

# NOBCChE- UMD Newsletter

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## NOBCChE-UMD

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## Contributors

- Rennisha Wickham, President
- Floyd Bates, II, Vice-President
- Colef Talbert, Secretary
- Alicia Bowen, Treasurer (Editor-in-chief)
- Domonique Downing

## Welcome to our first semi-annual newsletter

A student chapter of NOBCChE is here at the University of Maryland, and would like to invite you to become a member. We need your help in order to grow as a



successful student organization. Thank you for your support.

In photo (l-r): Dr. Herman Sintm, Dr. Kwaku Dayie, Dr. Michael Doyle, Jacob Sama, Rennisha Wickham, Domonique Downing, Melantha Jackson, & Fredrick Nytko, III.

## Thank you all!

NOBCChE-UMD would like to thank the following people and organizations for providing support for travel to the annual conference in Houston, Texas this year:

- Dean Charles Caramello, The Graduate School
- Dean Darryll Pines, A. James Clark School of Engineering
- Department of Chemistry & Biochemistry
- Department of Chemical Engineering
- Materials Research Science & Engineering Center (MRSEC)
- NOBCChE (National Organization)

*See more information about the conference on page 3.*

## NOBCChE News

- General body meetings for the 2011-2012 year have resumed and will be held on the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursdays of each month, this semester.
- Tutoring will be available for undergraduate chemistry students. See details on pg 3.
- Get involved with NOBCChE today! Committee positions are now open.
- Our new website will be launched soon.

## President's Corner



Rennisha Wickham,  
President 2010-2011

As president of NOBCChE, I personally welcome you all to our first newsletter. In this issue, we aim to update you on NOBCChE's accomplishments and future endeavors. Thank you for reading and allowing us to serve you. Join NOBCChE today!

## General Accomplishments

The 2010-2011 school year turned out to be a success for the UMD chapter of NOBCChE. The executive board set high yet achievable goals and each of these goals were met and/or exceeded throughout the course of the year. Average attendance at general body meetings more than doubled over the previous year with the incorporation of monthly "Professional Development Seminars". This unique series offered useful information not only to graduate students but professors and undergraduates as well. Successful integration of this series led the UMD Multicultural Involvement and Community Advocacy (MICA) office to select the chapter for a 2011 MICA MVP Award in the area of "Leadership Development". Our UMD chapter even reached out to the Department of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering administration and hosted a Distinguished Speaker Seminar in conjunction with them. The executive board is proud of all of these accomplishments as well as those highlighted below.

### NOBCChE Graduates

#### Renee Siler, Ph.D.

Dr. Siler successfully defended her thesis, "Nonlinear Optical Studies of Molecular Adsorption and Solvation at Solid/Liquid and Liquid/Liquid Interfaces" under Dr. Walker. She is now working for Coherent Inc. in Santa Clara, CA in Advanced Technical Sales.

#### Jacqueline Smith, Ph.D.

Dr. Smith defended her thesis, "The Synthesis of a Diverse Library of A1-2 Analogs to Investigate Bacterial Quorum Sensing" under Dr. Sintim. She accepted a postdoc position at Georgetown University with Dr. Milton Brown.

#### Williamson Oloo, Ph.D.

Dr. Oloo successfully defended his thesis, "Synthesis and Reactivity of Monohydrocarbyl Pd(IV) Complexes In Protic Solvents Using HOOH as an Oxidant" under Dr. Vedernikov. He accepted a postdoc position at The University of Minnesota with Dr. Lawrence Que, Jr.

#### Merle Zimmerman, Ph.D.

Dr. Zimmerman successfully defended his thesis, "A Physical Chemist's Guide to Applied Computational Chemistry" under Dr. Tossell.



UMD College of Chemical & Life Sciences Commencement on May 19, 2011. The class of 2011 was the last class to graduate from our former school, CLFS. See recent graduates to the left.



Melantha Jackson and President Rennisha Wickham show off NOBCChE's certificate from MICA. An MVP Award was given for NOBCChE's success in leadership development.



The UMD had a strong presence at this year's NOBCChE National Conference in Houston, TX. Shown here are Dr. Herman Sintim, Jacob Sama, Domonique Downing, Caedmon Walters, and Fredrick Nytko, III. Jacob and Domonique were award winners at this year's conference.



Dr. Michael Doyle, chair accepted the Department's 2011 NOBCChE Presidential Award for Outstanding Partner in Academia. The award was given during the gala, a favorite among conference attendees.

