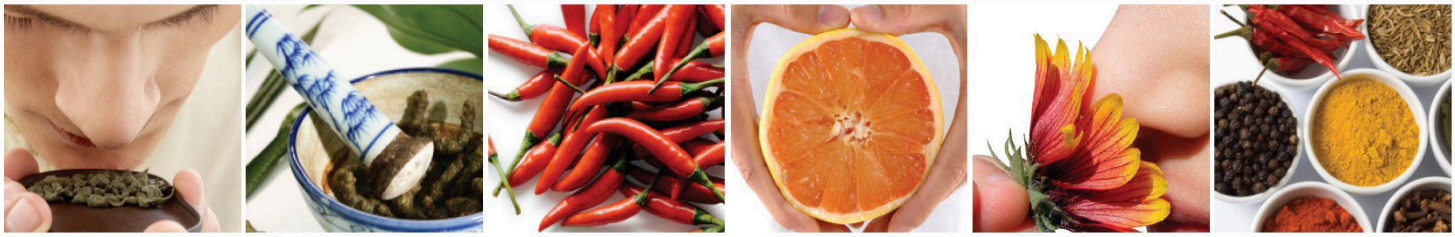


AChemS
Association for Chemoreception Sciences
ANNUAL Newsletter
2026 FOSTERING CHEMICAL SENSES RESEARCH AND UNDERSTANDING SMELL AND TASTE IN HEALTH AND DISEASE

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Yanina Pepino, PhD
President, AChemS

I want to start with a thank you. This past year asked many of us to do science while also managing uncertainty largely beyond our control. Since our last AChemS meeting, delayed funding actions, shifting program guidance, and disruptions in the research funding landscape have complicated planning for labs and trainees. Even so, I have watched members step up for one another in meaningful ways, especially for early-career colleagues. We also know that for some members, this year's challenges extend well beyond the lab. Ongoing conflicts and humanitarian crises are affecting colleagues, trainees, and families in deeply personal ways. If you are carrying that burden, please know you are not alone in this community.

What gives me confidence is the steadiness of AChemS and the role we can play for one another. We may not be able to remove uncertainty or hardship, but we can show up, make space for trainees, and keep our connections strong. AChemS will keep doing what we do best: promoting rigorous chemosensory science; supporting members through mentorship and connection; advocating for increased and sustained research support for our field; and strengthening our outreach beyond the lab by helping broader audiences understand why taste and smell matter for health, safety, and quality of life. The committee reports that follow capture the full scope of this work; I want to highlight a few efforts here.

Promoting rigorous chemosensory science. Ann-Marie Torregrossa, our Program Chair, and the Program Committee put great care into shaping a scientific program that reflects the breadth and rigor of our field. I'm also excited that this will be our first meeting in St. Pete Beach. The venue is walkable, right by the beach, and in a lively area with a wide range of food and activities. I hope the new setting makes it even easier to connect with colleagues, bring trainees, and stay for the conversations that happen outside the lecture rooms. Some of the best AChemS memories happen outside the formal sessions, in hallway conversations, over posters, and sometimes on the dance floor.

Mentorship and connection. Under Arianna Maffei's leadership, the Mentoring and Networking Committee kept our mentoring programming active year-round through an online seminar series pairing trainee presentations with those of senior investigators. With generous support from dsm-firmenich, the series sustained scientific dialogue between annual meetings and highlighted exciting work from across chemosensory research. We also updated our bylaws to establish BOOST (Building Opportunities and Outreach for Sensory Trainees) as a standing committee. BOOST expands outreach and professional development opportunities for trainees and increases the visibility and participation of underrepresented groups within the Society and at the Annual Meeting. Arianna also stepped in as interim chair to help launch BOOST, and we were pleased to offer 10 BOOST travel awards this year.

Advocating for research support. On February 18, 2026, AChemS members and friends participated in Hill Day, meeting with House and Senate staff to champion NIH support for taste and smell research. The group held 32 meetings with offices from 11 states, joined by two individuals living with smell loss, and the jellybean demo once again made the science hard to forget. Our requests were clear: a 12% increase in the NIDCD budget and more predictable pathways to restore research support when awards are interrupted. Hill Day was successful thanks to Dani Reed's exceptional leadership and organization, and I'm grateful for the sustained effort she brings to this work. I also want to recognize the Grant Committee, chaired by Linda Barlow, for securing the AChemS NIDCD R13 Conference Grant, foundational support that helps sustain the strength of our meeting.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (continued)

Outreach efforts. Our Councilors, Lindsey Macpherson and Claire Cheetham, have been wonderfully proactive this year, and their energy is already translating into new opportunities at the Annual Meeting. They have arranged two outreach events at local libraries in St. Pete during the meeting, focused on helping broader audiences understand why taste and smell matter. These events will only work if we have member volunteers, so if you can spare an hour, I hope you will consider signing up. I appreciate the thoughtful planning Lindsey and Claire have put into making these events welcoming and impactful.

One of the best parts of AChemS is taking time to recognize outstanding colleagues. Julie Mennella and the Awards Committee brought real care to this process, and their selections celebrate excellence across the arc of a career, from early-career awards through our most senior honors. Please join me in congratulating this year's awardees and take a moment to read about them in this newsletter.

Across all these efforts, I'm grateful to the many committee members and volunteers whose names I did not include here who keep AChemS running. Much of this work happens quietly, outside the spotlight, and it is what makes the meeting, year-round programming, and member support possible. In particular, I want to acknowledge Julian Meeks, our Finance lead, and his team for careful stewardship of AChemS resources, which makes so much else possible, from trainee support to programming and outreach.

I also want to acknowledge our sponsors and partners, and in particular Kathryn Deibler, Chair of the Industry Liaison Committee, for building and sustaining these relationships. Sponsor support helps sustain key parts of the meeting and year-round programming, including trainee-focused activities and professional development. We are deeply grateful for their continued investment in our community.

