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Behind the scenes ...

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We welcome contributions from our alumni. If you are interested in writing for the newsletter, please contact the Editor at chmcws@nus.edu.sg.

Editorial Notes

Reflecting over our events in 2017, we are glad that “ChemConnections” was resuscitated and we are now into the 3rd issue of its new electronic format. We hope it has played the intended role of giving “snippets” of what’s happening in Chemistry to our alumni, friends, students and colleagues. The editorial team would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a Happy and Healthy 2018, and of course also a Wealthy and Prosperous Year of the Dog!

Congratulations to our colleagues who won teaching and service awards!

During the recent Faculty Awards (2017) ceremony, Dr Xu Hairuo and Dr Liu Mei Hui received Faculty Teaching Awards; Dr Chng Shu Sin, Dr Jason Yeo, and Dr Zhang Sheng were named to the Teaching Award Honour Roll. Our graduate students Craig Fraser and Sun Xue won Teaching Assistant Awards, while staff Lee Bee Peng, Dr Liu Qiping and Dr Steven Yuan were recipients of Service Awards. Congratulations to all of them!

New Science canteen opens its doors

The newly renovated Frontier canteen (of course we still prefer to call it the “Science canteen”) opened for business on 15 Jan 2018 after nearly 2 years of revamping. With its sleek, open concept design and armed with 15 food stalls, the new canteen has more space to accommodate staff and students during the peak lunch period. There is now a second level above the new canteen to provide a sheltered link connecting Block S16 and Block S8, with also lots of “soft spaces” available for students’ interactions.
Chemistry 88th Anniversary Dinner

The Department celebrated its 88th anniversary with fine dining on 27 Oct 2017 at the Fullerton Hotel. More than 370 alumni, former and present staff and students enjoyed a nostalgic evening getting re-acquainted with one another. Former head, Professor Andy Hor, currently with The University of Hong Kong flew in especially for the occasion, which was also graced by the presence of the Dean of the NUS Faculty of Science, Professor Shen Zuowei. The programme for the evening included tasting of special wines made by our Food Science & Technology (FST) programme. Of special interest was the durian version which tastes buttery with savoury notes. With alcohol content of just six per cent, lower than that of standard wines, and with fermentation process that sharply reduces sulphur levels within the durian – the wine will not kill!

The entertainment for the evening was in the form of three unforgettable performances by our own alumni. Our renowned Mrs Joanna Wong (former NUS Registrar) with Mr Gary Ong staged an impressive enactment from the Cantonese opera “The Patriotic Princess” (Di Nu Hua) in full costumed regalia and make-up and many were drawn to have their photographs taken with the pair. A piano recital by Dr Tan It Koon included classical and contemporary pieces, with a slideshow of a selection of his awe-inspiring paintings in tandem. The lively guitar rendition of two song items by retired Professor Hardy Chan rounded off the evening pleasingly. The Department is very fortunate to have received overwhelming thoughtful support and sponsorship for the event. All gifts collated are channelled into the Chemistry Alumni Fund towards the establishment of awards/prizes for our students in Chemistry and the FST programme. Our fundraising effort is ongoing. With continued support from alumni and well-wishers, it will truly make a real difference in the lives of our students and accomplish more than we could do alone. Please continue to support the Department and its students! Photographs and videos of the event can be found at http://tinyurl.com/88chem.

Huang Hsing Hua Chemistry Merit Scholarship

The Huang Hsing Hua Chemistry Merit Scholarship was established during the Chemistry 88th Anniversary event in honour of Emeritus Professor Huang Hsing Hua. This campaign was initiated by a few Chemistry alumni including Dr Chong Yoke Sin, Ms Natasha Kwan, Dr Lawrence Chia and Dr Chin Wee Shong, and supported by many alumni, staff members, and Professor Huang’s family. This scholarship aims to encourage talented students to study Chemistry at NUS. On the establishment of the scholarship, Emeritus Professor Huang conveyed his appreciation, “I wish to thank Professor Richard Wong, A/P Chin Wee Shong, and the alumni involved for initiating this fund-raising campaign to set up a Merit Scholarship in my name. This campaign has been successfully completed. To those who have kindly contributed to the establishment of this Scholarship, I wish to express my deepest appreciation for their generosity. The aims of NUS scholarships are laudable and will benefit not only the recipients but in a broader way, the welfare of Singapore.”

