

# The Minnesota Chemist



## Chair's Corner

It was wonderful to see so many colleagues at the ACS National Meeting in San Diego! The attendance at this event has climbed steadily post-pandemic, and there were over 12,000 in-person attendees with 2,000 more participating in digital sessions from various corners of the globe. While there were many terrific talks and sessions, it was also clear many scientists are thinking about adapting to the changes to funding at the federal level. It was highlighted during the open Board Meeting session that for many chemists, particularly those at the entry point of their careers, that influencing scientific policy can begin with involvement in their local sections—and we encourage chemists of the North Star state to do exactly that.



April will see multiple events—the first, on April 9, is a **Senior Chemists** gathering at the Sally Manzara Nature Center in Lake Elmo. On April 11, there will be a tea hosted by Urvashi Sandhir at Hamline University as the inaugural event of the **Women's Chemist Committee**, the **Chemists in the Library** will be at George Latimer Library in St. Paul on April 19, the Winchell Symposium will take place at North Hennepin Community College on April 26, and an event on April 30 at Bethel University, will discuss Project Management for Scientists. Please see below for more details on all of these gatherings! Then, on May 13 at the 3M Innovation Center we will be having the awards dinner and ceremony—with the option to tour the Innovation Center prior to the event. The dinner menu looks FABULOUS (beef tenderloin and walleye anyone???) and so we welcome you to join in!

Sarah Dimick Gray  
Chair 2025

## ACS MN Local Section Meetings

### Minnesota Senior Chemists Meeting Wednesday, April 9, 2025

The Minnesota Senior Chemists group will meet at the Sally Manzara Nature Center building in Sunfish Lake Park in Lake Elmo on Wednesday, April 9 at 11:45 am. Lunch will be a very nice picnic lunch provided by the Lake Elmo Event Center. After you have signed up you will receive a menu of the choices. There will be a small \$5 charge to cover some of the expenses.

There will be a short program following the lunch. This is not yet finalized.

Please let Lynn and Ken Latham know if you plan to attend by Friday April 5th. RSVP to [Lynn Hartshorn](#) and [Ken Latham](#). Contact us if you have any questions.

Sunfish Lake Park is located at 9632 Stillwater Blvd in Lake Elmo, about 200 yards off Stillwater Boulevard, west of the Lake Elmo city center. The entrance is clearly signed.

We look forward to seeing you.  
Lynn and Ken

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## Women Chemist Meeting Friday, April 11, 2025

Urvashi Sandhir will host a WCC event for women faculty in both chemistry and biochemistry, women graduate students, and women postdocs. The purpose of this meeting is to network and gather input from those interested in participating in WCC.

**Time:** Friday, April 11, 2025 at 3:00 pm

**Location:** West Hall 100, Hamline University  
(There will be no parking enforcement in Lot E during the event.)

**RSVP:** Register at <https://www.mnlocalsectionacs.org/event-info/women-chemist-meeting>

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## Project Management for Scientists at Bethel Wednesday, April 30, 2025

### Unlock Project Success: Intro to Project Management for Scientists

Are you a scientist navigating the complexities of academia, industry, or volunteer-led STEM initiatives? Whether you are managing laboratory expansions, developing new products or courses, or organizing impactful STEM events, effective project management can make all the difference.

Join us for a **1-hour introductory session** designed to equip you with essential project management tools and techniques tailored for the scientific community.

#### What You'll Learn:

- What is a project? Gain clarity on how projects differ from routine tasks.
- Project Charters Made Simple: Learn the key elements of a project charter and why it's critical to your success.
- From Scope to Schedule: Discover how to define your project's scope, create a Work Breakdown Structure (WBS), and develop a realistic schedule.
- Navigating Risks and Communication: Explore strategies to identify risks, keep stakeholders aligned, and maintain seamless communication.

#### Why Attend?

This session is perfect for:

- Scientists managing laboratory moves, expansions, or mergers.
- Team members involved in product or course development projects.
- Volunteers planning STEM/STEAM events, meetings, or activities.

You'll leave with practical knowledge and actionable tips to take a project from concept to completion with confidence. Plus, we'll wrap up with a fun, interactive activity to solidify your learning!

Don't miss this opportunity to boost your project management skills and drive success in your work and volunteer efforts.

