



American Chemical Society  
Susquehanna Valley Section

## OCTOBER 2025 NEWSLETTER

---

### MONTHLY DINNER MEETING:

The four hundred and eighty-first meeting of the Susquehanna Valley Section of the American Chemical Society will be the Wilkes University [Henry J. and Linda C. Pownall Lecture](#) held on Wednesday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2025, at 7:00pm in Stark Learning Center 105. The speaker will be Professor Jessica Larsen of the Department of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering at Clemson University in Clemson, South Carolina. The presentation will be preceded by a cocktail hour (4:30-5:30 PM) and dinner (5:30-6:45 PM) at Bank and Vine, 268 S Main St, Wilkes-Barre. Please RSVP for dinner to Gail Kozich ([gail.kozich@wilkes.edu](mailto:gail.kozich@wilkes.edu)) or 570.408.4715 by Monday, October 13<sup>th</sup>.

### *Leveraging Chemistry to Overcome Biologic Barriers in Neurologic Disease Treatment*

Jessica Larsen, Ph.D.  
Clemson University

**ABSTRACT:** According to the World Health Organization, neurologic disorders account for the largest global burden through both early mortality and loss of independent life due to disability. Although there is a clear need for treatments that can enter the brain, there are a very limited number of medications available on the market. A major contributor to this fact is the presence of the blood-brain barrier (BBB), which prevents passage of more than 98% of small molecule therapeutics from the blood into the brain tissue. The Larsen Lab works on polymeric biomaterials-based approaches to bypass and transport payloads through the BBB and the blood-nerve barrier. By understanding the pathophysiology of each disease, polymeric nanoparticles can be chemically tailored to respond specifically to disease-based stimuli and promote natural healing



processes in the brain. In this talk, Professor Larsen will highlight some of her ongoing projects in this space, specifically focusing on the following: 1. enzyme-responsive polymersomes that can promote self-healing autophagic processes and enzyme restoration in neuropathic lysosomal storage disease model, GM1 gangliosidosis. 2. pH-responsive polymersomes as delivery vehicles for nerve-regenerative peptides isolated from the G3BP1 protein, demonstrated to promote neurite outgrowth in dorsal root ganglia cultures, with some neuronal specificity. 3. Controlling the protein corona around nanoparticles to promote specific polymer-protein binding and enhance on-target tissue delivery.

**BIOGRAPHY:** Professor Jessica Larsen began her academic career at the University of Virginia, obtaining her B.S. in Chemical Engineering in 2012. She obtained her Ph.D. in Chemical Engineering from Auburn University where she was able to perform research under Drs. Mark Byrne in Chemical Engineering and Doug Martin in the College of Veterinary Medicine. Her research focuses on polymer-based nanotechnology to enable treatment of neurologic conditions, delivering drugs across the blood-brain and blood-nerve barriers. Professor Larsen leads a research team of 25 students and staff in these endeavors. In her undergraduate mentoring efforts, she has received the Phil and Mary Bradley Award for Mentoring in Creative Inquiry. She was also selected as the 2021 Outstanding Faculty Woman at Clemson University. She received the NSF CAREER Award in the Spring of 2021, the Governor’s Young Scientist Award for Excellence in Scientific Research in 2022 and has been an invited speaker at the American Institute of Chemical Engineers and the World Biomaterials Congress. Most recently she was recognized as a 2025 NIH Director’s New Innovator. Her work has been funded by the NSF, NIH, and multiple disease-specific foundations.

**DINNER:** The cocktail hour will be held from 4:30-5:30 PM and dinner from 5:30-6:45 PM both at Bank and Vine (268 S Main St, Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701). The cocktail hour will include appetizers and there will be a cash bar. Dinner will include focaccia and butter with a house salad. Entrée choices include a choice of roasted & creamed cauliflower tagliatelle, maple glazed salmon, NY strip steak, and chicken marsala. As a result of the generosity of the Pownall’s, our guests will be provided with dinner at no cost. However, dinner capacity is limited, and reservations will be confirmed on a first-come, first-serve basis. Please RSVP to Gail Kozich, 570.408.4715 or [gail.kozich@wilkes.edu](mailto:gail.kozich@wilkes.edu), noting your entrée choice by Monday, October 13th.

### DIRECTIONS TO WILKES UNIVERSITY:

GPS: Wilkes University parking can be accessed at 141 S. Main St, Wilkes-Barre, PA 18702.

