

2026 MARYLAND LOCAL SECTION

STUDENT AWARDS

Congratulations to all nominated college and university students in chemistry and related fields.

48th Anniversary — 2026 Student Awards Ceremony

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Sara Narayan, Ph.D., a former Professor of Chemistry at Stevenson University is pleased to announce the 48th anniversary of the Student Awards Ceremony (SAC), taking place on Sunday, April 19, from 11:30 AM to 2:00 PM at the Knott Science Center Lounge, Notre Dame University of Maryland. The event will be hosted by Dr. Jason Labonte, Assistant Professor of Chemistry at NDM. As chair of the Student Awards Committee, Dr. Narayan is honored to oversee this distinguished event.

Join us as we recognize and celebrate the achievements of outstanding students in chemistry with an afternoon of inspiring speeches, awards presentations, and a formal lunch. This ceremony serves to highlight the dedication and hard work of talented chemistry students. We eagerly anticipate your presence on this special occasion.

History of the Student Awards Committee (SAC) Origins of the Student Awards Program

The Student Awards Program began in March 1978, founded by Professor Carl Minier at Essex Community College in Baltimore. As a former chair of the American Chemical Society (ACS) Local Section, Minier aimed to honor and encourage exceptional students in chemistry, helping to launch their scientific careers. Since its inception, the program has been held successfully each year in April.

Celebration of Excellence

Each year, the ACS Student Awards honor one exceptional chemistry student from every participating college or university within the Maryland Section. Traditionally, the awards ceremony takes place during the spring meeting of the Maryland Local Section of the ACS,

typically on Sundays. These awards seek to motivate students who demonstrate significant interest and aptitude in chemistry to pursue further achievements.

The ceremony is widely attended, drawing students, families, educators, and mentors together to celebrate remarkable talent. Each year, about 20-23 students are selected by the committee and faculty members, with one Outstanding Chemistry Student chosen per institution. Awardees receive a Certificate of Outstanding Achievement in Chemistry, ACS souvenirs (sent separately), and a copy of the announcement featuring awardee photographs and a message from the chair and coordinator. A formal lunch precedes the ceremony, providing opportunities for networking.

Noteworthy Speakers

This year's ceremony will feature Dr. Sandra Kay Young, who previously led the US Army Basic and Applied Research office in Japan. In that capacity, she collaborated with scientists, engineers, and students throughout Asia, Southeast Asia, and Oceania, fostering research partnerships and supporting projects. With extensive experience in STEM education, Dr. Young also served as an advisor at the Pentagon and managed the engineering and scientific exchange program for the US Army. She has been a Fellow of the American Chemical Society since 2016, taught undergraduate chemistry for 15 years, and twice chaired the Maryland section. Dr. Young is passionate about lifelong learning, mentoring, and adapting to change for career growth.

Title of Dr. Young's Presentation: "Career Opportunities for Young Scientists Around the World"

In short, the Student Awards Committee (SAC) has a strong tradition of recognizing and nurturing outstanding chemistry students. Through annual ceremonies and ongoing collaborations, SAC not only celebrates academic excellence but also inspires future generations of scientists. Professor Carl Minier's legacy continues each year, profoundly impacting many promising chemists' lives.