**Presented by**

**Time**

April 30, 2025  
6:00 - 8:00 pm

**Location**

Brushaber Commons (BC) Room 468, Bethel University, 3900 Bethel Dr, St Paul, MN 55112

*Please part in the West lot. Enter through the Carl Lundquist Community Life Center (CLC) and follow posted signs to Brushaber Commons (BC) Room 468.*

**Dinner**

Southern BBQ Buffet - Smoked beef brisket, baked beans, coleslaw, potato salad, cornbread and a chocolate brownie (please note any dietary restrictions in ticket registration)

**Cost**

\$18 / \$8 students

**RSVP**

Register by April 14 at <https://www.mnlocalsectionacs.org/event-info/mn-ac-s-project-management-for-scientists>

**Speaker bios**

Rachel and Mike run Back in the Box Consulting, LLC, a training and consulting firm dedicated to helping individuals and organizations implement straightforward, effective processes to reach their goals.

Rachel brings expertise in marketing project management and educational product development, with a focus on delivering practical tools and techniques that drive success in both personal and professional growth.

Mike is a seasoned project management professional with decades of experience leading teams, processes, and projects in manufacturing, software development, and IT. He emphasizes principle-centered strategies to create impactful and meaningful training experiences.

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## May Awards Dinner at 3M Innovation Center Tuesday, May 13, 2025

Mark your calendars for a special evening at the 3M Innovation Center this May! Join us as we celebrate the outstanding achievements of our award recipients while exploring one of the most cutting-edge research hubs in the industry.

Don't miss this opportunity to connect with fellow professionals, honor excellence in chemistry, and experience the innovation that drives 3M forward. We look forward to celebrating with you!

**Presentation****Video Enhanced Learning for a Dynamic Classroom Environment**

Mr. Kevin Dirksen of Eagan High School  
2025 High School Chemistry Teacher Award Winner

**Time**

4:00 - 5:00 pm Tour of the Innovation Center  
5:00 - 5:45 pm Social & Networking (beer, soft drinks and water)  
5:45 - 7:00 pm Buffet Dinner  
7:00 - 8:15 pm Presentation of Awards and Presentation by Mr. Kevin Dirksen

**Location**

3M Innovation Center, 2350 Minnehaha Ave E, St Paul, MN 55119

**Dinner**



Beef Tenderloin with a cherry demi glaze, Ritz Cracker Breaded Walleye with homemade tartar sauce, (For vegetarian - Pasta Primavera), Mixed Greens with Apples, Dried Cranberries, Candied Pecans and a Port Wine Vinaigrette, Wild Rice Pilaf and Creme Brulee dessert

### **Cost**

\$20 / \$10 students

### **RSVP**

Register by May 5, 2025 at <https://www.mnlocalsectionacs.org/event-info/mn-acs-awards-dinner>

### **Abstract**

#### **Video Enhanced Learning for a Dynamic Classroom Environment**

Kevin Dirksen, educator at Eagan High School, has spent his career refining instructional methods to enhance student learning. Frustrated by the limitations of traditional lecture-based instruction, he transitioned to a model in which students obtain primary content through concise video lessons at home, freeing up class time for deeper engagement. This approach allows Kevin to create a dynamic blend of laboratory investigations, group activities, visual demonstrations, collaborative problem-solving, formative assessments, and digital learning. It also allows Kevin to step off the "stage" and act more as a facilitator, providing targeted support to students who need it most while fostering independence in those ready to progress at their own pace.

Beyond the classroom, Kevin serves as the Science Department Coordinator, hybrid credit recovery program facilitator, mountain bike team coach, and district Chemistry Curriculum Lead.

In his presentation, Kevin will share the history behind how he shifted his instructional style, insights into his video-enhanced learning environment and, hopefully, get some active participation from those willing to be a student for a short time again.