### Individual Awards

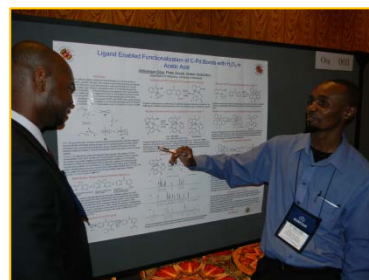
- Dept. of Chemistry and Biochemistry**, under Chair Dr. Doyle - NOBCChE Presidential Award for Outstanding Partner in Academia
- Domonique Downing** – The Dow Chemical Company Fellowship Award
- Fredrick Nytko, III** – Carl L. Rollinson Teaching Award
- Jacob Sama** – AP Kennedy Award
- Rennisha Wickham** – G. Forrest Woods Memorial Scholarship

## 2011 NOBCChE National Conference

The primary purpose of the National Organization for the Professional Advancement of Black Chemist and Chemical Engineers is to increase the number of minorities in science, technology, engineering and mathematics related professions. We members of UMD-NOBCChE strongly believe that the only way to accomplish this goal is to provide students with learning opportunities outside of the classroom setting and to engage professionals having diverse backgrounds and nationalities. Thus, we felt it necessary that UMD students be given the opportunity to attend the 38<sup>th</sup> Annual National NOBCChE Conference. Given support from Dean Caramello and the UMD Graduate School, Dean Pines and the James Clark School of Engineering, Dr. Doyle and the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, Dr. Ehrman and the Department of Chemical Engineering, Dr. Reutt-Robey and the Materials Research Science and Engineering Center, and the national NOBCChE organization nine UMD students were able to attend the national NOBCChE conference in Houston, Texas.

## A Record of 9 Students Attend the National Conference

During the conference, six graduate students and one undergraduate student made either oral or poster research presentations along with two of the five UMD faculty members who also attended. All students attended daily technical sessions in line with their interests. Topics of discussion included alternative energy solutions, analytical chemistry, polymer and materials science, and organic chemistry. Students also attended lectures by Dr. Warren Washington, the 2007 Nobel Laureate, Norris McDonald, president of the African American Environmentalist Association, Dr. Milton Brown, director of the drug discovery program at Georgetown, and Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee. Student development workshops on resume writing, mentoring in the STEM disciplines, money management and investing, mock interviews, science and policy, academic/professional transitioning, and technical writing were also offered at the NOBCChE conference.



Williamson Oloo walks a fellow conference attendee through his scientific poster on "Ligand Enabled Functionalization of C-Pd Bonds with H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> in Acetic Acid."



Fred Nytko thoroughly explains his poster on "Synthetic Approaches Toward the Aminoquinone Natural Product Streptonigrin: Key C-Ring Functionalizations" to Melantha Jackson during the conference poster session.

## Career Fair Exposition

A career fair exposition also took place at the conference, giving students the chance to put all that they learned in the workshops to practice. Both students and faculty volunteered at the UMD department of chemistry and biochemistry booth, where they spoke with high school teachers and undergraduate students interested in summer research opportunities and/or graduate school. Moreover, students gained networking experience as they learned about the culture and job opportunities within companies such as 3M, The Dow Chemical Company, Dupont Company, GlaxoSmithKline, Corning Corporation, Colgate-Palmolive Company, Defense Threat Reduction Agency, Proctor & Gamble, Merck & Company, and National Institute of Standards & Technologies.



Mouhamed Diop and Domanique Downing at the career fair. UMD professors and students represented UMD CMNS.

## Conference Comes to a Close: Awards Ceremony Gala

The conference came to a close after the awards ceremony and gala dinner, where both UMD faculty and students walked away with several awards. First, several UMD students were asked to interview with companies as a result of their oral presentation. Then Dr. Michael Doyle received the NOBCChE Presidential Award for Outstanding Partner in Academia. Also, Domonique Downing walked away with the Dow Chemical Company Fellowship Award, a graduate award sponsored by Dow. Lastly, Jacob Sama, an undergraduate chemistry major at UMD was awarded the AP Kennedy Award. Then to finish off the night of excitement UMD faculty and students hit the dance floor with other conference attendees and partied the night away to the sounds of Fried Ice Cream.



NOBCChE Terps enjoying the Award Ceremony gala on the dance floor.



Students pose for a photo during a luncheon featuring a speech by Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee.



Dr. Steven Rokita, Director of Graduate Admission and Recruitment also attended the conference in Houston.

## NOBCChE in Action: Community Outreach Overview

NOBCChE has been very proactive about community outreach in our short 5 years around the DC metropolitan area. Key activities include free tutoring services, science fair judging, and participation in exhibits and demonstrations.

### K-12 Outreach: Science Fair Judging

This year our chapter volunteered to be judges at three science fairs in the area. For the third year in a row, NOBCChE members participated in the Northwestern High School (Hyattsville, MD) science fair on February 10<sup>th</sup> along with GSO members. As judges, we had the pleasure of advancing five high school students to the regional science fair which was held this spring. University of Maryland judges for this event are listed in photo to the right in alphabetical order.

