

UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER  
CHEMISTRY DEPARTMENT  
GRADUATION CEREMONY



SATURDAY, MAY 16, 2026

# DEPARTMENT FACULTY & STAFF

## Department Faculty

Laura Anderson	Yishu Jiang	Shauna Paradine
Brandon Barnett	William Jones	Benjamin Partridge
Kara Bren	C. Rose Kennedy	Allie Paton
Joseph Dinnocenzo	Kathryn Knowles	Michael Ruggiero
Tom Driver	Todd Krauss	W. Udo Schröder
Ignacio Franco	Ellen Matson	Agnes Thorarinsdottir
Alison Frontier	David McCamant	Megan Tichy
Benjamin Hafensteiner	Bradley Nilsson	
Pengfei “Frank” Huo	John-Carl Olsen	

## Research/Cluster Faculty & Senior Scientists

Yasemin Basgodan	David Mathews	Marc Porosoff
Frank Ebetino	Benjamin Miller	Alexander Shestopalov
Sina Ghaemmaghami	Brendan Mort	Andrew White
Alan Grossfield	Astrid Müller	Ralph Young
Alfred Marchetti	Andrew Nelson	

## Department Staff

Tessa Baker	Katie Fiete	Jalil Shojaie
Emily Breitbart	Jason Holt	Barbara Smith
William Brennessel	Sumie Jacoby	Barbara Snaith
Daniel Colon	Chloe May	Yinru Song
Brie Coyne	Lynda McGarry	Ray Teng
Donna Dolan	Terry O’Connell	Jeff Tschirhart