#### **2025 Minnesota High School Chemistry Teaching Award**

The Minnesota high school chemistry teaching award is given to an outstanding high school chemistry teacher for Excellence in High School Chemistry Teaching. This year's award goes to Mr. Kevin Dirksen of Eagan High School (EHS) in Eagan, MN. Mr. Dirksen serves as both a Chemistry and Physics teacher and according to EHS Assistant Principal of EHS, Mr. Stephen Thompson, possesses a profound understanding of his subjects, which he conveys with enthusiasm and clarity. He has developed a series of videos related to his courses which have become invaluable resources for his students. He uses these videos to "flip his classroom" so he can spend more time with hands-on activities and labs in his classroom. Beyond the classroom, Mr. Dirksen has taken on a variety of coaching and co-curricular roles. He has been a science olympiad coach, football coach, track coach, cross country coach, newspaper advisor, and advisor of several smaller student run clubs. He currently is a volunteer coach of the ISD 196 mountain bike team, which he co-founded in 2011. For his chemistry innovative teaching methods, science olympiad coach and outstanding contribution to the EHS school community, MN ACS is proud to honor him with this award in our May Awards meeting at 3M Innovation Center on May 13. This award comes with a plaque and a \$600 honorarium.

#### **2025 Janet Tarino Volunteer Award**

The Janet Tarino Volunteer Award is given to an individual for outstanding volunteer service to Minnesota ACS, and/or chemistry related projects and events not directly connected to Minnesota ACS. This year's award goes to Ms. Linda Nanko-Yeager. Linda received her B.S. in Chemistry from Carnegie-Mellon University and worked for nearly a decade doing production analysis, quality control, and formulations in the fields of polymers and pharmaceuticals. Since her retirement she has been a science education volunteer in addition to engaging in a number of community activities. Her notable volunteer work is for the Chemists-in-the-Library program with Dr. Phil Buhlmann for our section since 2005 (20 years!). Phil writes in her nomination that Linda has attended as a volunteer 142 of library events, a number that is higher than any other of the volunteers who are helping him with this program. Her other volunteer activities include volunteering for the Kids & Chemistry program for our section, Science Museum of Minnesota, Wyoming Elementary School, Delta Gamma Society of Minnesota, Forest Lake Montessori School, Giese Memorial Library in Wyoming (MN) and Rotary Club of Forest Lake as well as 17 years of service for the Wyoming City Council. The Minnesota section of ACS is very enthusiastic in bestowing this award to an absolutely exceptional volunteer, Ms Linda Nano-Yeager. The award comes with a plaque and a \$250 honorarium. Linda will be honored at the May Awards Dinner at 3M Innovation Center on May 13.

## 2025 Great Lakes Regional Meeting

**Chemistry for a Better Planet:** The 2025 Great Lakes Regional Meeting of the ACS is coming up fast! We hope to see you there in Appleton, WI on June 4-6, with hundreds of chemistry students, faculty, and industry professionals from around the upper Midwest. For more information, see our website at <https://greatlakesregion-accs.org/event-welcome/glrm-2025>.

## ACS MN Local Section News

### The Winchell Symposium

The [2025 Winchell Symposium](#) will be held on **Saturday, April 26**, at North Hennepin Community College. This is a great chance for chemistry program students to present their research.

It was noticed last year that there were few students from chemistry programs at the Winchell symposium. It is a great chance to present your research and see other students present their work.

The MN ACS Local Section offers a scholarship for student presenters to cover some of your costs. In order to qualify for the scholarship you must meet the following criteria:

- You and/or your advisor is a member of ACS
- Your research is in chemistry or biochemistry
- You are among the first seven students to register from your institution
- You attend an institution within the boundaries of the MN ACS Local Section (see list of schools [here](#))

Scholarship requests should be emailed to [Nick Schlotter](#).

### Building Connections: Undergraduate Chemistry Faculty Networking Event

On February 28, 2025, 27 chemistry faculty from two-year and four-year institutions across the Twin Cities, St. Cloud, Northfield, and beyond gathered at Metro State University for a dynamic Undergraduate Chemistry Faculty Networking Event. Organized by Sarah Dimick Gray, this afternoon of discussion fostered meaningful conversations on the evolving landscape of undergraduate chemistry education.



The event provided a valuable forum for faculty to share insights on student demographics, shifting expectations, and emerging challenges in the classroom and laboratory. Key topics included trends in enrollment, student research opportunities, and curriculum development, with lively discussions on how faculty are adapting to post-pandemic teaching formats and changing career aspirations among students.





The event's roundtable discussion format encouraged attendees to connect across institutions, fostering collaboration and the exchange of innovative ideas. The opportunity to report out after each session ensured that key takeaways were shared with the broader group, further enriching the conversation.