On February 16<sup>th</sup>, our chapter judged the science fair at McFarland Middle School (Washington, DC) for the first time, and we hope to build a lasting relationship with the school. McFarland judges included Alicia Bowen, Domonique Downing, Melantha Jackson, and Rennisha Wickham. NOBCChE also has a connection with Catherine T. Reed Elementary School (Lanham, MD) and this year Domonique Downing and Rennisha Wickham were judges at their science fair on April 14<sup>th</sup>.



Floyd Bates, Domonique Downing, Kelli Golanski, Dennis Mayo, Abulfazl Mehrjardi, Fred Nytko III, Ali Sikorsky, Chris Sims, Jackie Smith, and members of AXE.



In photo: (l-r) Fred, Dennis, and Chris.

## UMD Outreach: Free Tutoring Services

Our chapter is also very proud of our tutoring program, which offers free services to chemistry students at UMD. Tutoring will be available for the 2011-2012 school year in the areas of general chemistry and organic chemistry, while tutoring in other chemistry courses may be available upon request. Students in need of our services may contact us via email at [nobcche.umd@gmail.com](mailto:nobcche.umd@gmail.com).

## MRSEC NanoDays & National Chemistry Week

Our chapter also participates in annual exhibits that help enrich society's knowledge of science, particularly that of students, to spark an interest in the STEM fields. On April 7<sup>th</sup>, Jackie Smith and Floyd Bates performed tabletop nanoscience demonstrations as part of the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Materials Research Science and Engineering Center (MRSEC) Nanodays. Nanodays is an annual event held at Oxon Hill High School (Oxon Hill, MD) where approximately 100 students are exposed to information and experiments pertaining to nanoscience. We thank Dr. Janice Reutt-Robey (MRSEC Director) and Dr. Alex Prasertchoung (Assistant Director of Education Outreach Programs) for inviting us to participate once more.

NOBCChE members Petrina Boucher and Colef Talbert also volunteered at the USA Science and Engineering Festival held in Washington, DC during National Chemistry Week.



Jackie Smith performing a scientific demonstration at NanoDays at Oxon Hill High School.



Floyd Bates participating during NanoDays, an annual event to introduce high school students to the field nanoscience.

## Seminars & Professional Development Overview

The University of Maryland, College Park Chapter of NOBCChE (NOBCChE-UMD) worked diligently to provide a seminar series which would be informative and useful in the enrichment of the graduate student experience at University of Maryland. Our chapter implemented a Professional Development Seminar Series as well as a Distinguished Seminar Series that was open to all departments, students, and faculty on campus. All of the seminars were successful with 30 or more people in attendance at each which is comparable to the attendance at weekly department seminars in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry.



Petrina Boucher, Rennisha Wickham, Melantha Jackson, and Reyniak Richards at the 2010 DC Metro Science Café.



Dr. Isiah Warner and Dr. Cathrine Fenselau having a discussion following the annual seminar.



NOBCChE general body meeting featuring the professional development topic of "Women in Science"

## UMD Outreach: Free Tutoring Services

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## Professional Development Series

The primary goal of the Professional Development Seminar Series was to provide graduate students with insight and valuable information that we felt would be useful in ensuring success in their careers. At these seminars students were able to ask in-depth questions and receive valuable advice from highly qualified faculty members about subjects important to their professional growth.

The first of these seminars was held on November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2010, entitled *"Women In Science"*. The guest speakers for this seminar were Dr. Dorothy Beckett, Dr. Amy S. Mullin, and Dr. Nicole LeRonde-LeBlanc. Our speakers were able to discuss their experiences as women in the fields of Chemistry and Biochemistry. Coming from different backgrounds and being at different stages in their careers, our panel was able to provide a great deal of insight from multiple perspectives.

The next seminar was *"Leadership and Job Opportunities"* on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2010, given by Department Chair Dr. Michael P. Doyle. Dr. Doyle was able to give insight on the perception of scientists in our society, outlook of the job market, and job options. Dr. Doyle also gave advice on putting together an effective CV and how, and when, to look for a job.

On February 3<sup>rd</sup> 2011, Dr. Lyle Issacs gave a talk on *"How to Give an Effective Scientific Presentation"*. In this seminar Dr. Issacs went over the do's and don'ts of giving a presentation. He discussed different types of talks one may need to give, the different audiences one may encounter, and how to prepare properly so a presentation can be given effectively.

Our final Professional Development Seminar was *"Manuscript Writing"* given by Dr. John T. Fourkas on March 3<sup>rd</sup>. Dr. Fourkas gave important tips on how to properly prepare a manuscript. He gave an overview of details that should be included in manuscripts so the importance of the work is clearly understood and how to go about getting it published. He also explained many of the things that authors do incorrectly that often cause a manuscript to receive negative comments from reviewers.



"Women in Science" panel: Profs. Amy Mullin, Nicole LaRonde-LeBlanc, and Dorothy Beckett.

