

Chapter 9

Faculty-Student Life in the Department

Extracurricular activities in the Chemistry Department in recent years have centered around ACS Student Affiliate Chapter.

Starting in 2013, the term Student Affiliates was discontinued by the American Chemical Society (ACS). Student members were now recognized as full members of the ACS. Officially SAACS was renamed as the Student Chapter of the American Chemical Society (SCACS).

Over the 75 years of existence of the student section of the ACS the group has always been very active but the nature of events has changed.

In the early days of the Department, beginning in the 1930's extracurricular activities centered around a science club moderated by a faculty member. The history of these clubs have been documented in various issues of the student newspaper, The Griffin. Some of these activities are summarized here.

The first of the chemistry student organizations was started in 1939. (Griffin, vol 7, Oct 20, 1939)

“Organized last December 13, the Chemistry Club, represented by Dr. Austin V. Signeur and the student president, submitted official application for membership in the Council, in the form of charter and constitution as prescribed in Section 11, Article III, of the Constitution. Jerome Faber, head of the committee investigating the application, delivered a recommendation that the Club be not considered for membership until the second semester, at which time they will be eligible for a Council seat.”

The first and most prominent science club was The Strohaber Science Club, beginning in 1935. (Griffin, vol 8, Oct 4, 1940)

“The Strohaber Science Club, an organization run by and for science students at Canisius College, was addressed by Bruno J. Zwolinski, their president, at the organization's first meeting of the year, last Wednesday. The meeting was held in the Horan O'Donnel building.

Mentioning briefly the history of the club and outlining its purpose, Zwolinski stressed the numerous benefits offered by the organization to its science members.

Benefits Offered

“Ever since 1935,” said Mr. Zwolinski, “the Strohaber Club has been aiding the students of the Science Department in selecting the career for which they are best fitted, by training, education, and personal qualifications. The members are offered the opportunity, through the club's activities to study the various professions and vocations for which they may qualify”

Speakers

An important function of the organization is the sponsoring of addresses by eminent men in various scientific fields. These men give explanations of the nature of their work, its advantages, disadvantages, and requirements. These lectures are supplemented by the showing of films, slides, and visits to industrial plants.

Opportunities Offered

Mr. Zwolinski explained that the prime purpose of the club is to stimulate the students' interest in scientific endeavor. Its members are offered the opportunity of doing original work in the well-equipped laboratories of the Horan O'Donnell science building. They may also act as assistants to the faculty members in any work in which they may be engaged.

Membership

Strohaver membership is open to all students enrolled in science, but the right to hold office and to vote is accorded only to those members who maintain a scholastic average of at least eighty percent during the year. These privileged members are known as fellows.

Officers

President Zwolinski announced that students wishing membership in the club should attend the next meeting or contact one of the club's officers. These officers include: Leonard Ambroski, secretary; George Trum, Treasurer; Peter Jackson and Casmir Pietraszek, sergeants-at-arms; Austin C. McTigue, Ph.D., professor of Physics, is acting as moderator of the club."

Another article in the newspaper emphasized the importance of students being exposed to chemistry alumni. (Griffin, vol 9, Oct 4, 1940)

"According to Father Brown, Chemistry Department head, junior and senior chemistry majors must attend all meetings of the alumni and undergraduate societies. All lectures heard will be discussed in Chemistr 50 (Introduction to Chemical Research). The compulsory attendance ruling affords the students an opportunity to meet the alumni chemists.

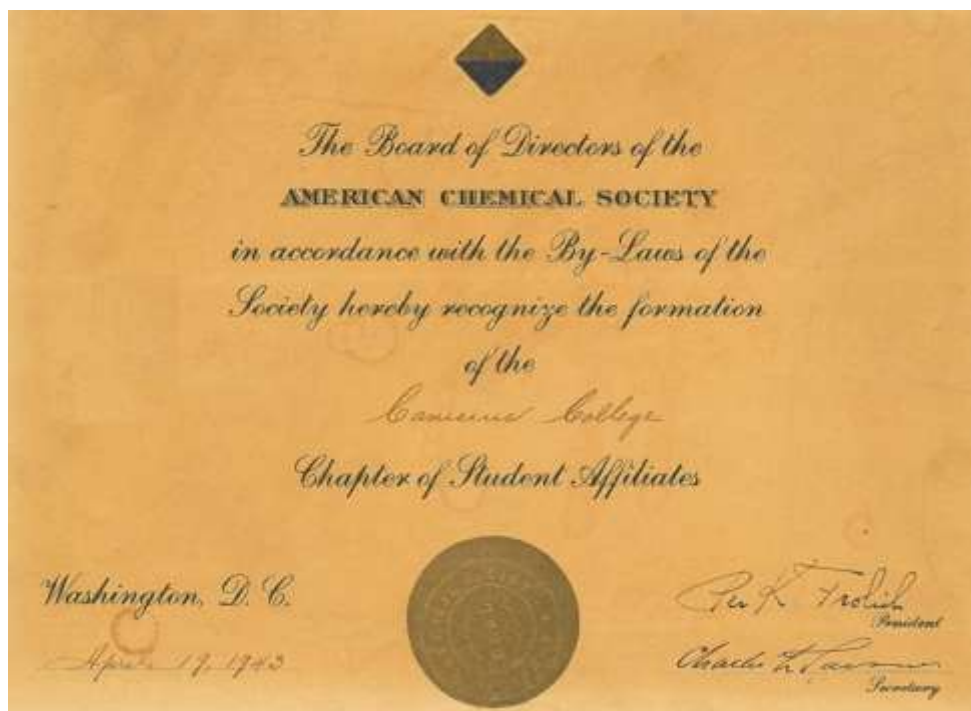
Mr. William B. Foley of the Research Advisory Service of the Liberty Bank, spoke at the October 6th meeting of the Alumni Chemistry Club. His subject was "Industry's Challenge to Research."

