



Dear Friends,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to first edition of the Chemistry department alumni e-newsletter. We sincerely hope to reconnect with you if he have lost contact, and to share exciting news about the achievements of our students, faculty and of course you -- our valued alumni.

The department is celebrating that we have 14 students majoring in chemistry this year. This number ties our largest-ever graduating class of 14 back in 2011.

Andrew Rajewski '18, Matt Embury '18, and Chase Schultz '18 will travel to the **National American Chemical Society** conference in New Orleans in March to present their research. Please join us in wishing them luck!

Congratulations to Spenser Congram '18 for winning "Best Poster Presentation" at the Midland Section ACS Fall 2017 Scientific Meeting!

Our chemistry club (Chem Club) is thriving and regularly visits local elementary schools to show off a little chemistry! **Click here for a video** from this past fall that shows our Chem Club president showing second and third graders how chemists have fun with water balloons.

Thank you for your interest in and support of the chemistry department. We truly appreciate that many of you choose to designate all or part of your annual gift to our program. Your gifts enhance our budget and help us continue to provide an excellent learning experience for our students. We are grateful!

Sincerely,  
Jeff Turk, Ph.D.  
Department Chair

### Faculty Updates



*Wei Wei*

Dr. Mazzuca is on a half semester pre-tenure sabbatical now and Drs. Joel and Nancy Dopke took a standard half semester sabbatical last fall. To replace this full-time position, we hired Dr. Wei Wei as a visiting assistant professor. He taught Chemical Analysis in the fall and is teaching Chemical Thermodynamics this winter. We support and wish him well as he looks ahead into next year.

**Current Student Spotlight: Paige Bartkowiak '18**

Paige was initially considering a chemistry/political science major and paired with a chemistry faculty, Dr. Turk, as an advisee. She wanted to be a physician, and chemistry is a great major to prepare students to take the medical college admissions test (MCAT). "All I knew is that I wanted to help people.

Growing up I was unaware about all the job possibilities and ways to help people, so I figured being a doctor was a way to do that." While taking her second chemistry course, she and Dr.

Turk had a thoughtful discussion that helped her discover her real passion. Unfortunately for the department (because she was a stellar student), chemistry wasn't her passion. Now, Paige reports, "I am currently working for Senator Stabenow's finance department for her 2018 reelection campaign living in Lansing and I am learning a ton! I am not sure on what exactly it is I want to do once I graduate. But what I do know is that I want to work hard and passionately about issues I care about. I see myself running for public office and working to effect change from within." Through the guidance of caring faculty and interdisciplinary educational experiences, Paige is discovering her passion, finding her path, and helping her fellow citizens. Isn't that what the liberal arts is all about?



### Alumni Spotlight



**Jennifer Meloche '12** was a chemistry major and math minor while here at Alma College. After graduating, she entered the Ph.D. program at the University of Notre Dame and received her degree in the summer of 2017. She's just accepted a position as assistant professor of chemistry at Trine University!



**Blake Reed '10** came to Alma College as a prospective biology major. He did research with Dr. Turk for a few years and decided to change his major to chemistry. He graduated, earned a Ph.D. in Inorganic Chemistry and is now a new assistant professor of chemistry at Olivet University.



**Chris Duymich '10** arrived at Alma determined to pursue a pre-medical track and earn admission to medical school. He did research with both Dr. Turk and Dr. Beckmann and ultimately decided his passion was in research. He graduated with a degree in biochemistry and later earned a Ph.D. He says, "What really enticed me towards pursuing a graduate degree was my involvement in the research projects in Dr. Turk's lab as well as Dr. Beckmann's. My current employer is DxTerity Diagnostics and I am working as a Senior Scientist in Product Development."