Chemistry Award and Appreciation Lunch

Some generous alumni and partners contributed anchored gifts to set up sub-named Study Awards during our initial campaign to establish the Chemistry Alumni Fund in 2015-16. These awards aim to encourage Chemistry students who perform well in their studies despite their family and financial situations. The Department organised an Award & Appreciation Lunch on 17 Jan 2018 to disburse the inaugural batch of awards. During the event, our donors presented the respective awards and interacted with the beneficiaries over lunch. The Department expresses special appreciation to Mr Homer Tan, Chairman of the Tan Ean Kiam Foundation which contributed three such awards towards our cause, for attending the lunch and sharing his words of wisdom with our students. Read more about the Chemistry Alumni Study Awards here: http://www.chemistry.nus.edu.sg/alumni/gifts/CAF.htm
Public Lecture by Sir J. Fraser Stoddart

NUS Chemistry invited Sir J. Fraser Stoddart, Nobel Laureate in Chemistry 2016, to give a public lecture at the department on 23 Jan 2018. Sir Fraser shared the Nobel Prize with Jean-Pierre Sauvage (University of Strasbourg, France) & Bernard L. Feringa (University of Groningen, the Netherlands) for the design and synthesis of molecular machines. "The strength of a horse, the hide of an elephant, and the work ethic of a honey bee" - Sir Fraser Stoddart shared with students and faculty the trials and tribulations of his illustrious journey in Chemistry, and what it takes to succeed in academia.

Interviewing skills workshop

In collaboration with the Centre for Future-ready Graduates (CFG), NUS CSS organised an ‘Interviewing Skills’ workshop for NUS Chemistry students on 24 Jan 2018 at the Department of Chemistry Executive Classroom. This workshop was specifically organised for Chemistry students to prepare them for the interviewing process. Ms Teo Leng Leng, the CFG Career Advisor, shared with participants tips and skills for different types of interview questions as well as the common pitfalls that interviewees usually make. To apply the tips and skills obtained, the participants had a short role-play session in the workshop.

Science Carnival at Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum (LKCNHM)

The NUS Chemical Sciences Society (CSS) participated in the Science “Rocking Fun” Carnival organised by NUS Faculty of Science and LKCNHM in 11 Nov 2017 to support the NUS Science Merit Scholarship. It was a fun-filled and interactive session with families that communicated the importance and omnipresence of chemistry in our daily lives at the CSS red-cabbage pH indicator booth.

Industrial Visit to DOW Chemical Pacific

In 29 Aug 2017, the American Chemical Society Students’ Chapter (ACSSC) of NUS organized an industrial visit to DOW Chemical Pacific. Dow Chemicals is the second-largest chemical manufacturer that specialises in providing effective chemical solutions to business partners from various industries such as agriculture, automotive and infrastructure. The visit commenced with a sharing session of Dow’s various business units in a round-table setting. Several technical service and development officers from different business units introduced their roles and functions. Representatives from the company’s human resources division then presented a talk on hiring processes, advice on developing oneself and planning for career progression. The talk was followed by a short question-and-answer session. Lastly, participants had the chance to explore the company’s laboratories. The laboratory technicians gave an overview of their work and their roles, allowing the visitors to understand what working life at Dow entailed. In general, such an industrial visit provides current Chemistry undergraduates with an insight into working life in the chemical industry.
Hosting of ACS-Universiti Teknologi Malaysia Student Chapter

In 10 November, 2017, the NUS ACSSC hosted a visit from our fellow sibling from Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM), Skudai, Johor. The session first began with a talk by the Chairperson of the NUS Chemistry Student Life Committee, A/P Ang Wee Han, which focused on the graduate programs NUS Chemistry has to offer. This was followed by an address by the President of ACSSC-UTM, Lakhshmana Barathi, who introduced some activities that his chapter organizes. The visitors were shown around NS Chemistry’s laboratories, where our friendly faculty staff were on hand to perform demonstrations and showcase some laboratory equipment. Subsequently, they were taken on a tour of the NUS campus, including iconic locations such as the Museum and University Town. Finally, members from both chapters had dinner together, which doubled as an interaction session. Although our time together was short, we enjoyed having our Malaysian friends and we hope to have more chapter visits in the future!

Last call to campus couples for Valentine’s Day Dinner!

Are you aware that there is a “Campus Couples Bursary Fund” set up by married couples who are also NUS alumni to help needy students? Why don’t you and your better half celebrate Valentine’s Day this year in a meaningful way, together with other couples? The event is on 13 Feb 2018 at NUS.

Email campuscouples@alummail.nus.edu.sg for more information.

Honours Symposium and Networking with Alumni 2018

Every April, our Honours students present their final year projects at a poster symposium. We invite our alumni to join us at the symposium, and also help select recipients of the Chemistry Honours Poster Achievement Awards, and interact or share their words of advice with the graduating cohort. The 2018 Symposium will be held on Wednesday, 11 April, at the University Hall level 1 foyer. Do drop us a note HERE if you would like to participate!

The 13th Singapore National Crystal Growing Challenge (SNCGC)

The Department is organising the 13th Singapore National Crystal Growing Challenge on Saturday, 26 May 2018. Through the mastery of the art of crystal growing, students will learn about chemistry happening around us and discover the elegant science behind this ubiquitous process. There are three categories in this competition, i.e. Junior Level – for secondary school students, Senior Level – for junior college, ITE college and polytechnic students, and Open Level – for secondary, junior college, ITE college and polytechnic students. Registration is now open until Friday, 2 Mar 2018 or when the full registration number is reached (whichever is earlier). Click HERE to register.