

Chem^{NUS}CONNECTIONs

Newsletter of NUS Chemistry



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Editorial Notes

As we bid farewell to another year, we extend our warmest wishes for good health, happiness, and success in the year ahead. This is a time for reflection and renewal, an opportunity to look back on the moments that have shaped us and the memories we have created together as part of the NUS Chemistry community. In this issue, we are pleased to share several meaningful highlights: the NUS120 University Awards, the retirement of Madam Lim Nyoon Keow after an extraordinary 43 years of service to the Department, the welcoming of our new freshmen in AY2025/2026, the 10th anniversary of the Chemistry Alumni Fund, the Class of 2025 Homecoming, and a thoughtful reflection on chemistry and career, written by Ms Lum Yi Chyi (Class of 2018). We hope that you will enjoy reading these stories that celebrate our people, milestones, and the shared spirit of learning and connection. As we look ahead to the new year, may it bring renewed energy, meaningful opportunities, and continued success to all. The editorial team wishes our alumni and friends a joyful and fulfilling New Year 2026!

NUS120 University Awards

To mark its 120th anniversary, NUS honoured seven exceptional educators, researchers and professionals at the 2025 NUS University Awards for their far-reaching contributions to the university, the citizens of Singapore, and the global community. We were delighted to have Professor Liu Xiaogang from the Department of Chemistry among the honourees. The ceremony was held at the University Cultural Centre on the 12th September 2025. During the event, NUS President Professor Tan Eng Chye highlighted the special significance of this year's awards and thanked the recipients for their sustained contributions and commitment to NUS.



NUS120 University Awards 2025 ceremony, held at the University Cultural Centre on the 12th September 2025. Professor Liu Xiaogang is the fourth from the right. Image source: National University of Singapore.



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We welcome contributions from our alumni. If you are interested in writing for the newsletter, please contact the Editor at chmcws@nus.edu.sg.

A Decade of Giving: Celebrating 10 Years of the Chemistry Alumni Fund

Ten years ago, a group of senior alumni came together with a shared vision to give back to the Department that had shaped their journeys. Their efforts led to the launch, in November 2015, the Chemistry Alumni Fund, a lasting endowment that pools the care and legacy of our seniors in supporting the dreams of future generations of Chemistry students.

We received tremendous support from alumni and friends of the Department. Every contribution, large or small, represented a heartfelt gesture of goodwill, a senior extending a helping hand to their juniors. The Fund was set up as a general-purpose endowment, empowering the Department to enhance teaching and learning in meaningful ways. Over the years, it has supported bursary students through study awards and recognised outstanding achievements in both academic and research pursuits.

This year, the Fund celebrates its 10th anniversary, marking a decade of impact and generosity. Since its inception, it has benefited close to 300 students, growing from 13 named Study Awards to 17 as of 2025. During the challenging years of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Fund became an essential source of support, helping an average of 40 students who faced financial hardship each year from 2021 to 2024.

The Fund has also opened doors beyond the classroom. It enabled about 20 bursary students to join a 10-day experiential learning trip to China since 2023, an eye-opening journey that broadened their perspectives and strengthened their passion for Chemistry. For many, it was their first overseas experience, made possible through the generosity of the Chemistry alumni community.

As we look back on this meaningful milestone, we celebrate not only the achievements of the past decade but also the enduring spirit of care, connection, and community that defines NUS Chemistry. Our heartfelt thanks go to all our alumni and friends whose continued generosity keeps this spirit alive, inspiring the next generation to learn, explore, and give back in turn. If you would like to contribute to the Chemistry Alumni Fund and continue this legacy of giving, you may **click** or **scan** the QR code on the right.