## Librarians

Susan Cardinal

Rachel Cheman

# THE CLASS OF 2026

## Doctoral Degrees

Farwa Awan

Alexis Bauer

Jordan Butt

Nathalia Cajiao Sanchez

Ignacio Camarero Temino

Chayan Carmenate Rodriguez

Xinxian Chen

Shannon Cooney

Erica Craddock

Hannah Distaffen

Christopher Hastings

Andrew Hong

Hafsa Irfan

Christopher Jones

Anees Puthenpeedikakkal

Ryan Kosko

Kaye Kuphal

María Fernanda Lizarazo

Elios Mondal

Owen Monteferrante

Soraya Ngarnim

Aurodeep Panda

Chari Peter

Elizabeth Phinney

Revathy Rajan

Joshua Ruby

Vishal Tiwari

Leyla Valerio

Bevan Whitehead

## Master of Science

Noah Bader

Rahul Chourasiya

Abraham Ellenbogen

Baela Ferrigno

Hannah Gorski

Alejandro Lazaro

Jiayun Li

Monica Li

Abigail Mullen

William Stoll

Manana Tsiskarishvili

Jennika Denise Yao Robato

# THE CLASS OF 2026

## **Bachelor of Arts**

Yuxu Feng

Ryan Garber

Ewan Haley-Lock

Joshua Li

Zhenyi Lin

Chen-Lin (Eva) Liu

Sage Loomis

Nadia Magalski

Nicholas Mahadeo

John Paul Mogyordy

Dhir Patel

Marvin Wu

Jinyu Zeng

## **Bachelor of Science**

Malia Dickinson

Erhan Ertekin

Robert Ghetiu

Matthew Gleason

Riley Joseph

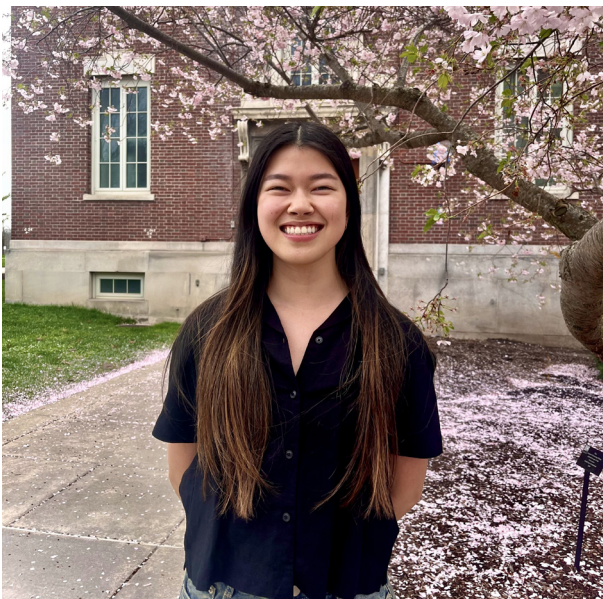
Benjamin S. Kozloff

Ashlie Morgan Sitzer

Brooke Stanley

McKenna Young

# Malia Dickinson



My four years at the University of Rochester have been an exciting journey filled with both challenges and successes. The summer before my senior year, I joined Dr. Todd Krauss' lab, where I began researching perovskite quantum dots, with the hopes of applying them to biomimetics. While my project did not go as planned, the beauty of chemistry is being able to redirect and explore different ideas. I am especially grateful to my mentor, Dr. Wesley Chiang, for being patient with me, allowing me to keep trying new things, and for guiding me through my current work studying the effects of matching the chalcogenide ligand to the surface of CdSe quantum dots on their photocatalytic performance. Furthermore, I would like to extend my gratitude to the entire Krauss group for their humor, being role models, and tolerating my smelly syntheses, and to my friends and family for their unwavering support and encouragement. After graduation, I will be pursuing a Ph.D. in chemistry with a focus on nanomaterials at Pennsylvania State University. I will greatly miss all the people in the department who have helped shape the student and researcher I have become, and I look forward to when our paths cross again someday.

# Erhan Ertekin



Over the past four years, I've grown in ways I never fully expected. Being a first-gen international student at UofR felt like navigating uncharted territories that pushed me to think differently. I've built resilience, discovered new passions through a myriad of opportunities that UofR has provided, and strengthened the values that guide me forward. The late nights, small accomplishments, and even the doubts all played a part in shaping who I am today.

I'm grateful for the people who supported me along the way. My friend Robert, Professor Paradine, and my mother, who believed in me even when things felt uncertain. I carry both excitement and curiosity as I step into graduate school to pursue my Ph.D. in Chemistry at UCSB.

# Yuxu Feng



My four years at the University of Rochester have been a journey filled with growth, curiosity, and exploration. I earned a B.A. in Chemistry, a B.S. in Biochemistry, and a B.S. in Clinical and Translational Sciences, which allowed me to explore the connections among chemistry, biology, and medicine. Through research in Professor Yishu Jiang's laboratory, I gained a deeper understanding of chemical biology, protein engineering, and the power of chemistry to address biological problems. After graduation, I will pursue a Ph.D. in chemistry and continue building toward a career in pharmaceutical and biomedical research. I sincerely thank my professors, mentors, lab mates, friends, and family for their support, guidance, and encouragement during this important chapter of my life.

# Robert Ghetiu



At the University of Rochester, I discovered a genuine passion for chemistry and ultimately chose to pursue it as my major. Over the past four years, I've been fortunate to take part in experiences that have shaped both my academic and personal growth. Serving as a workshop leader for multiple courses sparked not only my enthusiasm for chemistry, but also a deep appreciation for teaching and supporting others in their learning.

I joined the Frontier lab during my sophomore year and have been involved in research there ever since. Through this work, I developed as a scientist and gained a clearer understanding of the research process, which ultimately solidified my decision to pursue graduate study. Beyond the lab, I served as vice-president and then president of the Undergraduate Chemistry Society, where we continued our twice-weekly tutoring sessions and expanded our "Meet the Speaker" events to include more visiting seminar speakers. After graduation, I will be pursuing a Ph.D. in Chemistry at MIT. I am deeply grateful to Professor Alison Frontier and Patrycia Zybura for their invaluable mentorship, and to the many friends who made even the most challenging moments along the way both meaningful and enjoyable.