Detailed parking information can be found [here](#). Detailed directions can be found [here](#).

See map with restaurant, parking, and lecture locations to the right.



## LOCAL STEM COMPETITIONS:



A list of all STEM competitions for high school students is posted on our [website](#). If you have any questions about the contests or have suggestions for others, please contact the person indicated on the site. Questions may also be directed to the [Local Section Councilor](#).

---

---

## 2025 UPCOMING LOCAL SECTION MEETINGS:

October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2025 @ Wilkes University

November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2025 @ Lycoming College

January 2026 Executive Board Meeting

---

---

## OPEN POSITIONS IN THE LOCAL SECTION:

Do you want to use your talents to help other chemists in the Susquehanna Valley section? Listed below are examples of positions that need to be filled by willing individuals along with websites that give organizing ideas:

- Susquehanna Valley Local Section Chair-Elect  
*This three-year position is the usual office taken on by local chemists who want to begin to become more involved in the local section.*
- WCC ([Woman Chemists Committee](#)) Chair  
*Help attract, retain, develop, promote, and advocate for women to positively impact diversity, equity and inclusion in the Society and the profession.*
- CMA ([Committee on Minority Affairs](#)) Chair  
*Help increase the number & participation of racially & ethnically underrepresented scientists in the Society and its governance.*
- Project SEED ([Summer Experiences for the Economically Disadvantaged](#)) Coordinator  
*Coordinators are responsible for establishing programs, identifying mentors, recruiting students, fundraising, and organizing activities such as field trips.*
- SCC ([Senior Chemists Committee](#)) Chair  
*Help improve communication among senior chemists, increase the number of senior chemists' groups, and the level of their engagement within local sections.*
- CCEW ([Chemists Celebrate Earth Week](#)) Coordinator  
*Help promote the positive role that chemistry plays in protecting our planet.*

If you are interested in learning more about these volunteer activities, please contact the section Councilor (Donald Mencer, [donald.mencer@wilkes.edu](mailto:donald.mencer@wilkes.edu)).

---

---



**Topic: *The Hidden Life of Spices***

This year, National Chemistry Week is celebrated October 19-25 with the theme “The Hidden Life of Spices.”

Learn more about this year’s NCW [here](#).

---

---

**REGIONAL ACS MEETINGS:**



***ACS Middle Atlantic Regional Meeting***

The 54th Middle Atlantic Regional Meeting (MARM 2026) - “[Molecular Milestone: Crafting a Sweet Future Through Chemistry](#)” will be held in Hershey, PA 17 – 19 May 2026.

MARM 2026 will be an in-person event.

---

---

**NATIONAL ACS MEETINGS:**



***Spring 2026 ACS National Meeting***

The Spring 2026 national meeting will be a hybrid event.

The meeting will be held 22 – 26 March 2026, and the in-person event will take place in Atlanta, Georgia.

Abstract submission ends September 29, 2025!  
See the [website](#) for more information.

---

---

**JOIN THE ACS:**

If you know of anyone who would benefit from being a member of the American Chemical Society, please direct them to the membership website: <https://www.acs.org/membership.html>

---

---

**ACS LEGISLATIVE ACTION NETWORK:**

Legislation that may impact the chemical enterprise comes before Congress on a regular basis, and the ACS is committed to keeping its members informed and encouraging them to weigh in on high-priority issues. To see the position of the ACS on many legislative issues visit the ACS LAN website: <https://www.acs.org/content/acs/en/policy.html> To find out how to become more active in ACS advocacy activities, see the [advocacy website](#).

Joining the ACS' grassroots legislative advocacy network, ACT4CHEMISTRY will allow you to stay up to date on policy issues and contact legislators on behalf of chemistry and chemists, go to their website, follow the [Act4Chemistry X](#) account, or email [advocacy@acs.org](mailto:advocacy@acs.org).

*Act4Chemistry Advocacy Issues. To take action go to the website*  
<https://www.acs.org/policy/memberadvocacy.html>

---

Susquehanna Valley Section Web Page: [svs-acis.org](http://svs-acis.org). Please send any comments about the monthly newsletter to your Local Section Secretary, Sydney Bachman, [sydney.bachman@stellantsystems.com](mailto:sydney.bachman@stellantsystems.com)