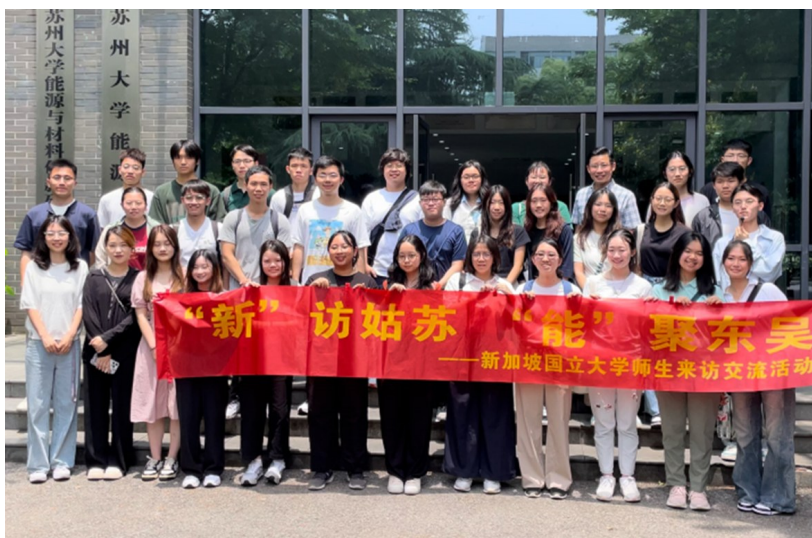
What some of Chemistry Alumni Study Award awardees say...



"...Coming from a humble background, juggling finances with my academics is a struggle, coupled with the ailing health of my parents. As a person with hearing loss, I faced unique challenges that I had to overcome or adapt to. This has greatly taught me how to embrace challenges and take it in my stride, conquer them and come back up after being beaten down... My educational pursuits would not have been possible without your generous donation to the NUS Chemistry Alumni Fund. Thank you for supporting me towards reaching my fullest personal and professional potential." - Abdul Ghafur Bin Zainal (Year 2, one of Chemistry Alumni Study Award awardees Academic Year 2024-2025)

"...Growing up in a lower income family, finance has always been at the top of my head. With my passion in Chemistry and a goal to finish my studies in University definitely took a toll on my family's finances. Receiving the Chemistry Alumni Study Award alleviated a considerable amount of financial stress which allows me to focus more on my studies and extracurricular activities...I would like to express my deepest appreciation to the Chemistry Alumni Study Award..." - Yam Qing En (Year 3, one of Chemistry Alumni Study Award awardees Academic Year 2023-2024)

"...The COVID-19 pandemic has made it a challenging time for everyone, including myself. My cost of living has increased significantly as I am unable to return to my home country, Malaysia. Your financial generosity would be of much help in lightening my financial burden as well as allowing me to concentrate on my studies during this difficult time. I hope one day I will be able to help others attain their goals just like you have helped me. Thank you again for this thoughtful and generous gift." - Tan Huai Chyi (Alumna, one of Chemistry Alumni Study Award awardees Academic Year 2022-2023)



Happy retirement to Madam Lim Nyoon Keow

Madam Lim Nyoon Keow retired from the Department in October 2025 after an extraordinary 43 years of service. She joined us in 1982 and has risen through the ranks as a laboratory technologist. Madam Lim generously mentored generations of younger colleagues in the teaching laboratories. Over the past decade, she took on critical responsibilities in overseeing the department safety matters, and later overseeing departmental infrastructure. Her professionalism, meticulous standards and unwavering commitment have left an enduring mark on the Department's culture and operations. We are deeply grateful for her passion and dedication. Thank you, Madam Lim, for your decades of loyal service. We wish you good health and a blissful retirement.



Chemistry Freshmen Bond and Brew

On the 13th August 2025, the Department of Chemistry held the Freshmen Bond & Brew event to welcome the chemistry freshmen to the Department. The event was attended by 105 participants and started with a welcome address by Associate Professor Chin Wee Shong, Deputy Head (Administration), who introduced student life, key faculty members, and support services available to chemistry undergraduates.

A highlight of the event was "Getting to Know Chemistry," where students explored teaching and research facilities through guided tours and interactive station visits. Completing each station earned them stamps, making the experience both engaging and informative.