# Matthew Gleason



My four years in the Department of Chemistry have been truly transformative! I want to thank Professor Rose Kennedy, Dr. Kaycie Malyk, and Vivek G. Pillai for their mentorship and for inspiring me to pursue a career in chemistry. I am also grateful for all of my classmates (both in chemistry and other departments) who have supported me, made me laugh, and nurtured my growth over the years. Special shoutout to UCS for providing me with an outlet to teach chemistry and connect with the wonderful people in our department. Lastly, thanks to my parents, siblings, and friends back home, I couldn't have done it without you all! Following graduation, I am pursuing a Ph.D. in Chemistry at the University of Chicago, where I hope to continue studying physical organic chemistry and catalysis.

# Ewan Haley-Lock



Over the past four years at the University of Rochester, I've grown not just as a chemistry student, but as someone learning how to navigate uncertainty, challenge, and purpose. Within the chemistry department, I've had the opportunity to meet incredible students and faculty who have left a lasting impact on me. My favorite experience will always be TA'ing for CHEM 210W with Dr. Tichy. Through her ability to foster a supportive and creative environment for her TAs, I found myself doing the same for my own students—more than half of whom have since gone on to become TAs themselves. That semester—grading countless 30+ page reports and hosting a lab twice a week—opened my eyes to the value of teaching. It showed me how meaningful it is to guide others through challenging material and be part of their growth. Since then, teaching has become something I hope to carry with me as I continue my path. After graduation, I will be spending the summer in Sweden while planning my next steps. Finally, thank you to every person I have had the pleasure of sharing a conversation with during my time at Rochester.

# Riley Joseph



At the University of Rochester, I have completed a chemistry major and a political science minor, and I've developed a strong interest in using chemistry to solve the current climate crisis. I've had the opportunity to do research in Dr. Ellen Matson's laboratory, as well as serve as a workshop leader and a teaching assistant for both general chemistry lecture and lab. Outside of academics, I've been a member of Rochester's varsity cross country and track and field teams for four years, and I was honored to serve as captain my senior year. After graduation, I'll be pursuing a Ph.D. in chemistry at UNC Chapel Hill. I'd like to thank my mentors, Hannah and Chari, and Professor Ellen Matson for helping me grow as a scientist and always believing in me. I'd also like to thank my teammates, coaches, friends, and family for their constant support throughout these four years.

# Benjamin S. Kozloff



Joining the Department of Chemistry at the University of Rochester has been a tremendous experience. As a transfer student, I didn't really know what to expect coming in, but as I look back on my time here, I wouldn't change a thing. In the Frontier Lab, I developed new chemistry and learned how to conduct rigorous science. I am thankful for all the support and advice from Professor Alison Frontier and all my mentors. I also served as a Workshop Leader where I learned a ton from my students. Most important of all, I made some great friends here. I wouldn't be where I am without the support from my family and friends. Next year I will be starting a Ph.D. in organic chemistry at NYU, and I am excited to apply the knowledge and skills I've gained in Rochester in my future studies.

# Joshua Li



I've had many great experiences over the past four years in the Chemistry Department. I conducted research in the Matson and Bren groups, and also TA'd for Chem 231 and Chem 210. Outside the department, I have been playing with the University's Symphony Orchestra and also picked up bouldering. Additionally, I've volunteered with Rochester Digital Literacy at the Central Library. In the upcoming year, I taking my gap year and applying to medical schools. I'd like to thank my family, friends, professors, mentors, and peers who have helped me throughout my undergrad.

# Chen-Lin (Eva) Liu



My four years at the University of Rochester have been an incredible journey of growth, discovery, and lasting connections. I earned a B.S. in Optics and a B.A. in Chemistry, and I am deeply grateful to Professor Udo Schroeder for offering me an internship at the Laboratory for Laser Energetics, where I have been designing Raman spectroscopy systems for hydrogen isotopes using optical cavities with Mark Wittman and Prof Jim Zavislan. This experience opened my eyes to the profound impact that optics and chemistry have on the world around us.

