



OrganicERs

community
innovation
transformation

NEWSLETTER

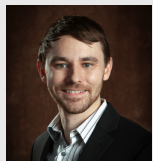
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Letter from the Chair



Dear OrganicERs,

I am honored to introduce myself as the new chair of the newsletter committee. For those I have not yet

met, I am Jonathan Dannatt, Associate Professor of Chemistry at the University of Dallas. I take on this role with deep gratitude to Vince Maloney, who has put this newsletter together on his own for roughly a decade. Vince will continue contributing, including handling email distribution, and we're all the better for it.

This issue marks a few firsts. You will see our new official logo, designed by Catherine Lugo, alongside a refreshed newsletter design that Catherine has

also led. We are launching the Contribute to OrganicERs campaign through the ACS Division of Organic Chemistry. Ahead of BCCE 2026, you will find a full preview of OrganicERs workshops, symposia and our Birds of a Feather session.

If you would like to contribute to a future issue, or serve as a content editor, please reach out via email (jdannatt@udallas.edu). I would love to hear from you.

Warmest regards,

Jonathan Dannatt
Chair, Newsletter Committee
OrganicERs

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The New OrganicERs Logo: Defining our Identity

Catherine Lugo

The impetus to design an official logo for OrganicERs started with a practical reason: we needed one for a fundraiser. The process, however, quickly became much more meaningful. As OrganicERs continues to grow and develop a stronger organizational infrastructure, we realized we needed more than just a graphic. We needed a visual identity that reflected who we are, what we value, and the impact we hope to make in organic chemistry education.

Designing the logo challenged us to think carefully about how we wanted the organization to represent itself moving forward. The initial concepts were grounded in three guiding ideas: community, innovation, and transformation. These themes shaped both the symbolism within the logo and the broader message we hoped it would communicate about OrganicERs and its future. After multiple rounds of brainstorming and revision, the ideas

were narrowed down to four final logo concepts, which were presented to the incumbent leadership board for a vote on March 5.

The final design emerged through that collaborative process. A hexagon anchors the logo in organic chemistry, our shared discipline, while interconnected circles represent the people and ideas that define the collaborative spirit of OrganicERs. The six colored vertices symbolize the diverse perspectives that strengthen our community, while the outward ripples suggest expanding influence beyond individual classrooms.

As OrganicERs expands its programming, outreach, and national presence, the logo will provide a cohesive and recognizable visual identity across the organization's communications and materials.

ORGANICERS AT BCCE 2026

The 29th Biennial Conference on Chemical Education (BCCE) takes place July 26-30, 2026, at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. BCCE is the largest gathering of chemistry educators in the world, and it represents one of the most important opportunities for the organic chemistry community to share innovations, build connections, and strengthen teaching practice. OrganicERs will have a strong presence this year, with sessions spanning topics from AI in the classroom to active learning and assessment reform. Whether you are attending in person or following from afar, we hope you will engage with and support your colleagues as they share their studies and passion for the subject.

Continued...

BCCE 2026 (continuation)**SYMPOSIUM: ACTIVE LEARNING IN ORGANIC CHEMISTRY: RETHINKING ASSESSMENT (S258)**

Organized by Dee Jacobs (Rider Univ.), Matt Casselman (UC Riverside), and Richard Mullins (Xavier Univ.) on Monday, July 27, 8:30am–12:00pm & 3:30pm–5:00pm at Engineering Hall 1209

Active learning challenges us to rethink how we measure student learning. This symposium focuses on assessment practices that move beyond traditional high-stakes exams toward models emphasizing growth, transparency, and inclusion. Presentations may highlight mastery- or specifications-based grading, portfolio assessments, collaborative testing, peer review, or authentic performance tasks. Both established and developing work are welcome. Presenters should discuss pedagogical rationale, implementation, and observed or anticipated impact on learning, equity, and belonging. Attendees will gain adaptable frameworks for assessments that honor varied learning preferences, promote equity, and align with active-learning environments, alongside shared reflection on transforming assessment culture in chemistry education.

