

FLORIDA TECH CHEMISTRY ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

C. Baum

September 2006

Welcome to the third "annual" newsletter! I am averaging over three years between correspondence, which is entirely too long. As you will see, we are in the process of establishing much more efficient and timely communication with our alumni so it should be easier to keep in touch. However, I will continue to correspond on a somewhat more personal and, hopefully, more frequent basis. One drawback of my delay is that our "current" address list becomes more obsolete. Please let me know if you are aware of addresses that need to be updated.

Since my last communication in January 2003, the most dramatic change to the department is our facility. We moved into the new F. W. Olin Physical Sciences Building in January 2005 and are now quite settled. For those of you who have not seen the structure in person, I refer you to the website (<http://cos.fit.edu/olinPS.html>) for the details. It is very refreshing each day to enter the building. The first floor



includes the department office, two classrooms, the General Chemistry and Organic teaching laboratories, the stockroom and the major instrumentation lab. The second floor has the Physical/Analytical Chemistry laboratories, a conference room, a social area for students, and offices and research labs for the analytical and physical chemists. The organic and inorganic faculty offices and labs are on the third floor, including the research groups of **Joe Rokach** and **Gordon Nelson**. There are state-of-the-art hoods (no more peeling paint) in all the laboratories and the odor in the organic lab is barely noticeable. The pchem lab is now twice the size of the old lab and has windows! There is a separate laser laboratory as well as a computational lab, a photochemistry lab, a glassblowing room, and the adjoining instrumentation lab also is double its previous size. The research laboratories are roughly three times larger than most of the old labs and include several specialized centers. The new instrumentation includes a 400 MHz NMR spectrometer, a scanning tunneling microscope, a surface FTIR spectrophotometer and a mass spectrometer with a DART (direct analysis in real time) probe, the first of its kind at a research academic institution in the Southeast.

We have increased the number of chemistry faculty to thirteen with the addition of **Dr. Joel Olson** (analytical chemistry) from the University of Minnesota and **Dr. Rudi Wehmschulte** (organometallic chemistry) from the University of Oklahoma. A few outstanding chemistry faculty achievements include **Virender Sharma's** sabbatical to Stanford University, the renewal of **Joe Rokach's** 1.3 million dollar NIH grant, recognition by the Florida Tech faculty of **Monica Baloga** as the outstanding teacher at the University (the Kerry B. Clark Award for Excellence in Teaching), and the hosting of the International Sustainability Conference.

There has been a significant increase in the number of chemistry undergraduate and graduate students in the past several years and our graduates continue to be very successful, with acceptance at such schools as Princeton and Columbia University. One result of the faculty

additions mentioned above has been a decrease in the size of our general chemistry sections to no more than 50 students so this course has become more personal. This Fall, we are introducing the first real change to our chemistry curriculum since the switch from quarters to semesters in 1994. The first semester of analytical chemistry has been moved from the Junior year to the Sophomore year and will be taken along with the first semester of organic chemistry. The old FORTRAN requirement is being replaced by a new Computer Applications in Chemistry course in the Sophomore year. **Kurt Winkelmann** and I will teach this course. Kurt Winkelmann co-teaches a freshman-level nanotechnology laboratory course with professors from the Physics and the Chemical Engineering Departments.

With so many new alumni, we decided to launch a Chemistry Department Alumni website. This will contain the current Alumni Newsletter, an archive of previous newsletters and links to the new Alumni Registration page and Alumni Connections page. You can find all this by first visiting the Chemistry Department's homepage. It is updated on a regular basis and has links to all the faculty so you can keep track of the news in the department. You will note that few of us update our pictures so we look as youthful as ever!

Chemistry Department Homepage http://cos.fit.edu/chemistry Chemistry Alumni Website http://cos.fit.edu/chemistry/alumni Alumni Registration http://cos.fit.edu/chemistry/alumni/registration Alumni Connections http://cos.fit.edu/chemistry/alumni/connections Send an email to kwinkel@fit.edu to receive the username and password for the Connections page.
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The Alumni Registration form will make it easier for you to let us know what is happening in your life and when there are contact changes. Information you provide us on the Chemistry Alumni Registration page will not be shared with anyone unless you give your permission. Please notify us if you change your address so we can keep in touch. If you choose to share your information with other alumni, it will be posted on the Chemistry Alumni Connections page. Only readers of this newsletter will be able to view the information since that page requires a username (panther) and a password (chemistry).

Posting information on the Alumni Connections page has many benefits. Most importantly, we hope the Alumni Connections page helps our alumni maintain friendships and network with each other and chemistry faculty. We would like to know about your latest accomplishments. An up-to-date alumni list also benefits the Chemistry Department because accreditation agencies often wish to know where our graduates are employed.

I do not have valid addresses for the following alumni: Paul Arends, Dominic Keating, E Zhou, Jennifer Bernau, and Lynda Dawson. Please let me know if you have contact information for them.

Please stop by and visit our new facilities and new and old faculty. We would love to see you!

Chair's Corner

Greetings to all our alumni:

We're very proud of your accomplishments and I would personally like to invite you back to see our new building, meet new faculty, and renew your relationship with the department. Some of you already have stopped by and it was so nice to see you.

The department continues to grow and is rapidly developing into a premier research department. Our undergraduate and graduate enrollments have both doubled. We are currently third on campus in external funding at about 2.5 million dollars and are part of the College of Science, the number one research entity on campus. At the same time, we feel that teaching is still the cornerstone of our enterprise as evidenced by our own Dr. Baloga being named the outstanding teacher on campus for 2005-2006.

The University is currently in the middle of a 50 million dollar capital campaign to provide much needed funds for scholarships, chaired professorships, the endowment and capital improvements. This is necessary for Florida Tech, already a Carnegie class 1 research institution, to enhance its national and international prominence and to reach its goal of becoming one of the top technological universities in the world. This campaign is timed to culminate in our 50th anniversary celebration in 2008. When you participate, please keep us in mind by specifying your donation to the Chemistry Department Endowment. We are optimistic that by 2010 we will have 100 undergraduate chemistry majors and 50 graduate students helping to continue our climb to the top, if scholarships and fellowships permit.

I am very proud of this department and hope that you are as well.

Best wishes,
Dr. Babich

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