Through my coursework and mentorship from Professor Julie Bentley, I developed a deep passion for optical design — one that led me to win the Robert S. Hilbert Memorial Optical Design Competition by Synopsys Inc. for designing an  $f/1.8$  lens with perfectly circular bokeh. I have also had the privilege of serving as a teaching assistant for several optics courses, which deepened my own understanding while allowing me to give back to the department. Outside of academics, I am a hiker and photographer, and over the past four years, I have had the opportunity to explore breathtaking landscapes across Norway, Chile, Argentina, and beyond. I plan to continue my studies in optics and build on the strong foundation I've developed here. Thank you to the Chemistry Department and to all the friends whose support has meant the world to me.

# Sage Loomis



I had a winding path through the University of Rochester, entering as a biomedical engineering student and transitioning through chemical engineering and finally to chemistry as I followed my passions and refined the path I wanted to follow in my academic and future life. In the end, I've emerged for the better from it, with experience in a variety of engineering skills that makes me exceptionally well-rounded as a practical chemist. I'm looking forward towards a future in chemical instrumentation, fusion, or renewable energy, where I can apply my chemical engineering and computer science minors to their full effect by creating practical chemical solutions to the problems that affect our world. I thank every professor who passed their knowledge onto me, and I thank my friends and fellow students for the time we spent studying, laughing, and debating problems around a whiteboard. It made the experience of learning together joyful and fun, and I've formed some bonds that I expect will last a lifetime. To my parents and my family, thank you for all the support you've given me during my time at this university, for flying all the way across the country to see me and the invaluable advice you gave me in my academic journey.

# Nadia Magalski



Having spent the past 5 years at the University of Rochester and Eastman School of Music pursuing a Dual Degree in Applied Music and Chemistry, and a minor in Art History I have been honored to experience so much of what the University and the City of Rochester have to offer. In my time here, I have completed the Arts Leadership Certificate program and participated in several internships, including a museum conservation internship at the Susan B. Anthony Museum and House. After graduation, I will continue my studies working towards an MA in Museum Studies and pursuing a career as an art and objects conservator. I would like to thank all of the faculty in the chemistry department for their support and willingness to work with me to accomplish all of my studies. I would also like to give a special thank you to my parents for their love and support throughout all of my education and to the wonderful friends who have stuck by me and the new ones I have been able to make throughout my 5 years at the University of Rochester!

# Nicholas Mahadeo



My past four years at the University of Rochester have been full of growth, challenges, and memories I'll always be grateful for. As a chemistry major with minors in psychology and business, I've had the chance to learn from so many different experiences both inside and outside the classroom. I've served as a TA in the chemistry and biology departments, mentored high school students in the Rochester area, tutored students outside the university, and worked as a research assistant in two psychology labs.

I'm also proud to have been a brother of Sigma Phi Epsilon, where I served on the executive board promoting, teaching, and supporting DEI. Outside of academics and career development, I spent plenty of time on the basketball courts trying to earn the title of "local legend." Beyond UofR, I've worked as a dental assistant and volunteered in a hospital, experiences that helped strengthen my goal of pursuing dentistry. After graduation, I plan to continue shadowing, study for the DAT this summer, and apply to dental school in the next cycle. I'm incredibly thankful for everyone I've met along the way. You've helped me grow, pushed me forward, and made these four years unforgettable. I'm excited for what comes next, and I wish us all a bright and prosperous future!

# John Paul Mogyordy



My past four years at the University of Rochester have been full of new experiences and memorable moments. From long hours in the library to TAing chemistry workshops and volunteering at Strong Memorial Hospital, I've had the opportunity to explore my academic interests while learning more about myself along the way. Outside of the classroom, serving as Vice President of Sigma Chi has given me lasting friendships and growth as a leader. More than anything, it's the people I've met and the experiences we've shared that have made these years so meaningful. This fall, I will be attending The Ohio State University College of Optometry, where I'm excited to continue my education and serve my community. I'm incredibly grateful for the support of my friends and family, and a special thank you to my mom and dad for their constant encouragement and guidance.

