The college’s Annual Scholarship Celebration took place on Thursday, April 20. This event brought together the donors who contributed to College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) scholarship funds with the students who benefited from receiving those scholarships. As part of the luncheon, there was a short program including speaking points from both a scholarship donor as well as an outstanding student recipient. Chelsi Lopez, a graduating senior from the Chemistry Department, shared the importance and impact of scholarships from her respective views. Becoming financially independent after high school, Chelsi thrived in college with the help of scholarships. She has been accepted by the graduate program in University of Miami and will pursue a Ph.D. degree in Ocean Science with a concentration in Marine Biogeochemistry. We wish Chelsi all the best in her future endeavor.

Students like Chelsi are recognized annually in the departmental undergraduate award ceremony. This year the ceremony was also held on May 12. A list of our awardees and their group pictures are included in this newsletter. Again we have a group of excellent students. It is such a great pleasure to watch students excel.

It is often said that a teacher is really a crucial person in a student's life. In the Chemistry Department we have a group of dedicated faculty who work tirelessly to improve the quality of teaching and student-centered research. This year four outstanding faculty members were recognized at the CLAS award ceremony for their special achievements. Dr. Margaret (Peggy) Bruehl was honored as one of the college’s Outstanding Faculty Award recipients for her achievement in teaching chemical education. Moreover, Peggy was also the recipient of the university award in this category. Dr. Marino Resendiz received the CLAS Award for Enhancing Diversity and Inclusion in Teaching, Research, and Leadership/Service. Dr. Scott Reed received the CLAS Excellence Service and Leadership Award, and Dr. Xiaojun Ren was recognized by the CLAS Excellence in Research and Creative Activities Award. It has been an honor working with these colleagues. They have done extraordinary work to improve the department.

In the coming academic year the department will welcome a new member: Dr. Emilie Brigitte Guidez from Iowa State University will be appointed as a tenure-track Assistant Professor. Emilie’s research specialty is in theoretical/computational chemistry, in particular electronic structure theory study in chemistry and material science. Now that there are four faculty members with research expertise in computational chemistry (Emilie Guidez, Hai Lin, Haobin Wang, and Xiaotai Wang) and an adjoined professor (Michael Crowley) in the same area, the department will propose to establish a Center for Computational Chemistry in the next year.

The launch of a BS Biochemistry program is underway. CLAS Dean Pam Jansma has expressed her support of this program, and the department is working with the Institutional Planning to begin putting together the budget for the proposal. Led by Dr. Jeff Knight, this represents the most significant change for the department over the past ten years. Meanwhile, the revision of the MS program is almost complete. The new program has started to offer four MS tracks: a Biochemistry Track, a Synthesis and Measurement Track, and a Molecular Modeling Track. Students interested in gaining experience in a broad range of chemistry are encouraged to consider the traditional track. The department has also established a joint BS-MS program with the Chemistry Department of the Metropolitan State University of Denver. A significant increase in the number of graduate students is expected in the next few years.

On a personal note, may I offer words of appreciation to all alumni who have helped the department in the past year. I would like to hear your thoughts on how to further improve our program. If you are interested in serving in the department external advisory board, please let us know.

Sincerely,

Haobin Wang
During the 2015-2016 academic year, Professor Scott Reed was on sabbatical at Stockholm University in Sweden. Professor Reed was appointed as a Visiting Professor in the Department of Biochemistry and Biophysics. Working in the lab of Professor Peter Brzezinski, the goal of this sabbatical was to improve the understanding of how the vesicle transport system overcomes the energetic barrier of merging two lipid membranes.

While abroad, Dr. Reed witnessed many Swedish traditions including some interesting academic traditions. For example, one tradition involved their PhD defense. A few months before defending a PhD thesis, a student takes part in a “spikning”. This involves nailing your PhD thesis to a tree. Every department has their own tree (usually just a large piece of bark, really) and reading student application materials for the award (including letters of recommendation); (4) selecting award winners; (5) crafting award letters; (6) sending award letters to award recipients and their faculty advisors; and, (7) coordinating and communicating information about travel fund reimbursement with the COACS Treasurer.