A huge thank you to Sarah Dimick Gray for organizing this successful event, and to all faculty who participated! These gatherings are essential in strengthening the local chemistry education community, and we look forward to continuing the dialogue in future events.

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## A Night of Innovation: Tour & Technical Presentation at Donaldson

On March 12, 2025, Donaldson hosted the Minnesota Local Section with a fantastic Tour & Technical Presentation, bringing together around 40 attendees for an evening of exploration, learning, and networking.

The event began with guided tours of Donaldson's state-of-the-art analytical chemistry laboratories, offering a rare look into the advanced techniques used to develop and test cutting-edge filtration solutions. Attendees had the opportunity to see firsthand how spectroscopy, chromatography, and other analytical methods play a crucial role in evaluating materials, contaminants, and fuel composition—all essential for improving filtration performance in real-world applications.

Following the tours, guests enjoyed a networking dinner, providing time to discuss the insights gained from the lab visits. It was a perfect opportunity to connect with fellow professionals and students in a relaxed setting.

Dave Mulder, Donaldson's Chief Technology Officer, provided an insightful overview of the company's history and its impact on filtration technology. Attendees learned about Donaldson's century-long commitment to innovation in materials science and chemistry.

The evening concluded with an insightful presentation by Matthew Goertz, Senior Principal Scientist of Advanced Materials & Chemistry at Donaldson, who explored the impact of chemistry changes on modern diesel fuels and the filtration challenges that arise. His talk built upon the tour experience, connecting laboratory techniques to real-world industry applications.

A huge thank you to Donaldson for opening their doors and providing such an immersive look into the world of analytical chemistry and filtration science. Events like these highlight the power of chemistry in solving global challenges.

We look forward to seeing you at our next event!



Here are highlights and key actions from our Councilors who attended the ACS Council meeting on March 26 and the Board of Directors meetings held on March 21 – 23, 2025.

By electronic ballot, the Council selected Christina Bodurow and Dawn Mason as candidates for 2026 President-Elect. These two candidates will join any additional candidates selected via petitions to stand for election in the fall 2025 national election.

On the recommendation of the Committee on International Activities (IAC), Council voted to approve the creation of new International Chemical Sciences Chapters in Ghana, Ecuador, and Northeast China, subject to the concurrence of the ACS Board of Directors.

On the recommendation of the Committee on Membership Affairs (MAC), Council voted to approve the 2026 Schedule of Dues and Benefits, subject to the concurrence of the ACS Board of Directors.

The ACS Spring 2025 meeting was held from March 23-27. As of March 26, there were 15,332 registrations (14,251 in-person and 1,081 online). The ACS Fall 2025 meeting will be held in Washington, DC, from August 17-21, 2025.

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## Volunteer Opportunities

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### Chemists in the Library

Watch the Minnesota Local Section ACS website for details about upcoming events. If you are interested in helping as a volunteer, please get in touch with [Phil Buhlmann](#); he would be grateful to hear from you. No preparation before events is required, and no commitment has to be made; volunteers can sign up for one event at a time.



#### **Chemists in the Library Events 2025**

19 April, 11:00 AM: George Latimer Central Library Saint Paul

17 May, 1:30 PM: Rogers

21 June, 1:30 PM: Chisago

19 July, 1:30 PM: Golden Valley

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### Committee Volunteer Opportunities - Get Involved!

Are you looking to enhance your leadership, project management, and networking skills? Volunteering as a committee chair for the Minnesota Local Section of the ACS is a fantastic way to grow professionally while making a meaningful impact!

We are currently seeking passionate leaders for the following committees:

- **Younger Chemists** – leads initiatives to support, engage, and connect early-career chemists and students within the Minnesota Local Section of the American Chemical Society (ACS).
- **National Chemistry Week** – responsible for leading efforts to promote and coordinate activities related to National Chemistry Week, an annual outreach event organized by the American Chemical Society (ACS).
- **Public Affairs** – serves as a bridge between the chemistry community and policymakers, advocating for science-related policies and engaging the public on key issues.

- **Government Affairs** – plays a key role in advocating for science policy and fostering relationships between the chemistry community and government officials.
- **Minority Affairs** – plays a key role in promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) within the Minnesota Local Section of the American Chemical Society (ACS).

If you're interested in learning more, please reach out to [Sarah Dimick Gray](#) to explore these opportunities.

Take the next step in your leadership journey—get involved today!



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