SYMPOSIUM: ACTIVE LEARNING IN ORGANIC CHEMISTRY: INSTRUCTIONAL INNOVATIONS (S257)

Organized by Dee Jacobs (Rider Univ.), Matt Casselman (UC Riverside), and Lucas Tucker (Siena College) on Tuesday, July 28, 8:30am – 12:00pm and 3:30pm – 5:00pm at Social Sciences 6104

Research consistently affirms that active learning enhances student success in STEM, improving achievement, retention, and attitudes toward science. This symposium highlights innovative approaches that strengthen conceptual reasoning, problem-solving, and belonging in organic chemistry by rethinking how class time, independent study, and feedback work together. Presentations may feature flipped classrooms, POGIL activities, collaborative learning, and supporting technologies such as visualization tools or AI-assisted feedback. We welcome data-driven reports, evolving practices, and early-stage pro-

jects. Attendees will gain practical strategies and implementation insights while connecting with instructors across institutional contexts in a community of practice around active learning.

WORKSHOP: ACTIVE LEARNING IN ORGANIC CHEMISTRY: BACKWARD DESIGN 2026 (W179)

Facilitated by Catherine Lugo (Texas A&M Univ.) and Jennifer Chaytor (Saginaw Valley State Univ.) on Tuesday, July 28, 10:30am–12:00pm (part 1) and 3:30pm–5:30pm (part 2) at Chemistry B355

Meaningful instructional change begins with a clear understanding of what we want students to learn and how we will know they have learned it. Before introducing new teaching strategies or active-learning techniques, both instructors and students benefit from well-articulated learning goals and aligned assessments. This workshop will guide participants through a structured process for defining and assessing learning in the context of undergraduate organic chemistry. Materials developed during the session will be shared with the OrganicERs community via www.organicers.org, promoting continued collaboration among educators dedicated to improving student learning in organic chemistry.

WORKSHOP: ACTIVE LEARNING IN ORGANIC CHEMISTRY: TRANSFORMING AI CHALLENGES INTO SKILL-BASED OPPORTUNITIES (W259)

Facilitated by Dee Jacobs (Rider Univ.) and Stephanie Brouet (Saginaw Valley State Univ.) on Wednesday, July 29, 8:30am–12:00pm at Chemistry B331/B333

Artificial intelligence is reshaping chemistry education, presenting both opportunities and challenges. This interactive workshop explores how AI can be deliberately incorporated into organic chemistry teaching to enhance active learning, promote ethical use, and shift outcomes toward skill-based competencies. Participants will engage in discussions and hands-on activities addressing assignment and assessment

design, effective AI modeling, and course policy. Working in small groups, attendees will examine applied examples and develop draft materials integrating or responsibly accounting for AI. Facilitators will guide reflection on equity and student engagement throughout. Attendees will leave with practical frameworks, usable materials, and collegial connections for ongoing collaboration.

WORKSHOP: HOW CAN I ASSESS THE IMPACTS OF THE GREEN CHEMISTRY CURRICULUM? (W287)

Facilitated by Alexey Leontyev (North Dakota State Univ.) and Krystal Grieger (North Dakota State Univ.) on Thursday, July 30, 10:30am–12:00pm at Chemistry B357/B359

This workshop will help instructors assess the cognitive and affective impact of green chemistry instruction. Participants will learn how to align assessments with green chemistry learning goals and use multiple approaches, including multiple-choice questions, open-ended prompts, and case-comparison tasks, to evaluate students' understanding and reasoning. The workshop will also introduce theory-based instruments for measuring affective outcomes. Participants will practice developing assessment items, discuss basic research designs such as pre/post comparisons, and leave with templates and strategies they can adapt for their own courses.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATION: BUILDING AND SUSTAINING CHEMISTRY COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE: TEACHING, LEARNING, AND UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH EXPERIENCES (CC328)

Chaired by Joanne Stewart (Hope College) along with panelists Jeffrey Raker (Univ. of South Florida), Barbara Reisner (James Madison Univ.), Anne Bentley (Lewis & Clark College), Jennifer Chaytor (Saginaw Valley State Univ.), Elizabeth Sterner (Lebanon Valley College) on Monday, July 27, 6:00pm–7:00pm at Memorial Union: Shannon Hall 1130

BCCE 2026 (continuation)

Communities of practice play an important role in supporting chemistry teaching, learning, and undergraduate research by creating collaborative spaces for faculty development and innovation. These communities often operate between institutional and professional society levels, providing opportunities for sustained engagement and shared growth. This session will feature examples from communities at different stages of development, highlighting both successes and ongoing challenges in building and sustaining these initiatives.

Panelists will share strategies for fostering participation, maintaining momentum, and leveraging community resources to support instructional and research practices. Participants will be invited to discuss how communities of practice can enhance courses, support faculty development, and expand undergraduate research opportunities. The session aims to provide practical insights and create space for exchanging ideas about strengthening and sustaining these collaborative networks.