In 1943, the Student Affiliates of the American Chemical Society was first introduced. (Griffin, vol 10, issue 9, Feb 19, 1943).

"Under the direction of Father T. Joseph Brown, S.J., chairman of the Department of Chemistry, a new group of student chemists has been organized. The Student Affiliates of the American Chemical Society, as well as attendance at the national meetings of the society.

Dr. Liberatore, before his departure for Columbia University, and Father Brown, were instrumental in the formation of the group.

Following is a list of the present Students affiliated.: Samuel Albert, Lonard Ambroski, Walter Brauer, James Caher, Stephen Shmielowski, Paul Corcoran, Edward Golibersuch, Rudolph Grandits, Louis J. Gugliuzza, William Kenline, William Kirchgessner, Walter Kosiba, Edgar Langenstein, Eugene Lorence, Jerome Mruk, Raymond Osgood, Francis Sayles, Michael Syracuse, John Szymanski, Kenneth Walters and Walter Ziemba.”



As documented by student newspaper accounts, the principle activities of the SAACS was organization and attendance at lectures presented by prominent chemists. (Griffin, vol 12, issue 6, Jan 19, 1945)

“Public lectures and activities of the Student Affiliates of the American Chemical Society predominate on the calendar for the science students as the fourth quarter gets under way. Last Wednesday evening, January 17th, the college students enjoyed a talk on “The Viscose Process”, delivered by Dr. Emmette R. Isard of E. I. du Pont de Nemours. On Thursday evening, February 15th, Dr. H. A. Bruson of Rohm and Haas Co., will present a lecture on “The Chemistry of Acrylonitrile”. This particular lecture will be in conjunction with the Western New York Sector of the American Chemical Society and will be presented here at the college. Dinner will precede the lecture. The highlight of this series of talks will be on Wednesday, February 21st, when Dr. Hugh S. Taylor of Princeton University will speak on “Kinetics of Reactions in High Polymer Systems”.

Father T. Joseph Brown, S.J., head of the Chemistry Department, announced that there are now forty-five college men in the Student Affiliate group of the American Chemical Society of which Henry Ph. Heubusch is chairman. Election of the remaining officers will be held next Monday at 2 p.m.”

Another prominent organization was the Alumni Chemical Society of the College. An article in the student newspaper describes lectures by prominent chemists with industries extended to the Student Affiliates. In those days an “institution” was “directive”. (Griffin, vol 14, Jan 17, 1947)

“Dr. Charles C. Price, Head of the Chemistry Department of the University of Notre Dame, and winner of the American Chemical Society Award in Pure Chemistry, in 1946, for his highly creative work in the study of reactions of olefinic and aromatic substitution, will be the speaker at the next meeting of the Alumni Chemical Society to be held on Tuesday evening, February 4th. Dr. Price will speak on “The Influence of Substituents on the Polarity of the Benzene Ring.”

Other Talks

Dr. Price received his Ph.D. degree from Harvard in 1936 and his early researches dealt with the mechanism of substitution reactions in the benzene ring, a field in which he has made notable contributions. Later he extended his studies to the reactions of unsaturated compounds in general.

Other talks to be given in the present series are:

March 3rd, “Some Days in a Research Chemist’s Life,” by Dr. Wesley Minnis. Dr. Minnis is Chairman of the Western New York Section of the American Chemical Society and Research Director for the National Aniline Division of the Allied Chemical & Dye Corporation.

March 31st, “Pilotless Aircraft” by Dr. C. C. Furnas, who is Director of the Cornell Aeronautical Laboratory of the Cornell Research Foundation, Inc.

Lectures in Science Building

May 5th, “Operation Crossroads” by Walter J. Murphy, Editor of “Chemical and Engineering News,” the news magazine of the chemical world and a publication of the American Chemical Society.

Members of the Student Affiliate of the American Chemical Society, the student body, their parents and friends are invited to attend Dr. Price’s lecture and the other lectures in the series. Lectures are held in Room 27 of the Horan O’Donnell Science Building beginning at 8:30 p.m.