In addition, I want to recognize the generous philanthropic support from several of our past presidents. Their continued investment in AChemS helps sustain trainee-focused initiatives and Society priorities beyond what meeting revenue alone can support. We are grateful for their ongoing commitment to the Society and to the next generation of chemosensory scientists.

Finally, my sincere thanks to the Executive Committee for their time, judgment, and care in guiding AChemS. Special appreciation to Melissa Paa and the SPLtrak team. I have relied on Melissa's exceptional leadership and day-to-day coordination throughout the year, and her steady support has helped keep many pieces moving smoothly.
I am genuinely excited for what comes next, and I hope to see many of you at the conference as we continue to build a strong, supportive, and scientifically ambitious AChemS together.

St. Pete Beach, here we come!

TREASURER'S REPORT

Julian Meeks, PhD

It is a bit intimidating to write you, fellow AChemS members, with this year's Treasurer Report. It has been a year, hasn't it? In my role as AChemS Treasurer, this has been a year of major uncertainty, but also of determination. AChemS members are rallying around each other, and I think that speaks volumes about the community, shared values, and strong belief in AChemS' mission.

As in prior years, we have worked with our partners at SPLtrak to adapt to the financial landscape by adjusting to shifting expenses, including updates to the dues and fees. Please accept my sincere thanks for understanding that these changes are made to ensure that our balance sheet stays as close to neutral (or slightly positive!) as possible each year.

TREASURER'S REPORT (continued)

As we enter the 2026 meeting, let's take a look at AChemS current financial position:

Please note while you read: Tradewinds, unlike The Hyatt Regency in Bonita Springs, requires substantial prepayments. **These effectively "preload" our expenses compared to prior years.** These prepayments are reflected in "Annual Meeting Expenses" that hit the books after the meeting in prior years. **I included prepayments as a line item that adds to our "Total Assets."**

In numbers (report date 3/1/2025 – 2/28/2026):

Annual Meeting Income:	$247,615	(-$3,517 compared to '24-25)
General Income (dues, donations):	$85,892	
Grant Income:	$40,700	(1 NIH grant distribution [2 distros in '24-25])
TOTAL INCOME:	**$374,207**	**(-$53,044 compared to '24-25)**
Administrative Expenses:	$134,106	(+$5,918 compared to '24-25)
Annual Mtg Expenses & Awards:	$339,388	(+$86,255 compared to '24-25)
Other expenses:	$28,354	
TOTAL EXPENSES:	**$501,848**	**(+$100,888 compared to '24-25)**
NET OPERATING REVENUE:	**-$127,641**	**(-$153,932 compared to '24-25)** (includes prepayments of $125k)
Investments/Other Income:	$22,619	(-$2,371 compared to '24-25)
NET REVENUE:	**-$105,022**	**(-$156,303 compared to '24-25)**
Venue Prepayments/Deposits:	$125,000	($100k for '26 meeting, $25k for '27 meeting)
Cash Reserves:	$152,279	
Investment account:	$140,775	
TOTAL ASSETS:	**$418,054**	**(+$19,978 compared to '24-25)**

As of the writing of this letter, meeting registrations are down very slightly compared to 2025, likely reflecting understandable financial stresses among our membership. We are far from a worst case scenario, but AChemS is walking a "thin line" as we navigate the current day and try to anticipate what is to come. As a fellow member, I feel this strain as well. Even still, I am excited to be able to attend the meeting with members of my laboratory, and to share in the joy of scientific discovery, teaching, and learning at St. Pete's Beach.

All the best,
Julian Meeks, PhD, Treasurer
Julian_Meeks@urmc.rochester.edu

AChemS Finance Committee:
Elizabeth Hanson Moss, PhD
Douglas Storace, PhD

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Ricardo Araneda, PhD

As of March 10 2026, AChemS has 496 members: 218 Regular, 60 Postdoctoral, 120 Student, 20 Postbaccalaureate, 67 Emeritus, 3 Developing Nation, and 6 Patients/ Patients Advocate members (Fig. 1). This represent ~9% decrease compared to membership at the same time last year. Membership increased substantially following the pandemic (between 2021-2022); however, there has been a gradual decline since 2017. Growing membership remains a priority as we approach the 2026 annual meeting. Over the past year, members of the Executive Committee, including the Membership Chair, conducted a membership drive, inviting former members to renew their membership. AChemS remains firmly commitment to its mission of advancing scientific research in the chemical senses; smell, taste, chemesthesis, internal chemoreception and related disciplines. Membership support is essential to sustaining the Society's programs and annual activities. In February, AChemS again participated in AChemS Hill Day 2026, helping to raise awareness among members of Congress about the importance and impact of chemosensory research. Moving forward, we will continue efforts to maintain and expand Society membership through targeted outreach and engagement activities.

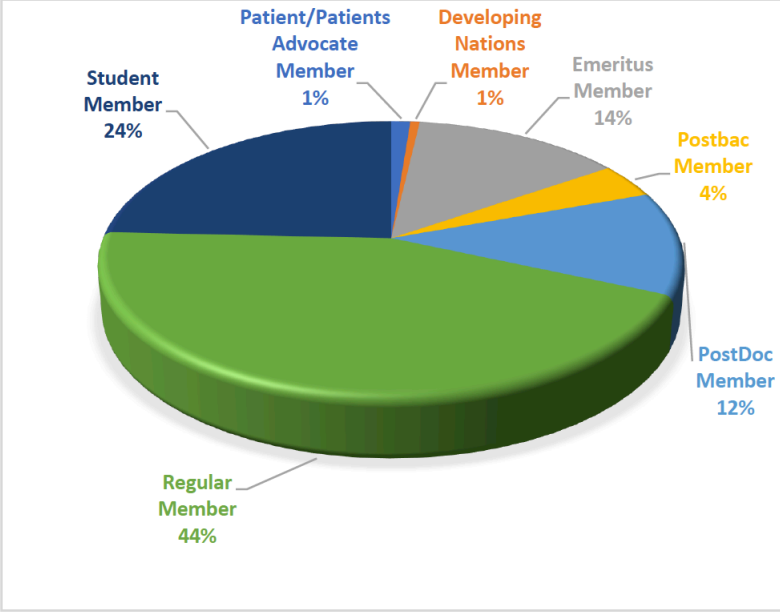


Fig. 1: Current members by membership Category

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Roberto Vincis, PhD

The AChemS newsletter is published once a year and provides an overview of key activities and achievements of the society. An archive of past newsletters is available at: AChemS Newsletter Archive.