BIRDS OF A FEATHER: ACTIVE LEARNING IN ORGANIC CHEMISTRY / ORGANIC EDUCATION RESOURCES (ORGANICERS)

Hosted by Cathy Welder on Sunday, July 26, 5:30–6:30 PM at Memorial Union: Capital View 4224

Come join us for an informal gathering of those who teach or plan to teach organic chemistry. This is a great way to find out more about the resources available at www.organicers.org and meet with members of the Organic Education Resources community and meet with members of the Organic Education Resources community.

*Contributing Authors:
Dee Jacobs, Jennifer Chaytor, Alexey Leontyev, Cathy Welder, and Jonathan Dannatt*

**MICER@BCCE**

Methods in Chemical Education Research (MICER) is a pre-conference workshop taking place on July 24 to 26, three days before BCCE 2026. Designed for educators interested in chemistry education research (CER), the workshop provides an introduction to research methods while fostering connections with researchers and practitioners. Participants will have opportunities to explore potential research questions, develop collaborative projects, and become more engaged in the CER community.

CONTRIBUTE TO ORGANICERS

Jennifer Muzyka

This issue marks the official launch of the OrganicERs fundraising campaign, "Contribute to OrganicERs," hosted by the ACS Division of Organic Chemistry. The donation page is now live on the Give Lively platform.

Funds raised through the campaign will support a DOI subscription service for OrganicERs, enabling peer-reviewed learning materials hosted on our site to be assigned digital object identifiers. Citable DOIs make members' contributions more discoverable, easier to reference in publications, and more durable in the scholarly record.

The campaign was made possible through the support of the ACS Division of Organic Chemistry treasurer, who established the donation system.

Every contribution, large or small, directly supports the infrastructure that makes our peer review process meaningful. If you have benefitted from OrganicERs materials in your own teaching, please consider contributing and sharing the campaign with colleagues.

**Click here to
make a donation**

**A New Leadership Structure for OrganicERs**

After several months of drafting, discussion, and revision, OrganicERs formally adopted new bylaws on March 13, 2026, establishing the leadership structure that will carry the community forward. The goal was to create an open and inclusive process that breaks the leadership roles into small enough pieces that leaders do not have to give up every other professional activity to be involved, and to provide a mechanism for members to step back from leadership. The new structure organizes OrganicERs into three tiers:

Continued...

Leadership (continuation)**Steering Committee (SC)**

The operational core, made up of all subcommittee chairs plus the SC Chair. SC members are elected from existing Leadership Board members to staggered three-year terms. They remain on the LB for the term of their service. They are responsible for strategic planning, grant writing, and recruiting members to their subcommittees.

Leadership Board (LB)

Where the mission of OrganicERs is accomplished. LB members serve renewable one-year terms and contribute to at least one subcommittee or ad hoc assignment per year. First-year members serve as OrganicERs Fellows and are paired with an experienced LB member for mentorship.

Collaborators

Individuals or entities who support specific activities such as grant funding or statistical analysis without serving on the LB. Collaborators bring specialized expertise or resources to a defined project or initiative, allowing OrganicERs to draw on outside help without requiring an ongoing leadership commitment.

Elected Members of the Steering Committee

Justin Houseknecht
Wittenberg Univ.
SC Chair '29



Leslie Nickerson
Idaho State Univ.
ALOC Workshops '27



Dee Jacobs
Rider Univ.
FLCs '27



Kristen Barrett
Rowan Univ.
CDTs '27



Jonathan Dannatt
Univ. of Dallas
Newsletter '28



Ian Rhile
Albright College
Community Effect. '29



Cathy Welder
Dartmouth College
Membership '28



Jennifer Muzyka
Centre College
Website '28



Stephanie Brouet
Saginaw State Univ.
Peer Review '29

22 Newly Elected Leadership Board Members

The Steering Committee was elected on April 9 and twenty-two members were approved to the 2026–2027 Leadership Board on April 29. The Steering Committee is now actively placing these twenty-two members onto subcommittees, pairing new Fellows with experienced mentors.

Sincere thanks to everyone who contributed to drafting and refining the bylaws, with particular thanks to Cathy Welder and Jennifer Muzyka for substantive feedback throughout the process, and the full Leadership Board for thoughtful engagement during voting. Special thanks to Justin Houseknecht for his leadership and guidance throughout the development and approval of the bylaws. The bylaws are a living document and may be amended by majority approval of the full Leadership Board.

