is Featured on the Cover of the Journal of Molecular Biology. NYU contributors include the first-author, postdoctoral fellow Stephanie Portillo-Ledesma, and undergraduate researchers Lucille Tsao and Meghna Wagley.

■ Schlick Collaboration Investigates **Histone H1** as Genetic Drive of Lymphoma Mutations, in Nature

■ Schlick Examines the **Thriving Field of Biomolecular Modelling**, in Nature Computational Science. Postdoctoral fellow Stephanie Portillo-Ledesma co-authored the piece.

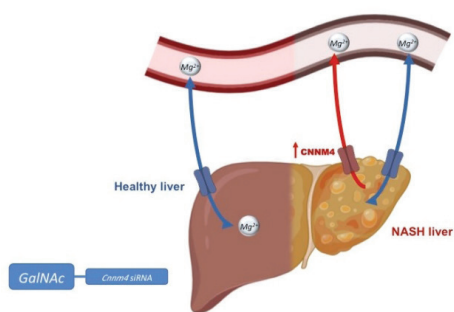


■ The Schlick Group Identifies **RNA Frameshifting Element as Target for Battling COVID-19**, on the Cover of Biophysical Journal. Contributors include Swati Jain, Shuting Yan, and Qiyao Zhu. The article was part of the journal's "Special issue: Biophysicists Address Covid-19 Challenges," which includes an editorial written by Tamar Schlick on the importance of biophysical contributions to the COVID-19 response, and the work was subsequently featured in The Observer.

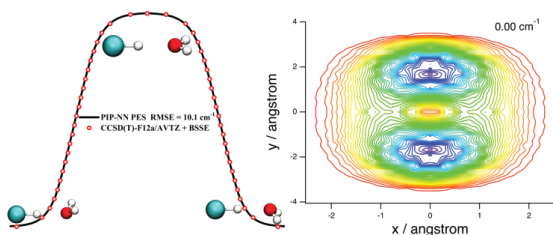
- Hamilton Group's **Supramolecular Strategy to Combat Alzheimer's Disease** is Featured on JACS Cover. The study was led by postdoctoral fellow Debabrata Maity.



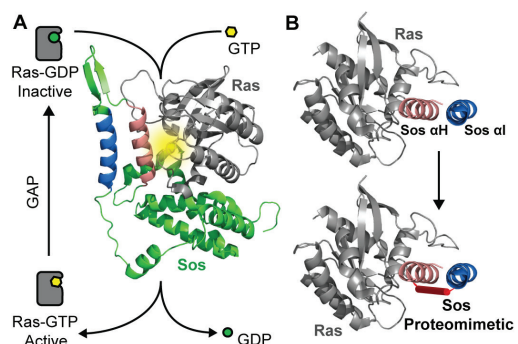
- Buccella & Colleagues Identify a **Therapeutic Target for Treating Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease**, in the Journal of Hepatology. Graduate student Jessica Gruskos (currently at BMS) and undergraduate researcher Kevan Chu (currently at Weill Cornell grad school) were contributing authors.



- Bacic & Colleagues **Study of HCL-H₂O Dimer** was selected as a 2021 Hot Article in Physical Chemistry Chemical Physics.



- Johnny Hong and Dan Yoo (Arora Lab) Develop **Protein Mimics to Target RAS**, in PNAS.



RESEARCH NEWS FROM NYUAD

Naumov Investigates Performance of Molecular Crystals in Conversion of Light to Mechanical Work, in Pnas

Naumov's Investigation of Beetle Luciferases Featured on the Cover of Nature Reviews Chemistry



Click on the titles for full articles





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Photo credit: Debabrata Maity



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