

VOL. 1 MAY 2025

DALHOUSIE CHEMISTRY

Department of Chemistry Newsletter

A CHATT PLACE - A PLACE TO SOCIALIZE

Professor Amares Chatt was a faculty member in the Department of Chemistry at Dalhousie from 1974, achieving full professor in 1985. He was Killam Professor of Chemistry from 2001 to 2006. After his official retirement in 2008, he held a position as an adjunct professor and continued to travel and lecture until his untimely death.

In honor of his unwavering dedication and enthusiasm throughout his career at Dalhousie, and in recognition of his love of a good chat. We are repurposing his former office, Room 534 in the Chemistry Building, as a space for the community to gather, discuss science, reflect, and support well-being. This room will serve as remembrance of Dr. Chatt, ensuring his legacy continues to inspire us all.

The Chemistry Department would like to gratefully thank the Estate of Thomas Meyerhoff which provided support for the renovation of this space.



Upcoming Events

2025 Spring Convocation
JUNE 19 - 12:30 PM

2025 Departmental
Convocation Reception
JUNE 19 - 2:30 PM
CHEMISTRY BUILDING
FOYER



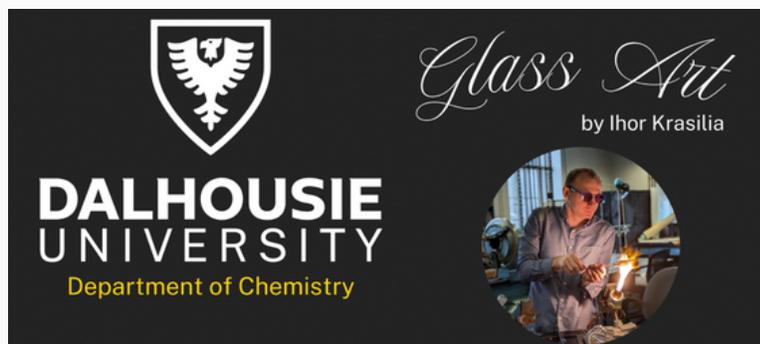
Chemistry Glass Art Shop

The Department of Chemistry is excited to share that our Chemistry Glass Art Shop is now open on the Dalhousie Marketplace!

Here, you can explore and order unique glass art pieces and book Masterclasses.

Visit us at our online store and check back regularly for new items added weekly!

Please scan the QR code and explore.





Emily Burke

Q: What motivated you to become a teaching assistant, and how has the experience aligned with your expectations?

A: My motivation to become a teaching assistant originally stemmed from a desire to challenge myself in leadership roles. In high school, I was quite shy and didn't seek out leadership opportunities, but as my confidence grew in university, I wanted to step into roles where I could make a difference. I also wanted to make a positive impact on students in a way that I had experienced during my own undergraduate degree. I remember being really stressed out during my labs and the TAs always made the labs more enjoyable.

My experience as a TA has not only met, but exceeded my expectations. I initially approached teaching through the lens of my own learning style, but working with a diverse group of students exposed me to different ways of learning and problem-solving. This experience has significantly shaped how I communicate, give and receive feedback, and provide instruction in my other leadership roles. Additionally, I found that I formed stronger connections with students than I originally expected. I enjoyed learning from my students when we would problem solve together in lab, and sometimes with nothing to do for 2 hours during a reaction stir time we always found fun things to talk about.

Winner of the Graduate Student Award for Teaching Excellence in Chemistry 2025





Q: How do you balance your responsibilities as a TA with your own graduate and undergraduate coursework and research?

A: Balancing my responsibilities as a TA with my graduate research and coursework has been manageable, in part because I have previously completed most of the labs I teach and having TA'd the same courses for several years. However, marking upper-year lab reports can be time-consuming, as the report length and complexity increases. To stay on top of this, I focus on being organized in my marking strategies, while ensuring fairness and flexibility, especially when accommodating unique experimental outcomes and other student accommodations. I am an avid to-do list maker, and as lame as this sounds, checking an item off on a to-do list item is literally the best feeling ever when you have a busy schedule. This led me to a “do it all at once” kind of mentality. So sometimes you got to just put on some *Real Housewives of Beverly Hills* with a cup of coffee and mark for a couple hours straight and it works great for me.