The event concluded with tea break refreshment, providing a relaxed setting for students to mingle with peers and faculty members. This event offered a warm and engaging start to university life, helping students feel welcomed, connected, and ready to embark on their NUS Chemistry journey.



Class of 2025 Homecoming

On the 19th July 2025, the Department of Chemistry organised the Class of 2025 Homecoming to celebrate the accomplishments of the graduating class. The event brought together 43 graduates, along with their friends and lecturers, for a day filled with warmth, laughter, and reflection.

The gathering provided a heartfelt opportunity to celebrate not only academic achievements but also the friendships, perseverance, and shared experiences that defined the students' journey at NUS Chemistry. A spread of delightful food and refreshments accompanied the event, adding to the relaxed and festive atmosphere. Smiles, stories, and photo moments captured the spirit of the occasion, one of pride, gratitude, and anticipation for what lies ahead.

Beyond marking the end of an important chapter, the Homecoming event also reflected the Department's close-knit community and enduring commitment to supporting students through every stage of their journey. Faculty members took the opportunity to congratulate the graduates personally and encourage them to carry forward the spirit of curiosity, collaboration, and excellence that defines NUS Chemistry.

As the event drew to a close, the air was filled with well wishes and excitement for the future. The celebration served as a meaningful reminder that while graduation marks the conclusion of one journey, it is also the beginning of many more, guided by the knowledge, friendships, and values nurtured at NUS Chemistry.



“Translating Molecules into Meaning: From UROPs and FYP to IP-Backed Startups”

by Ms Lum Yi Chyi, Class of 2018



“It is good to have direction, but I don’t think you have to be so fixated on that direction. So when opportunity comes, just try.”

I graduated from NUS seven years ago and was part of the pioneer cohort at the Ridge View Residential College (RVRC), back when it was a one-year programme. RVRC’s focus on environmental sustainability drew me in, and the community became a defining part of my student life where I met my best friend there. Later, we set out to do our UROPs (undergraduate research project) and FYP (final year project) together.

I entered NUS intending to build a career in the flavours and fragrances industry, and chemistry felt like the most relevant path. I briefly considered chemical engineering, but its engineering-heavy curriculum didn’t align with my interests. My fascination with food science began after watching a documentary about a flavourist who crafted taste profiles for consumer products. Without a JC biology background, food science seemed out of reach, but chemistry, part of the same disciplinary family, offered a robust foundation for the work I envisioned.

Early on, I wanted to test whether research suited me. In Year 2, I took a UROPs to experience firsthand what working in a lab was like. Up to that point, most of my courses were theoretical; UROPs and later my FYP brought chemistry to life. Working on copper nanowires, I saw reactions translate into tangible materials I had heard of but never seen with my own eyes. That bridge from theory to application, science with real-world relevance, was thrilling. When I approached Professor Chin Wee Shong seeking something practical and societally meaningful, her project matched my passion perfectly.

Another turning point was the NUS Overseas Colleges (NOC) experience. As a Year 1 student, I thought it wasn’t for me because it meant extending my candidature. I ended up changing my mind and applied for the programme in my second year. The NOC curriculum could only be mapped to electives, and not essential courses, which resulted in my having to extend my candidature to 4.5 years. But the trade-off was worth it. In China, I was immersed in a vibrant startup ecosystem, interning at a company using Augmented Reality for marketing and education across exhibitions, tourism and convention settings. My CEO was an excellent mentor, and the experience opened my eyes to innovation beyond the laboratory.

Back in Singapore, I engaged in a brief stint in oil and gas. Shortly after, I joined my current company. My company partners with IP-backed science startups to help it grow from inventions to commercial products. My research background has been invaluable. Understanding iteration, variability, and data rigor helps me communicate with PhD students and faculty and evaluate technologies across medical, semiconductor, hardware, carbon capture, and food tech sectors. Chemistry’s breadth is the real asset—it sits at the centre of science.

My advice to my fellow students: have a direction but stay flexible. Explore beyond your initial plan, seize opportunities, and keep learning. Curiosity will carry you far.”