AChemS Website and Social Media Presence

The website is regularly updated with news, announcements, and relevant resources. During the past year (February 2025 – February 2026), the site recorded ~29K visits (a 73.4% decrease compared to the previous year). AChemS maintains an active presence on multiple social media platforms to enhance visibility, engage with the public, and share updates regarding society activities. Official social media accounts (@AchemsInfo) are managed by SPLtrak, with additional contributions from the AChemS Social Media Committee, which includes Hillary Schiff, Martin Raymond, Kira Steinke, and Kamila Nixon.

During the past year, AChemS continued to strengthen its outreach. As in the previous year, a 14-day social media campaign was launched around World Taste and Smell Day (September 14), featuring daily posts with engaging facts about the chemical senses across LinkedIn, X, and BlueSky to raise awareness and promote the GoFundMe campaign initiated by past president Alfredo Fontanini and continued by current president Yanina Pepino. AChemS also expanded its monthly campaign highlighting key research findings from members and sharing interesting facts about chemosensory research in conjunction with specific food-celebration days, utilizing LinkedIn, X, and BlueSky.

SECRETARY'S REPORT (continued)

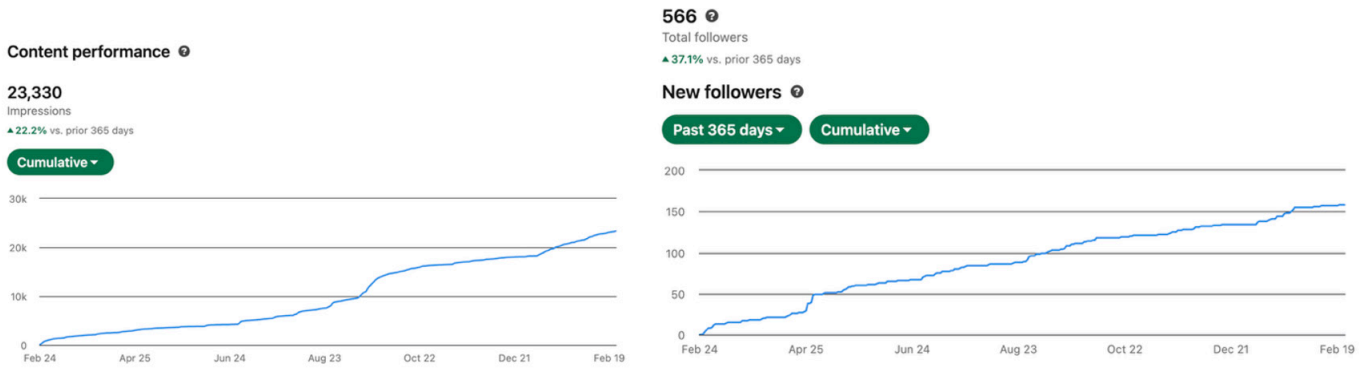


Figure: Content performance and total followers for the AChemS LinkedIn account in the last year.

Regarding individual platforms: the AChemS X account currently has 1,721 followers. Concerns regarding this platform, including ongoing instability, policies on content moderation, account verification, and fee structures, as well as the widely reported increase in and tolerance for hate speech, have persisted and remain pressing. AChemS should continue to monitor how these dynamics may affect society participation; input is welcome at info@achems.org. The AChemS BlueSky account (@achems.bsky.social) has grown to 211 followers. The AChemS Facebook page, maintained by SPLtrak, currently has 319 followers. The AChemS LinkedIn account has shown particularly strong growth, acquiring 37.1% more followers over the past year and reaching a total of 566 followers, with impressions increasing by 22.2% over the same period. LinkedIn continues to provide valuable opportunities to engage with industry partners, potential employers, and professionals not active on other platforms.

AChemS Monthly Highlights
The Monthly Highlights newsletter is sent to AChemS members by email and provides a summary of notable events, upcoming activities, society deadlines, and significant achievements of fellow members featured in the media. This bulletin ensures that members are informed about relevant and timely information within the community. Members are strongly encouraged to contribute to the Monthly Highlights by sharing news articles that feature their work or mention their contributions. If you have been featured in recent media coverage and would like to have it included in an upcoming Monthly Highlights edition, please email info@achems.org for consideration.

AChemS Wikipedia Page
The AChemS Wikipedia page is designed to provide an accessible resource for those outside the society who want to learn more about AChemS. It offers a general overview of the organization's origins, mission, and major milestones, serving as a central reference point for the public. Maintaining this page is essential for increasing awareness of the society. If you have suggestions for updates or noteworthy content that should be added, please contact info@achems.org.

COUNCILOR'S REPORT

Claire Cheetham, PhD and Lindsey Macpherson, PhD

For 2024-25, our outreach project focused on creating additional educational resources for elementary schools, including quizzes and fun facts about the chemical senses, to be featured on the AChemS Education Corner website.

For 2025-26, with the move to our new annual meeting location in St. Pete Beach, we have focused on re-establishing an in-person outreach event to engage members of the local community. After initial challenges in establishing local contacts, we have been successful in organizing two separate outreach events at local libraries, providing an opportunity to share our enthusiasm for chemosensation with library patrons. The first event, taking place at the President Barack Obama Library in nearby St. Petersburg, will feature several short presentations about the chemical senses and how they relate to everyday life from AChemS members, as well as an opportunity to try some interactive taste and smell activities. The second, at the St Pete Beach Library, will be a drop-in event with taste and smell testing and other fun activities to demonstrate the importance of taste and smell. We hope that these events will provide a platform for future annual meetings to build upon.