# Dhir Patel



Over the past four years at the University of Rochester, I have grown tremendously both academically and personally while pursuing a degree in chemistry and a minor in biology. During my time here, I had the opportunity to conduct research at the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry under Dr. Ritchlin, where I developed a deeper appreciation for medicine, critical thinking, and collaboration. I also served as a teaching assistant for chemistry labs, an experience that strengthened my communication skills and reinforced my passion for helping others. Beyond the classroom and lab, I volunteered at URMC clinics, where I was able to engage directly with patients and contribute to the community in a meaningful way. These experiences have shaped me into a more compassionate and well-rounded individual. After graduation, I plan to continue my education by attending medical school as I work toward a career in medicine. I am deeply grateful to my mentors, professors, friends, and family for their unwavering support throughout my undergraduate journey.

# Ashlie Morgan Sitzer



My time pursuing a chemistry degree at the University of Rochester has shaped me in many ways, not just as a scientist, but as a person. Over the past two years in the Matson lab, I've grown as a researcher, and I'm incredibly grateful for the mentorship and support of Dr. Ellen Matson, Becca Walls, Dr. Shannon Cooney, and my labmates, who made the experience meaningful and enjoyable. Outside of the lab, I've served as a lab teaching assistant for four semesters, including head TA for CHEM 137. This past year, I also served as Publicity Chair for the Undergraduate Chemistry Society, which allowed me to connect more deeply with my peers. These experiences have helped me grow in confidence and leadership, and I know I'll carry them forward. After graduation, I plan to spend a year working in industry before applying to graduate school. I'm especially thankful for my friends, whose support, genuine care, and positivity have meant everything to me. I wouldn't be who I am today without them. I'm also deeply grateful to my family for always believing in me and encouraging me to pursue my education and become the best version of myself.

# Brooke Stanley



Being a student at the University of Rochester has been as challenging as it had been rewarding. I struggled through many changes and finding my identity, but in the end, I became a well-rounded woman who is confident to take on the next step in my life. While studying chemistry, I was able to be the captain of Royals Dance

Team, act and sing in musicals and performances, become the president of the Music Interest Floor, and do research in the Paradine Lab during my free time. My appreciation for Shauna Paradine cannot be understated, and I am extremely grateful for her to be my PI throughout my college career and for her instilling my love of organic chemistry for the rest of my life. Additionally, my mentor, Shannon O'Neil, has also been an impactful figure in my life as someone who is always there to help. I would also like to thank my parents for supporting my education and encouraging my love for science through their own experiences. My thanks also extend to my friends and professors who were there to help me, regardless of the circumstances.

# Marvin Wu



I had the privilege of spending the past four years studying Chemistry and Clinical and Translational Sciences at the University of Rochester. I am immensely grateful to Professors Shauna Paradine and Rose Kennedy for sparking my interest in Organic Chemistry, which has become such an integral part of my life I never planned for.

Above all else, I am most thankful to Professor Ben Partridge for more than I can name, especially his mentorship and investment in undergraduate scholarship, which have been so instrumental in shaping who I am as an independent researcher. I'd also like to thank my lab mates and the many other professors in this department who have challenged and supported me. Along the way, I've been enriched by experiences in organizations like RC MERT, *Journal of Undergraduate Research*, the Undergraduate Chemistry Society, and the CHEMeliora committee. I was humbled to be named a Goldwater Scholar in my junior year, and was fortunate to spend two summers in the pharmaceutical industry at Genentech and Merck — experiences that have only reaffirmed my commitment to a career at the intersection of chemistry and medicine. I would not be here today without my family for all their support and encouragement, and my friends who made these years unforgettable. As I begin an accelerated nursing program this year, I am leaving this department with more curiosity than I arrived with and am excited for what's to come.