Over the period of the early 1970’s to the 1980’s activities of the Student Affiliate of the ACS evolved from primarily academic to a combination of academic-social to mainly a social

organization. The student organization is primarily responsible for selecting the Crowdle Award recipient (described in another section) but most activities are socially oriented outreach events.

Below is a list of annual chapter events with attached photos.

Summer Research Picnic

For nearly 20 years between 1997 and 2017, students and faculty involved in the summer research program enjoyed food, drinks and games at the beach. The venue was the cottage of Joe Bieron and Peg Weis at Crystal Beach on the Canadian shore of Lake Erie. (The little people in the photo are faculty family)



Christmas Party

In recent years, the students and family hold a Christmas party, hosted by Dr. Mary O’Sullivan. In addition to liquid refreshments, potluck dishes and good cheer, there is a gift exchange that challenges the creativity of the participants. The young children of faculty always enliven the event.



End of Year Banquet

A long-standing celebration in the faculty-student banquet at the end of the academic year. Student awards are announced, faculty are recognized, and the occasion offers a time for everyone to get dressed up for this big event.



Hands-On Chemistry Demonstrations

A nationally sponsored Chemistry Week provides an opportunity for students to visit local schools and conduct demonstrations to generate interest in chemistry.



Hands-On Chemistry Demonstrations for the Kids

To fifth graders, chemistry experiments are like magic and exciting. Silly putty never loses its attraction to youngsters.



Social/Team Building ACS vs. $\beta\beta\beta$ Football Game

Competition between Chemistry and Biology students always exists and the traditional football game at Thanksgiving is a very competitive event. For some faculty and students the day ends in the Emergency Room at Sister's Hospital.



Social/Team Building Bowling

Bowling has always been a popular sport in Buffalo and a midnight gathering at a local bowling alley is an annual event to provide another occasion to socialize.



Tour of NASA

A time-honored tradition is for faculty and students to tour science laboratories and industrial chemical plants. Shown here is a group touring the NASA facility in Cleveland.



Tour of Honeywell

The large chemical industry in Western New York provides good opportunities for site tours. Honeywell Research Labs developed fluorinated hydrocarbons for air conditioners. Chemistry Department alumni employed there arranged for the site visit.



Habitat for Humanity

Social outreach is an educational component to the college experience and the ACS organization provides a group opportunity to be involved in the community.



Boat Party

Buffalo is located on the shore of Lake Erie and a variety of industries and grain elevators are located in the harbor. A boat tour provides for both a shore event and an educational opportunity.



Here is an excerpt from the Canisius Chronicle, February 1995 that highlights the national award won by the Student affiliate that year.

“Lightning strikes thrice for student ACS chapter

From their casual joshing, one might surmise they’re just friends who happen to share the same academic major. And that’s what they are.

The strength of the friendships among its members is one reason for the extraordinary vitality of the Canisius College student chapter of the American Chemical Society (ACS). This year, for the third time in four years, the national organization has cited Canisius chapter as outstanding – an honor accorded to fewer than three percent of the 880 student ACS affiliates in the country.

American Chemical Society President Ned D. Heindel says all student chapters are required to submit annual reports of their activities, which are reviewed by the ACS Committee on Education. The committee then selects outstanding chapters on the basis of those reports.

What’s the secret of this chapter’s success? Brian Hill (’95) says chapter members enjoy “a certain bonding – but not a hydrogen bonding,” he specifies with a smile. “We feel a deep connection with each other.”

“We’re coming from a similar educational background, so the conversations tend to get interesting, and everyone’s involved. We all know each other,” says Steve Szczepankiewicz (’96), chapter treasurer.

Chapter president Tom Kermis ('96) says members of the chemistry faculty are also active in the group's many events, including the Christmas party and end-of-the-year banquet. Mary Dow, Chemistry Department secretary, comes in for additional praise as the members' "mother away from home," according to Brian Santora ('95).

The benefits of club involvement are not only social, however. Mr. Kermis likens the network of student and professional chapters of the ACS to "a brotherhood across the country. I think [graduate schools] look favorably on that [involvement]."

Current officers of the Canisius chapter make it clear that they are carrying the torch of their predecessors, who earned through last's years activities earned the award given this year. The '93-'94 slate of officers included Valerie Frydrychowski ('94), president; Ed Clinch ('94), vice president; Mary Beth Sands ('94), treasurer; and Brian Santora ('95), secretary.

In a letter to Canisius College President Rev. Vincent M. Cooke, S.J., national ACS president Ned Heindel noted that Dr. Frank j. Dinan, Canisius professor of chemistry and advisor to the college's ACS chapter, "deserves special commendation. Few faculty members are willing to make the great commitment of time and energy that a successful chapter requires of its advisor. Professor Dinan's efforts represent the best in undergraduate science education around the country." The Canisius chapter will be recognized officially in a forthcoming issue of Chemical & Engineering News.

Chapter members have also been invited to attend the awards meeting at the national ACS meeting April 2 in Anaheim.