PROGRAM COMMITTEE REPORT

Ann-Marie Torregrossa, PhD, *Chair*

I am looking forward to seeing you all and sharing the amazing program for AChemS 2026!

I want to start by sending a huge 'thank you' to the members of the program committee. I strongly believe in transparency and shared decision making. While that sounds lovely in theory, in practice, it means I asked a subset of the committee to do a lot of work this year! Thank you to the whole committee and thank you again to the six members who worked on the detailed program decisions with me. I also appreciate the support of Melissa Paa and SPLtrak for all their hard work. Finally 'thank you' to everyone who submitted a symposium. The submissions were phenomenal, and decisions were hard. I regret we could not host every one of them! This meeting is the product of many busy hands all working to make it the best it can be.

We developed a program for AChemS 2026 meant to highlight the cutting-edge work of our established members and early career scientists and to look across fields for intersections with chemosensory science.

- The program includes 4 member-initiated symposia, each designed to stretch the way we think about the chemical senses.
  - The appetition axis: integrating phasic sensory and physiological signals to drive ingestion
  - Lateralized and integrated processing in the olfactory system
  - New approach methodologies (NAMS) in chemosensory and interoception research
  - Genes and senses: Genetic regulation of chemosensation

- To celebrate our AChemS members and young scientists, the program includes 2 sessions where talks were chosen from the submitted abstracts. Although these sessions are somewhat thematically loose, one session is devoted to taste and one to olfaction.

- Dr. Yanina Pepino has organized a Presidential Symposium on the last evening of the conference titled "Ultra-Processed Foods, the senses and health: Exploring the evidence."

- The industry committee has put together an amazing symposium on "Data driven tools for sensory prediction."

- The clinical symposium committee will be presenting "Olfaction impairment in older adults: Associations with health beyond Covid-19 and neurodegeneration."

- **Our Keynote** lecture will be by Dr. Kevin Kohl who studies microbial ecology and animal physiological ecology. Dr. Kohl will talk to us about his work examining the "holobiont", and how associations with microbes mediate aspects of animal biology, including voluntary food choice and tolerance to toxins.

- **The Boost** lecture will be given by Dr. Lilina Davalos, an Evolutionary Biologist, who will talk to us about her work on the evolution of chemosensation in bats.

- We will have five poster sessions with over 200 posters. The Don Tucker Memorial Research Awards finalists are grouped in a single session to help highlight their achievements.

- The History Committee will host the annual journal club meeting. This year it will be "How Ideas Travel: From Classic Gustatory Cortex Mapping to Modern Flavor Computation"

- The AChemS councilors have organized two outreach events at local libraries. Reach out to Drs. Lindsey Macpherson and Clair Cheetham to become involved.

- The trainee representatives have also been organizing trainee-focused events including campfire smores, activities and get togethers.

PROGRAM COMMITTEE REPORT (continued)

- We will have two hands on workshops during the week.
  - Practical demonstrations of clinical chemosensory tests
  - Smell safari- field based tools for mapping and communicating human smell scapes

- Our NIH colleagues will be joining us once again and will be offering two presentations as well as offering trainees the option to sign up for a 1 on 1 talk with a program officer.
  - NIH Updates for early and established investigators
  - NIDCD workshop for trainees and new investigators.

The meeting will be packed but do not worry if you miss a talk you wanted to see! This year symposia will be recorded (with permission of the speakers). In order to increase access to our meeting and our cutting edge science, AChemS is offering a registration option for live-streaming this year. Online registrants will be able to live-stream the symposia and the recorded symposia will be available on-demand to all attendees for up to 30 days after the meeting. We hope this will help increase our reach and will allow attendees to see science they may have missed in competing symposia.

Lastly, enjoy the beach and I will see you on the dance floor!

POSTDOC AND GRADUATE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

Kara Fulton, PhD and Verenice Ascencio Gutierrez

We are excited to continue fostering a strong trainee community at this year's AChemS conference. The new location has given us the opportunity to introduce new ways for trainees to interact throughout the conference. By providing a space for trainees to meet and discuss science as well as making plans for the conference breaks, we hope that lasting relationships will take shape among AChemS attendees. Last year we set up trainee-focused tables at the Welcome Banquet and welcome breakfast to serve as an informal and welcoming space for trainees to meet before the conference began. This year we are taking advantage of the activities and spaces that the hotel offers and are introducing a campfire and smores event immediately following the welcome banquet. We hope that it will be a perfect opportunity for trainees to meet people early so that they have familiar faces to say hello to for the rest of the conference.

This year, we have diversified the opportunities for engagement between trainees and increased advertising for events. Since the breakfasts were poorly attended last year, we decided to focus on providing more active ways of engagement between trainees earlier in the conference program. During lunch on the second day of the conference, we are offering trainees the choice of paddleboat rides or engaging in friendly competition in lawn games. The goal behind this is to make sure all trainees feel included during all phases of the program, including the scheduled free time. We are also encouraging trainees to participate in the outreach events organized by the councilors. Following the conference, we aim to solicit feedback on the trainee-specific events so that we can tailor opportunities for interaction at next year's conference.

Lastly, because there is no overlap between representatives, we are aiming to increase communication between each cohort of representatives to ensure a smooth transition.