Q: How has being a TA influenced your own academic and professional development?

A: Being a TA has significantly contributed to my academic and professional development, particularly in leadership and communication. I think that being in situations where I am always challenged to convey information in different ways to help students at every level understand chemical concepts has been one of the more satisfying, and honestly more fun, parts of the job. I use this way of thinking to convey my ideas and knowledge while I event plan and while presenting my research at conferences.





Roman A. Kisseljov

I never imagined myself becoming a TA, let alone one in the chemistry department as I am an ENVS major, so this was a huge surprise and honour.

As a mature student of 33 years old back then, being in a university environment was very anxiety inducing, especially when surrounded by people nearly half my age. The TA team from the winter semester of chem 1012 was very welcoming, receptive, and provided me with a sense of belonging and ease.

As a result, I reached out to Dr. Jennifer MacDonald and passed along my gratitude for their work and she kindly invited me to apply to be a TA myself. I figured “sure, what the heck, why not!” as I love opportunities that challenge me and put me outside of my comfort zone. Additionally, I wanted to recreate the same environment that the TAs had created for me, because regardless of age, I knew there would be many others who would also feel the same anxiety I felt and I wanted to help ease and remove that feeling, I wanted every student to feel like they belonged and had every right to be there.

Being a TA with the chemistry department these past few years has been more rewarding than my past 17+ years of work experience. I made meaningful connections with students, and while we may not keep in touch, we always greet each other with a smile whenever we run into each other and I'll always ask them how their studies are doing as I have become invested in their growth, progression, and success.

Winner of the Undergraduate Student Award for Teaching Excellence in Chemistry 2025





I have also been welcomed and valued by a team of incredible individuals who have generously put their trust in me. Despite not being “my” department, nor my path of studies, the chemistry team has made me feel like one of their own and a part of Dalhousie University, and for that I am eternally grateful. Thank you to Dr. Jennifer MacDonald, Dr. Joshua Bates, Joe Weatherby, Dr. Angela Crane, and all the TAs and students I’ve gotten to work alongside with. The sense of ease and belonging you gifted me with has been my driving force in both my academic, professional, and personal pursuits.

Balancing TA duties with the remaining demands of life has been an absolute breeze. Again, this is in large part thanks to not only to the great team I have been fortunate to work with, but also for how incredibly well into chemistry is structured. I can confidently say as a student and teaching assistant of the course, while it can seem overwhelming at times, it is structured for all to be able to succeed!



SHARE YOUR STORY WITH US

Please contact
Christine.Cao@dal.ca



Chemistry Alumni Achievements

- Alex Mayo who is Dr. Erin Johnson's former PhD student started a new job as a Business Development Manager at XtalPi (<https://en.xtalpi.com/>).
- Dr. Sarah Martell from Dasog group was selected for the 2025 CAS Future Leaders Top 100 program.
- Dr. Sarah Martell from Dasog group was selected to attend the Lindau Nobel Laureate Meeting.
- Dr. Matthew Margeson from Dasog group won the 2025 Kenneth T. Leffek Thesis Prize and 2025 Dalhousie Doctoral Thesis Award.
- Dr. Matthew Margeson from Dasog group won the Most Innovative Research Award at the SDG Expo.
- Congratulations to Stephen Dale (PhD graduate from the Johnson group in 2016) on his appointment as a Research Assistant Professor in the Department of Materials Science and Engineering at the National University of Singapore.
- Congratulations to Dalhousie Chemistry PhD student Grace Sparrow, who was awarded the best poster prize at PPXRD-18: the pharmaceutical powder X-ray diffraction symposium.

Departmental Updates

- The washroom renovation on the basement level in Chemistry Podium hallway began on Thursday, April 10th and will last for the whole summer. After the renovation, we will have five brand new gender neutral and accessible washrooms.

If you need accessible assistance during the construction, please call:

MONDAY, TUESDAY & THURSDAY
(902) 880 - 3106 (CALL or TEXT)

WEDNESDAY & FRIDAY
(902) 494 - 3306 (CALL ONLY)

- The Chemistry elevator will be out of commission from June 3rd 2025 to the end of summer with some chemical movement allowed after the first few weeks intermittently.
- There will be a lighting retrofit going on throughout the building all summer.