# McKenna Young



I have greatly enjoyed my time at the University of Rochester pursuing a degree in chemistry and a minor in spanish. During my time, I have participated as a TA, as a content editor for the *Journal of Undergraduate Research*, as a UR Orientation Trek Leader, as an active Girls on the Run volunteer, and on the CHEMeliora committee. I had the privilege to be elected as the president of UR Celtic, the Irish Dance group on campus, which was one the defining moments of my undergrad. I am extremely grateful for my time conducting research in the Partridge Group, especially the mentorship from Ben, Hannah, and Liz. This group has provided much laughter and joy! I am excited to continue my chemistry career at Vanderbilt for my Ph.D.! Thank you to my friends and family for their endless support!

# Jinyu Zeng



During my time at the University of Rochester, I have grown both as a student and as a person through my studies in chemistry and Japanese. My experiences in the classroom, laboratory, and broader campus community have deepened my curiosity, strengthened my resilience, and shaped the way I approach learning. I am especially grateful for the professors, classmates, and friends who have supported and encouraged me throughout these four years. After graduation, I plan to continue my studies in chemistry in graduate school, building on the foundation I developed at Rochester. I would also like to thank my family for their constant love, patience, and support. I am thankful for all the memories and opportunities I have had here, and I look forward to the next chapter.

# COMMENCEMENT AWARDS

## **Dr. E.W. and Maude V. Flagg Award:**

### **Robert Ghetiu**

Established in 1982 as an endowed fund by Dr. John J. Flagg ('36), this award recognizes outstanding performance and promise in chemistry by a graduating senior. The recipient is selected by a faculty committee appointed by the chair of the Department of Chemistry.

## **John McCreary Memorial Prize:**

### **Joshua Li**

The John McCreary Memorial Fund was established in 1985 in tribute to the high academic and scientific standards and the personal dedication of John James McCreary. McCreary received his bachelor of science degree in chemistry with high distinction from the University of Rochester in 1975. John's career maintained its exemplary character until his untimely death in 1983. The award is given to an outstanding senior undergraduate student.

## **Analytical Chemistry Award:**

### **Yuxu Feng**

This award is given to a student who is selected by the faculty on the basis of outstanding academic achievement in analytical chemistry.

## **Inorganic Chemistry Award:**

### **Riley Joseph**

This award is given to a student who is selected by the faculty on the basis of outstanding academic achievement in inorganic chemistry.

## **Organic Chemistry Award:**

**Marvin Wu**

This award is given to a student who is selected by the faculty on the basis of outstanding academic achievement in organic chemistry.

## **Physical Chemistry Award:**

**Anna Spak**

This award is given to a student who is selected by the faculty on the basis of outstanding academic achievement in physical chemistry.

## **Rochester ACS Award for Outstanding Achievement in Chemistry:**

**Robert Ghetiu**

This award is given to a senior with an outstanding academic record and consists of recognition during the ACS Annual Rochester Section Undergraduate Research Symposium, and the awardee's name is included on a plaque displayed in the department.

## **Royal Society of Chemistry Certificate of Undergraduate Excellence:**

**Matthew Gleason**

**McKenna Young**

For university students in North America who have shown significant achievement in the chemical sciences.

The award recipients are selected by their departments for demonstrating exceptional dedication, performance, and engagement in coursework and research.

# **Chemistry Department Awards:**

**Malia Dickinson**  
**Ben Kozloff**

**Matthew Gleason**  
**Brooke Stanley**

The Chemistry Department Awards are given to seniors in recognition of outstanding scholarship in the study of chemistry.

## **Carl A. Whiteman, Jr. Award:**

**Erhan Ertekin**  
**Matthew Gleason**  
**Robert Ghetiu**

**Riley Joseph**  
**Marvin Wu**

This award recognizes exemplary teaching by an undergraduate student in the Department of Chemistry. Carl Whiteman graduated from the University of Rochester in 1950 (BS, Physics) and worked continuously in the department until his retirement in 1986. His enthusiasm and dedication to laboratory teaching made him a legendary figure among undergraduate chemistry majors. Whiteman continued his association with the department until his death in 2007. This honor recognizes his teaching excellence, as well as that of the recipients.