2025 AWARD CEREMONY

Max Mozell Award

Ajinomoto Award

Lawless Award

AChemS Young Investigator Award

AChemS
Association for Chemoreception Sciences

2025 AChemS Polak Young Investigator Award Recipients

Debarghya Dutta Banik
Ting-Wei Mi
Snigdha Mukerjee
Robert Pellegrino
Jesse Smith
Lu Xu

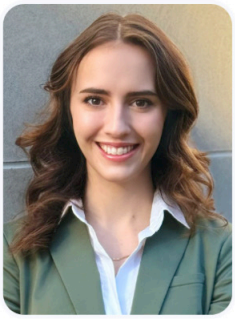
2025 AChemS Travel Fellowship Award Recipients

Claudia Asensio
Shania Appadoo
Gloria Bartolo
Lautaro Duarte
Victoria Esparza
Ricardo Frausto
Savoya Joyner
Neville Ngum
Ayomide Ogunsanmi
Stephanie Okoye
Yuryanni Rodriguez
Maray Valle

2025 AWARD RECIPIENTS

Polak Young Investigator Award

Travel Fellowship Award



Don Tucker Memorial Award
Sarah Sniffen
University of Florida

AChemS Undergraduate Research Award
Sid Rafilson
University of Oregon

2025 AWARD RECIPIENTS

Nirupa Chaudhari

Max Mozell Award Recipient

Research Focus: My research training and interests have been diverse. In graduate school, I learned to work with DNA and RNA and as a postdoc at the University of Colorado Medical School, applied these skills to study gene expression in the brain. During my first faculty position at Colorado State University, I was fortunate in collaborating with Kurt Beam to study the reciprocal interactions between gene expression, excitability, and the functional maturation of cells and tissues. In the late 1980's, our neuroscience program at Colorado State included the labs of Steve Roper and Sue Kinnamon. Their electrophysiological findings suggested to me that gustation was a field ripe for complementary approaches to find the molecules and processes that underlie taste. What began for me as a side project, taste research soon won me over as a fascinating, technically challenging and enormously rewarding line of study.

Collaborating with Steve Roper and Gene Delay, my trainees and I identified a key receptor for glutamate taste and in the process, elevated umami to broad recognition. My varied early experience with other excitable cells led to many exciting projects and findings in taste. My labmates and I studied signaling pathways in taste bud cells to show parallel and interacting roles of Ca2+ and cAMP within individual cells. We contributed to a push in the field to define the molecular and functional differences among the cells of taste buds and establish markers for the cell types. We explored how the taste bud renews itself, with distinct longevities for each cell type. In collaboration with Steve Roper, we developed tools and techniques to show that cells within taste buds "talk" to each other using numerous transmitter systems. Over the years, students and postdocs in the lab helped decipher novel functions of taste bud cells, for instance documenting new rationales for the designation of type I cells as "glial-like". A recent focus has been on interactions between receptor and glial-like cells and the afferent nerve fibers, including when, where and how such cross-talk occurs. We have also acquired new technologies to examine the molecular and functional diversity of gustatory afferent neurons via single cell transcriptomics, AAV-mediated tract tracing and most recently, trans-synaptic labeling. Such analyses form an essential base for dissecting chemosensory circuits in the brain and rationally design therapeutic interventions for a host of behavioral and metabolic conditions associated with gustation.

Acknowledgments: I am massively grateful to so many individuals in the field. AChemS members accepted me despite my newbie status in the field. Thoughtful comments and patient coaching from Dave Smith, Barry Ache, Al Farbman, Alan Spector, Pat Di Lorenzo and so many others helped me fill the gaps in my knowledge of taste and smell. My collaborations with Steve Roper, Sue Kinnamon, Steve St. John and David Hill have provided invaluable growth opportunities. I have been fortunate to have undergraduate, postbacc and graduate students, postdocs and longterm associates who have developed projects using their own strengths, and also followed my hunches into new directions. I owe more to them all than I can document here. The broad and scientifically inclusive approach of NIDCD was instrumental in establishing and sustaining my research for the last 30 years in the field, and for promoting my growth through participating extensively in NIH's peer review system. Finally I acknowledge my parents and family who molded me to be rational, allowed me to question everything and released me to independence. And Steve.

Alissa Nolden

Lawless Award Recipient

Research Focus: My research explores individual differences in taste perception and changes in taste functions with a broader interest in their implications on health. My work aims to bridge the gap between fundamental taste perception and real-world eating behaviors by integrating psychophysical methods with biology and behavioral analysis. I have been fortunate to collaborate with outstanding scientists and clinicians in sensory science, oncology, and public health. I look forward to advancing interdisciplinary approaches that enhance our understanding of human taste perception. I want to thank University of Massachusetts Amherst, my colleagues and mentors, and the broader chemosensory research community for their support and inspiration.

2025 AWARD RECIPIENTS (continued)

Yali Zhang

Ajinomoto Award Recipient

Research Focus: Food taste and food texture play a crucial role in shaping feeding behaviors across the animal kingdom. The ability to perceive and respond to these sensory properties is essential for selecting nutritious foods while avoiding harmful substances. Taste perception helps animals identify essential nutrients such as sugars and salts, while food texture influences food palatability and processing, ultimately affecting consumption choices. Despite their importance, the molecular and neural mechanisms underlying how animals integrate food taste and texture cues to guide feeding remain poorly understood.

To address this gap, we use the fruit fly as a model organism to dissect the molecular and neural basis of food taste and texture perception and feeding behavior. By employing a combination of genetic, molecular, and cellular approaches alongside calcium imaging and electrophysiology, we investigate how various types of chemosensory receptors and sensory cells detect the chemical composition and physical properties of food to guide appropriate feeding decisions.

Given the evolutionary parallels in feeding mechanisms between insects and mammals, insights from our research in flies could enhance our understanding of how taste and texture perception influence feeding behaviors in other animals, with potential implications for nutrition and health.