Professor Knaus’ COACS student travel award letters are not your ordinary award letters. Instead, Professor Knaus’ student award letters contain inspirational words of appreciation, good will and honor, by encouraging students to “triumph in your excitement as you learn and move forward on your research project with passion and perseverance”, “share this good news with family, friends, teachers and advisors who have supported you throughout your academic career” and to feel honored, “It is with honor that we present this award to you”.

Assistant Professor Karen Knaus received the 2016 COACS (Colorado Section American Chemical Society) Salute to Excellence Award. The work that led to the nomination for this award was cited as "Karen Knaus has been on the student award committee for many years, reading student applications for travel awards to go to scientific meetings.” Dr. Karen Knaus has served in the capacity of the Chairperson of the Colorado Section ACS Student Travel Award committee for the last 7+ years. Dr. Knaus’ work in this capacity involves: (1) updating application materials for the COACS website; (2) collecting and organizing student applications for each award cycle (twice a year); (3) checking over and award letters; (6) sending award letters to award recipients and their faculty advisors; and, (7) coordinating and communicating information about travel fund reimbursement with the COACS Treasurer.

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### Dr. Scott Reed’s Stockholm Sabbatical

During the Spring semester, the club hosted their 1st annual Graduate School in the Sciences event. Dr. Kristine Sikora, a recruitment director for CU Denver Graduate School gave a presentation about various scientific fields. This event was created to help attendees gain insight into what graduate school is and how to become a competitive applicant. This was also an opportunity for students to network with faculty and students from the graduate school. The club also participated in the Denver Metro Regional Science and Engineering Fair and performed the red cabbage pH lab using household items. The club also participated in the Feed the Need Competition and collected donations for the CU Denver Food Pantry to help students in need. Lastly, for fundraising the club sold ACS study guides and lab goggles.

The club would like to give thanks to the club advisor, Dr. Maron, Dr. Scott Reed, Dr. Karen Knaus, Lorrie Vigil, the Department Chemistry Faculty, SGA and students who helped promote the club and for everyone’s contributions!

### Dr. Karen Knaus Awarded the 2016 COACS Salute to Excellence Award


dr. karen knaus awarded the 2016 coacs salute to excellence award

### CU Denver Chemistry Club

In the fall, the Chemistry Club hosted a CV workshop with Dr. Scott Reed. The workshop helped students from various work backgrounds create a CV. Their most successful event in the fall was the 4th annual DataBlast. DataBlast is an undergraduate student research symposium that helps introduce students to the various research opportunities on campus. This event also gave presenters the opportunity to gain experience presenting in an informal setting and is also a great way for PIs to get the word out about their lab.

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Douglas F. Dyckes Award: Danielle Miller, Dr. Haobin Wang
Robert Damrauer Award: Cassandra Herbert, Dr. Haobin Wang
Marti Barrett Scholarship: Danielle Miller, Dr. Haobin Wang, Chloe Pitsch
Michael Milash Award: Sami Hourieh, Lana Salah, Dr. Haobin Wang, Nia Travers

General Chemistry: Matilda Hallet, Keegan Caroll, Dr. Haobin Wang
Honors General Chemistry: Mikias Negussie, Dr. Haobin Wang
Inorganic Chemistry: Robera Oljira, Dr. Haobin Wang
Analytical Chemistry: Angela Nguyen, Dr. Haobin Wang
Biochemistry: Tim Spotts, Dr. Haobin Wang
Outstanding Graduates: Desmond Hamilton, Thao Huynh, Dr. Haobin Wang

2016-2017 Award Recipients left to right:
Matilda Hallet, Cassandra Herbert, Chloe Pitsch, Angela Nguyen, Nia Travers, Haobin Wang (Professor and Chairman), Mikias Negussie, Thao Huynh, Lana Salah, Desmond Hamilton, Sami Hourieh, Danielle Miller, Robera Oljira, Keegan Caroll