Suggestions are currently being accepted for professional development topics for 2011-2012.

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NOBCChE members preparing for a successful general body meeting.



Students work as a team during a general body meeting!

## 5<sup>th</sup> Annual NOBCChE Seminar

On May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2011 we held our 5<sup>th</sup> Annual NOBCChE Spring Seminar in the Marker Seminar Room. Our distinguished guest speaker was Dr. Isiah M. Warner from Louisiana State University. Dr. Warner is the Vice Chancellor for Strategic Initiative, Boyd Professor, and Philip W. West Professor of Analytical and Environmental Chemistry at LSU. Dr. Warner has published over **300** articles in peer-reviewed journals, currently has six patents with four pending, is an American Chemical Society Fellow, and has received numerous awards and recognition throughout his career. Dr. Warner's talk was entitled "*NanoGUMBOS: A New Breed of Nanomaterials.*" He discussed his development of nanoGUMBOS (group of uniform materials based on organic salts), their properties, and their wide range of applications. We thank the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry for their continued support in our efforts to present our seminars annually.



Vice-president Floyd Bates and President Rennisha Wickham discuss logistics before the seminar.



NOBCChE-UMD pose with Dr. Isiah Warner following the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Seminar held on May 5, 2011 in the Marker Seminar Room of the Chemistry Building.



Secretary Colef Talbert with Dr. Isiah Warner after his seminar on *NanoGUMBOS*.

## Distinguished Seminar-Dr. Hammond

This year NOBCChE-UMD hosted two Distinguished Seminar Speakers. On April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2011 our first joint seminar with the Clark School of Engineering was held in Martin Hall. Our guest speaker was Dr. Paula T. Hammond of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Dr. Hammond is the Bayer Chair Professor and Executive Officer of the Department of Chemical Engineering at MIT. She has received many honors throughout her career, and is a fellow of the American Physical Society and the American Institute of Medical and Biological Engineering. Dr. Hammond has also filed over 20 patents on various technologies that she aided in the development of over the years. Dr. Hammond's talk was entitled "*Functional Materials from Fuel Cells to Implantable Pharmacies*". She discussed her electrostatic layer-by-layer (LBL) process which is used to construct highly tailored ultrathin polymer and organic-inorganic composite thin films. The LBL process is used to make customized materials for energy and biomedical applications.

## Meet the New Executive Board

Elections were held in September, in order to select the new leaders of our organization. Three members of last year's board will remain, giving their experience and point-of-view to keep our organization strong in terms of leadership and success. The new members of the board are listed including the four officers and committee chairs. Join us in congratulating our new board! **All** are encouraged to continue the efforts of the previous board by participating in the committees listed below and by making yourselves available as volunteering opportunities arise in the future.

**President:** Alicia Bowen  
**Vice-Pres:** Floyd Bates, II  
**Secretary:** Andrea Andrew  
**Treasurer:** Rejniak Richards

**Media Chair** Colef Talbert  
**Tutoring Chair** Geraldine Echibiri  
**Community Service Chair** Laetitia N'Dri

## End-of-Semester Celebration 2010

To cap off a great semester and say thank-you to all of those who supported the UMD chapter of NOBCChE during our Professional Development Seminar Series, a celebration was held! There was only one catch – admission to the party was not free! Each person had to bring one unopened toy to donate to Toys for Tots. Even executive board members were required to participate in the fundraiser to be a part of the celebration. Faculty and students from Chemistry, Biochemistry, and Engineering were all invited to come out to the party and socialize with people who they may not see on a regular basis. Along with the faculty and students, their spouses and family members were also invited to celebrate. This proved to be key to the success of the party as a large crowd showed up to gathering. The diversity of people and interests made for a great networking atmosphere. People from different disciplines united to talk about their common interests. The crowd was also entertained with buffet style food and drinks catered by Gist Family Catering, inviting background music, and a surprise iTunes gift card giveaway!



2010-2011 Executive Board members at the celebration on December 10, 2010.



A glimpse of the crowd at the beginning of the celebration.



Toys collected for the Toys for Tots Toy Drive during the celebration. Thank you for all your donations!

## Service: Toys for Tots Toy Drive

The end result of the toy drive was a pleasant surprise! Two overly packed boxes of toys were donated by the attendees of the party. When delivered to the foundation, the workers were overwhelmed by the amount of toys collected and thanked the UMD NOBCChE chapter and everyone who gave a toy! These toys were given to children whose families could not afford to purchase any during the winter holiday season. The reason for the success of the toy drive was the great outreach to faculty and students from the various departments.



Thank you all for your participation and continued support!

- ➔ General body meetings this semester will be held on the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of each month at 4pm in the Marker Seminar Room of the Chemistry Building (Chem 0112).
- ➔ Visit our website for updates & as always like us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter, and see us on Flickr.