I would like to acknowledge my dedicated lab members, especially Dr. Tingwei Mi and John Mack, for their outstanding research contributions in my lab at Monell. I am also grateful to my colleagues at the Monell Chemical Senses Center, particularly Dr. Danielle Reed, for nominating me for this award. Additionally, I sincerely thank my graduate and postdoctoral advisor, Dr. Craig Montell, for his invaluable support during the early stages of my career. Finally, I appreciate the support of the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD) and the Ambrose Monell Foundation

Federica Genovese

AChemS Young Investigator Award Recipient

Research Focus: My focus research revolves around the intricate interplay between the trigeminal and olfactory systems, driven by the scarcity of fundamental research in animal models and leveraging my foundations in neurophysiology. I provided the first physiological quantification of the trigeminal potency of odors, and determined that trigeminal-olfactory interactions, start from the periphery of the olfactory system and is grounded in the trigeminal properties of odorants. My current and future work focuses on the role of the trigeminal system in the olfactory bulb, unraveling its influence on odor encoding, as well as expand the reach of my studies on the role of the trigeminal system in metabolism and neuroinflammation.

Acknowledgments: I would like to thank Valentina Parma, Claire Martin, Thomas Hummel, and Johannes Reisert for supporting my nomination. They are among those in the chemosensory community whom I deeply admire. Learning about their involvement in this award nomination was truly meaningful to me. I am grateful to the NIH, the Monell Chemical Senses Center, and the state of Pennsylvania for their financial support of my research in the recent years. I want to acknowledge Prof. Prof. Stephan Frings, my PhD advisor at the University of Heidelberg, for gifting me with a lifelong research topic, and the Luquet team for welcoming me to the University of Paris Cité this past year. I am fortunate to have had the help of many colleagues and friends, whose science and humanity continue to inspire me every day. I am deeply grateful to each of them. Among them, I would like to thank Joel Mainland and Nancy Rawson for their invaluable support, for broadening my scientific horizons, and for showing me how leadership can look like.

Most of all, I want to express my deepest gratitude to my postdoctoral mentor, Johannes Reisert. His compassion, wit, moral and scientific integrity have been both a compass and an anchor throughout my years at Monell. Working alongside him has truly made me a better scientist.

I want to extend a special thank you to all the students I have had the privilege to supervise over the years. In particular, I am deeply grateful to many of the brilliant and motivated students I mentored through the Monell Summer Apprenticeship Program (MSAP). This program is a testament to how much diversity enriches scientific research. These students deserve our continue effort toward equal access and inclusive research opportunities.

Lastly, I must thank my family, who have supported and trusted me as I embraced a career path they knew so little about, and my partner, for her infinite patience and unwavering support.

AWARDS COMMITTEE REPORT

Julie A. Mennella, PhD, *Chair*

One of the most rewarding aspects of service to the AChemS community is the opportunity to recognize and honor the exceptional accomplishments of our society's members. I would first like to acknowledge the outstanding efforts of this year's committee members—Gerard Coureaud, Diego Restrepo, Janina Seubert, Christopher Simons, Akiyuki Taruno, Ann-Marie Torregrossa, and Marga Veldhuizen—who undertook the challenging task of selecting recipients from a truly remarkable pool of nominees. We are also deeply grateful to the AChemS members who took the time to nominate colleagues and provide thoughtful and compelling letters of support, thereby helping to bring the extraordinary achievements of these individuals to the forefront.

Congratulations to the 2026 awardees:

The AChemS Young Investigator Award for Research in Olfaction or Nasal Chemosensation:
Kevin Bolding, PhD, Monell Chemical Senses Center

The Ajinomoto Award for Young Investigators in Gustation or Oral Chemosensation:
Roberto Vincis, PhD, Florida State University

The Lawless Award for Research in the Psychophysics of Human Taste and Smell:
Emily Mayhew, PhD, Michigan State University

The Max Mozell Award for Outstanding Achievement in the Chemical Senses:
Thomas Hummel, PhD, Technicsche Universität (TU) Dresden

The awards will be presented during the AChemS Welcome/Awards Ceremony on **Wednesday, April 22nd at 5:00 PM**, in the Sawyer Key Ballroom of the Island Grand at Tradewinds in St. Pete, Florida. The awardees will present their research during the Awards Symposium on **Friday, April 24th from 7:30 – 9:30 PM**.

We would also like to congratulate **Sarah Sniffen** from the University of Florida, the **2025 recipient of the Don Tucker Memorial Award**, which recognizes an outstanding presentation by a graduate student at the 2025 AChemS Annual Meeting.

HISTORY COMMITTEE REPORT

Jessica H. Brann, Chair; Christian Lemon, Lynnette McCluskey, Claire Murphy, Stephen D. Roper, Alan Spector.

This History Committee welcomes and thanks its new members, Christian, Lynnette, Stephen and Alan! The committee recently selected a topic and recruited speakers for the Journal Club to be held at the upcoming Annual Meeting. Special thanks to Christian for organizing the topic; this year's Journal Club entitled "How Ideas Travel: From Classic Gustatory Cortex Mapping to Modern Flavor Computations" will focus on neural studies concerning gustatory cortex function and multisensory processing. Christian (University of Oklahoma) will introduce and provide historical context for our topic. Caitlin White (Samuelsen lab, University of Louisville School of Medicine) will discuss a classic paper on the discovery of neurons responsive to non-taste sensory stimuli in classically defined gustatory cortex in rodents (Kosar et al., 1986: "Gustatory cortex in the rat. I. Physiological properties and cytoarchitecture"). Discussion will build, including a presentation from Don Katz (Brandeis University) on a recent paper providing evidence that multisensory computations reflecting the hedonic features of bimodal taste and smell mixtures arise in gustatory cortex (Allar et al., 2025: "Gustatory cortex neurons perform reliability-dependent integration of multisensory flavor inputs) and a discussion on how ideas get started and how the past influences the present and future. Discussion from the audience is encouraged throughout! We welcome your contributions, and if you're a current or former member of the labs from which the papers arose, please join us to share your remembrances!