Website and Infrastructure Update

Jennifer Muzyka, Jeremy Klosterman, and Jonathan Dannatt

The OrganicERs digital infrastructure has seen several meaningful changes this spring. Here is where things stand.

Website migration to Backdrop. On April 8, we migrated the OrganicERs website from Drupal 7 to Backdrop, a community-maintained clone of Drupal. Drupal 7 had reached end-of-life and stopped receiving security updates, making the move necessary. Backdrop will look familiar to long-time site users but receives active

updates and improvements. The web team (Jennifer Muzyka, Jeremy Klosterman, and Jonathan Dannatt) tested the migration carefully before proceeding. If you notice anything unusual on the site, please reach out to any of us.

Upcoming move to ACS DOC hosting. Over the coming months, the site will migrate from its current host (Joinery) to a server administered by the

ACS Division of Organic Chemistry. After the move, the web team will have greater control over the site, enabling faster updates and new features. This will involve a learning curve as we get familiar with the new environment. We welcome your suggestions, questions, or bug reports as we continue to improve the platform.

— Meet the Newest OrganicERs Fellows —



Sachin Nedungadi is an Assistant Professor of Chemistry at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. He received his BSc. and MSc. degrees in chemistry from Bangalore University, India, and his MS degree in organic chemistry from the University of Colorado Boulder. He obtained his Ph.D. in chemical education from the University of Northern Colorado, and after a postdoctoral position with the ACS Exams Institute at the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee he started his current faculty position. He teaches both lecture classes and laboratory classes in organic chemistry. He also conducts chemical education research focused on the development of assessment tools to detect student difficulties with fundamental organic chemistry concepts. Additionally, he serves as the Associate Director of Research for the ACS Exams Institute where he works on assessment research, the development of nationally normed chemistry exams, and the development of instructional tools to support student preparation for these exams.



Ami Johanson is an Associate Professor of Chemistry at Aurora University, a Hispanic-Serving institution where she teaches organic chemistry and biochemistry. Her research and interests focus on increasing participation in STEM disciplines from underrepresented groups. In her teaching, she aims to use high-impact teaching practices, such as Course-based Undergraduate Research Experiences, to increase persistence and excitement in chemistry. Her participation in the Active Learning in Organic Chemistry workshop inspired her to implement innovative new teaching techniques in her courses. As an OrganicER's fellow she is excited to co-lead the faculty learning circle exploring innovative lab practices in organic chemistry.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- 79th Northwest Regional Meeting, Boise, ID, Jun 28–Jul 1, 2026
- 28th International Conference on Chemistry Education – 17th European Conference on Research in Chemical Education, Erzurum, Türkiye, Jul 13–17, 2026
- Gen AI In Chemistry Education, Liverpool, UK, Jul 21, 2026
- Methods in Chemistry Education Research (MICER), Madison, WI, Jul 24–26, 2026
- Biennial Conference on Chemical Education, Madison, WI, Jul 26–30, 2026
- ACS Fall 2026, Chicago, IL & Digital, Aug 23–27, 2026
- 2026 Midwest Regional Meeting, Manhattan, KS, Oct 25–27, 2026
- 2026 Southeastern Regional Meeting, Memphis, TN, Nov 4–7, 2026
- Central Regional Meeting, Covington, KY, Nov 14–17, 2026
- Chemistry Education Research and Practice, Gordon Research Conference, Lewiston, ME, Jun 27–Jul 2, 2027

THIS ISSUE'S CONTRIBUTORS

We extend our sincere thanks to all of the contributors who shared their time and expertise in this issue. Your willingness to contribute helps strengthen our community and makes this newsletter possible.



Alexey Leontyev



Catherine Lugo



Cathy Welder



Dee Jacobs



Jennifer Chaytor



Jennifer Muzyka



Justin Houseknecht



Vince Maloney

CONTRIBUTE TO A FUTURE ISSUE

Have a teaching idea, classroom activity, resource, research update, or conference experience to share? We invite members of the OrganicERs community to contribute to future newsletter issues.

The newsletter is a space to share ideas, celebrate accomplishments, and learn from one another. We welcome submissions of all lengths and formats and look forward to hearing from you! Please share ideas with Jonathan Dannatt by reaching out via email (jdannatt@udallas.edu).