The History committee has also started work on several initiatives, including scoping recording Oral Histories from our members, and updating the history portion of the AChemS website. If you're interested in contributing materials or joining the committee please reach out to Jess Brann (Jessica.Brann@dsm-firmenich.com).

MENTORING/NETWORKING COMMITTEE REPORT

Arianna Maffei, PhD *Chair*

Like every year, the Mentoring/Networking Committee has been busy connecting AChemS members during the annual meeting and providing additional opportunities for interactions throughout the year. Our goal is to facilitate and promote scientific exchange, innovation, and support the growth of our society. Toward these goals, the committee leads the organization of two year-long initiatives: the Career Networking Seminar Series and the Matrix Mentoring Program.

Career Networking Seminar Series. This initiative is generously sponsored by dsm-firmenich and is now in its sixth year. The Committee selects early-career members (graduate students, postdocs, junior faculty) out of a pool of nominees and pairs them with established AChemS members with whom they share scientific interests although they do not have a prior connection. The pairs are tasked with identifying a common topic for a joint session of talks that connect their chemosensory research themes and deliver a coordinated pair of talks. These meetings and held online, to facilitate access to all members of the community during the year and offer a chance to learn new findings and discuss them with the speakers in the Q & A session that follows the talks.

Non-members are welcome to attend the online seminars and learn more about ongoing research led by AChemS members. Career Networking Seminars are also available online to facilitate access at convenient times and in different time zones. Over 70 people on average registered to attend the past 8 seminars. As AChemS members, you can view the calendar of future events, access the recordings of past seminars here.

If you are interested in being considered as a speaker for the Career Networking Seminar, you can submit your application here. If you would like to nominate a trainee for the Career Networking Series, you can use this link to submit a nomination. The Committee will start working on the next calendar series soon.

The Mentoring Matrix Program is another mechanism for AChemS trainees to build a broad scientific network. The Mentoring Matrix Program connects scientists at all career stages, from undergraduates to emeritus professors, to discuss topics including science, career development, grant writing, life in academia and industry, and other topics that the group deems relevant to their scientific growth. Members who are interested in the Program are still on time to sign up by completing this quick survey. While it is preferable to sign up for the Matrix before the Annual Meeting (deadline March 31st), the Mentoring and Networking Committee has put in place options for being included in the Mentoring Matrix Program during the Career Networking Social event scheduled for **Thursday April 23rd at 5:45pm**. Please join us and become included in a matrix. After the Annual AChemS meeting, the matrix will then meet virtually at least three other times between April 2025 and March 2026.

Nominations for the Career Networking Seminar Series and suggestions for improving our initiatives are very welcome. Please email info@achems.org with the subject “Suggestions for Mentoring/Networking Committee” to get involved.

I would like to highlight two upcoming events at the AChemS 2026 meeting. On **Wednesday, April 22nd at 8:00pm** there will be a new social initiative for trainees organized by Kara Fulton and Verenice Ascencio: the TRAINEE CAMPFIRE & SMORES MEETUP, which will be at the Sand Box Beach Lounge at RumFish. On **Friday April 24th at 2:30pm**, Dr. Liliana Davalos will deliver the BOOST (Building opportunities and Outreach for Sensory Trainees) lecture titled FLIGHT BY NIGHT, OR THE ECOLOGICAL AND ANATOMICAL CONTEXT OF BAT CHEMOSENSORY EVOLUTION.

On a personal note, I would like to thank Patrick Pfister and Jessica Brann at dsm-firmenich for the continued support for trainees and for the Early Career Seminar Series. I am also indebted to the work of the past and present committee members who helped in selecting the speakers for the Early Career Seminars and in organizing the activities of the Networking and Mentoring Committee for the AChemS meeting. This is my final year as committee chair, and I know I am leaving the committee in great hands. I look forward to meeting everybody at the Annual Meeting!

BOOST (Building Opportunities and Outreach for Sensory Trainees) COMMITTEE REPORT

Arianna Maffei, PhD *Chair*

The goal of the BOOST Committee is to provide support to trainees, engage them in the AChemS community, and recruit the keynote speakers for the BOOST lecture at the Annual Meeting.

Travel Awards. Members of the BOOST Committee select the recipients of the Travel Awards, that provide funding for trainees to attend the Annual Meeting. Students at the undergraduate and graduate level, postdocs and junior faculty are eligible for the travel awards. This year's awardees will be honored during the Networking Reception, scheduled for Thursday April 23rd at 5:45pm in the Garden Courtyard.

Applications for the AChemS Travel Awards for AChemS 2027 will open in the fall of 2026.

BOOST Lecture. The BOOST speaker for AChemS 2026 will be Dr. Liliana Davalos, Professor in the Department of Ecology and Evolution at Stony Brook University. The talk is scheduled on **Friday April 24th at 2:30pm** in the Sawyer Key Ballroom. The title of the lecture is "FLIGHT BY NIGHT, OR THE ECOLOGICAL AND ANATOMICAL CONTEXT OF BAT CHEMOSENSORY EVOLUTION". A brief note on Dr. Davalos: Dr. Davalos graduated in Biology from Universidad del Valle and did her graduate work at Columbia University, where she obtained a PhD in Ecology, Evolution and Environmental Biology and a Certificate in Environmental Policy Studies from Columbia's School of International and Public Affairs. Dr. Davalos's scientific work has been recognized by several international awards. In addition to producing innovative research, Dr. Davalos also served as Consultant for the United Nations Office for Drug and Crime and is currently a research associate of the American Museum of Natural History in New York.

Suggestions for improving our initiatives are very welcome. Please email info@achems.org with the subject "Suggestions for BOOST Committee" to get involved.

I would like to highlight an upcoming event for trainees at the AChemS 2026 meeting. On **Wednesday, April 22nd at 8:00pm** there will be a new social initiative for trainees organized by Kara Fulton and Verenice Ascencio: the TRAINEE CAMPFIRE & SMORES MEETUP, which will be at the Sand Box Beach Lounge at RumFish.

On a personal note, it has been a pleasure and a privilege to serve as interim Chair for the BOOST Committee. I look forward to meeting everybody at the Annual Meeting!

INDUSTRY LIAISON COMMITTEE REPORT

Kathryn Deibler, Ph.D.

Industry Liaison Committee Members:
Kathryn Deibler, Xiaorong (Phoebe) Su, Ann-Marie Torregrossa Casey Trimmer, Theresa White

The Industry Liaison Committee is pleased to highlight the upcoming symposium, "Data Driven Tools for Sensory Prediction," taking place on **Thursday, April 23, in the morning session** at the AChemS Annual Meeting.

Predicting how chemicals give rise to human odor perception remains one of the most challenging problems in sensory science. While machine learning has begun to close the gap between molecular structure and perceptual experience, meaningful progress depends on integrating high-quality perceptual data, robust computational models, and biological insight. This work collectively addresses how olfaction can transition from a largely descriptive discipline to a predictive and mechanistically informed science.

A key focus is the generation of scalable, standardized odor quality data that can support modern modeling approaches. Efficient methods for capturing perceptual meaning at scale are essential to enable reliable structure: percept mappings and to ensure that predictions generalize across stimuli, concentrations, and contexts. Equally important is moving beyond isolated odorants to account for the complexity of real-world smells, including concentration effects and multi-component mixtures that define everyday olfactory experiences.
The integration of predictive models with receptor-level biology further strengthens the link between chemistry and perception, enabling not only improved prediction accuracy but also rational strategies for modifying odor experiences. Together, these efforts illustrate a convergent framework in which sensory methodology, artificial intelligence, and neurobiological understanding work in concert to advance digital representations of smell, support innovation in fragrance and odor control, and deepen fundamental insight into how humans perceive complex chemical environments.

In addition, we invite attendees to **Breakfast with Industry** on **Thursday, April 23**—an invaluable networking event where participants can connect with industry sponsors, learn about career opportunities, and discuss collaborations at the intersection of research and application.

Sponsorship and Exhibitors
We extend our sincere appreciation to this year's sponsors and exhibitors for their generous support:

- **dsm-firmenich – Gold Sponsorship**
- **PepsiCo – Silver Level + 2 travel fellowships**
- **Ajinomoto – Award Sponsor**
- **Sensonics – Silver Symposium Sponsor + exhibitor**
- **Compusense – Student fellowship**

Sponsorship provides a prestigious opportunity for organizations to showcase leadership in chemosensory science while supporting groundbreaking research.

Sponsors receive:

- ☑ Recognition in meeting materials, promotional communications, and on-site signage.
- ☑ Access to over 500 scientists, industry leaders, and emerging talent.
- ☑ Alignment with a world-class organization advancing chemosensory science.

If you or your organization is interested in sponsorship opportunities, please reach out to Kathryn Deibler at kdd3@cornell.edu.

We look forward to an engaging and insightful AChemS Annual Meeting!

CHEMICAL SENSES REPORT

Steven D. Munger, PhD, Editor-In-Chief

Chemical Senses (Oxford University Press) is the official journal of five scientific societies – including AChemS – that are focused on the study of smell, taste, and chemesthesis. Now publishing its 51st volume, *Chemical Senses* is also the only journal dedicated to our field. Our executive editors and editorial board include leading chemosensory scientists from diverse disciplines and all our member societies.

2025 saw important changes and new initiatives. Four of our executive editors (Susan Travers, Donald Wilson, Johan Lundstrom, and Julie Mennella) completed their terms of service. Each had made exceptional contributions to the journal, in some cases over a period of decades, and we are very grateful for all they did to help maintain the quality and impact of the studies we publish. Kathrin Ohla and Bradley Goldstein joined the executive editor team last year and have already jumped in fully to help guide authors and reviewers through and efficient and expert review process. Two additional executive editors will join in 2026.

Manuscripts continue to move efficiently through the editorial process. Time from submission to first decision is quite short, averaging 27 days (similar to the 26 days in 2024). The average time to final decision, 59 days, is significantly shorter than the 78 days we saw in 2024. Our overall acceptance rate (32%) remains selective for high quality studies that impact our field, but is a consequence of our standards, not a target rate. After a decrease in submissions following a bump during the early years of the COVID-19 pandemic, submissions rose by 46% in 2025 (to a total of 188). Sixty-three manuscripts were published in 2025.

A new subcontracted copyediting team should help improve the final production stage (i.e., licensing, proofing, and publishing) as they ramp up. Two license options are available for publishing: the standard subscription license (which is free to authors) or an open-access license. *Chemical Senses* also continues to publish abstracts from the AChemS and ECRO annual meetings at no charge to those societies.

Of particular note, *Chemical Senses* published a special issue entitled Chemosensory Receptors: Gateways to Perception in the Sensory World. Including five original research articles and eleven reviews, manuscripts in this issue have already been downloaded over 7000 times. I encourage you to explore this exciting special issue, which was spearheaded by executive editor Timothy McClintock and editorial board members Scott McGrane and Loic Briand. While a topic has not been selected yet, we anticipate that another special issue will be on tap for 2027 (suggestions are very welcome).

Chemical Senses is a journal for our entire community. We will continue to solicit and publish high quality chemosensory research that is relevant for all parts of that community, regardless of experimental approach or organism of study. But if the journal is to remain healthy and continue that mission, we need everyone's participation. This includes submitting manuscripts for publication, citing papers published in the journal, reviewing submitted papers when invited, and of course subscribing to the journal through your annual AChemS dues. All of these efforts are essential if the only journal devoted to our field is to thrive (and even continue to exist).

I you have any questions or suggestions, please don't hesitate to reach out (chemsenseseic@gmail.com).

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2025 Annual Meeting

Hyatt Regency - Bonita Springs, FL

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AChemS XLIX

April 28- May 2, 2027

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