THE
CAPITAL CHEMIST

ACS | Chemical Society of Washington Local Section

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CSW Dinner Meeting – Friday, November 6, 2026, featuring Dr. Jiaqi Dai

Meeting Logistics

Date: Friday, November 6, 2026
Time: 6:00 p.m. Check-in / Social Hour
6:30 p.m. Dinner
7:00 p.m. Speaker Presentation

Location: ACS Headquarters - Marvel Hall
1155 16th Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036

Menu:
Meal will be catered by St. Germain and will feature Mongolian-style beef; Szechuan tofu with green beans and sauteed mushrooms (vegan); scallion fried rice (vegetarian); mixed green salad with sesame ginger dressing; chocolate-dipped fortune cookies, mini fruit tarts, and sugar cookies. Beverages are included.

Cost: $24 (1/2 price for students and high school teachers)

An RSVP is required for dinner so we can plan appropriate seating and meals. Deadline to register is 3pm on November 3rd.

Registration is required if you wish to participate virtually via Zoom:
https://tinyurl.com/38arctfm

RSVP by 3pm ET Tuesday, November 3, to csw@acs.org. Please provide the names in your party as well as your contact information when you RSVP. The public is invited to attend. You may attend the talk only at no charge, but reservations are appreciated. If you need any further information or would like to make a reservation, please contact the CSW office by email at csw@acs.org.

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November 2026

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Speaker Bio: Dr. Jiaqi Dai, Co-Founder and Chief Science Office, InventWood



Dr. Jiaqi Dai is Co-Founder and Chief Science Officer of InventWood, a materials innovation company developing high-performance, sustainable materials for a wide range of industrial and commercial applications. He earned his Ph.D. in Materials Science and Engineering from the University of Maryland, College Park in 2018, and his research focuses on materials innovations for energy efficiency applications. With over 10 years in materials R&D and IP strategy, he has co-led more than $25M in climate tech research and commercialization. He is recognized among the World's Top 2% of Scientists (2020-2024) and is a member of the University of Maryland's Early Career Distinguished Alumni Society. Outside of work, he is a graphic designer who creates scientific visualizations and cover art for scientific journals.

Abstract: "Stronger than Steel: Superwood for a Sustainable Built Environment"

The building and construction sector generates nearly 50% of global carbon emissions, driven primarily by concrete and steel. Superwood, developed and manufactured by InventWood, offers a scalable, bio-based alternative without performance trade-offs. The process relies on in-situ molecular modification of lignin, followed by precision-controlled super densification that collapses the internal vessel structure and forms new hydrogen bonds between aligned nanocellulose fibers. This densifies the material 3-4x, removing natural defects and unlocking cellulose's inherent strength. The result is a material stronger than steel at a fraction of the weight, with outstanding fire rating, hardness, and resistance to moisture, termites, and fungi. Projected to be a net carbon sink at scale, Superwood can displace carbon-intensive materials in the built environment, starting with facade panels.

Parking: Parking is available in nearby commercial parking garages. Please be aware that garage closing times vary. Parking is also available on the street after 6:30 pm, but be aware that most parking meters are in effect until 10:00 pm and may be limited to 2 hours. You should check the individual meters for details and payment methods as some are no longer coin-operated.

Metro: Blue/Orange/Silver Line: McPherson Square or Farragut West. Red Line: Farragut North

Volunteer Opportunity: Speak at STEM event on March 12, 2027, in Arlington, Virginia

Arlington Traditional School is hosting STEM Day 2027 for pre-K - 5th grade students on March 12, 2027.

We're looking for enthusiastic speakers to share knowledge of science (chemistry), technology, engineering, and math with our students. If you love to teach others and spread excitement about your topic, we'd be thrilled to host you at STEM Day 2027. Please contact Janette Mason at janette.mason@apsva.us if you are interested in participating.

Reminder: 2026 CSW Elections

The Chemical Society of Washington will conduct its election with electronic ballots. CSW members should have received an email before October 15th from vote-now.com if an email address is on file, and a paper ballot by mail if CSW does not have an email address on file. As in previous elections, voting will close at 11:59 p.m. on November 15th. The candidates currently confirmed for the ballot are provided below.

President-Elect
Aditya Savara

Treasurer
Bree Taylor

Councilor/Alternate Councilor
Raychelle Burks
Andrei Gakh
Neal Golovin
Ravinder Paul Lall
Wilton Virgo
Alexander Zestos

Manager-At-Large
Steven Cummings
Jason Schaff

Navigating STEM as a Minority Professional

The Chemical Society of Washington's Committee on Minority Affairs (CMA) invites you to join us for Career Conversations: Navigating STEM as a Minority Professional!

This virtual panel discussion will bring together minority professionals from across STEM to share their career journeys, challenges, lessons learned, and insights on navigating professional spaces.

Whether you're a student, early-career professional, or established in your field, this discussion offers an opportunity to hear different perspectives, gain practical career advice, and connect with others in the STEM community.

Date: Thursday, November 5, 2026
Time: 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. ET
Location: Virtual via Zoom (Register here: https://lnkd.in/e2kJ86t6)

We welcome everyone to join the conversation!



Stay tuned for our panelist announcements and learn more about the professionals who will be joining us.

CSW is Seeking Communications Committee Chair(s) – a CSW Leadership Opportunity!

The CSW is soliciting interested members to serve as the Chair or co-Chairs of the CSW Communications Committee. The Chair(s) manage CSW's digital presence through posting of content on the *Capital Chemist* website (WordPress platform), and CSW's X, LinkedIn, and Instagram accounts. The Chair(s) are also responsible for sending the newsletter email every month to the CSW membership. Chairs will also manage other volunteers they recruit to assist, as well as work with our key CSW contractors (our Web Developer who produces the newsletter and manages the website backend, and our Executive Assistant who is the collection point for events and posts, and will create drafts for the Chair(s) to review). The CSW Board will also assist in soliciting additional volunteers to support committee activities as needed. Communications Committee leaders interact with all aspects of CSW's many programs and will gain exposure across the Society.

Contact CSW at csw@acs.org by December 1, 2026 for more information or to express interest.

Volunteer Opportunity: Help Plan MARM 2028

The Chemical Society of Washington has been selected as the host of the 2028 Mid-Atlantic Regional Meeting (MARM) of the ACS. An organizing committee has been established, and preparations are already underway. The meeting will be held right in the heart of Washington, DC, at historic Howard University June 8 – 10, 2028. Howard was selected for its prime location, favorable accommodations, and historic nature as one of the first HBCUs established in the United States after the Civil War by General Oliver Otis Howard. While we plan to include many of the symposia you are used to from other regional and national ACS meetings, we will also work to include symposia geared towards government labs and policy making given our unique location. We hope you can make this meeting to share and hear about great chemistry happening in the Mid-Atlantic area, but even more so we hope you can assist in our preparations!

So far, the organizing committee is composed of the following volunteers: Prof. Wes Farrell of the US Naval Academy is the General Chair, Prof. Lauren Ragle of George Washington University and Prof. Jacqueline Smith of Howard University are the Co-Program Chairs, Dr. Alessandra Zimmerman of the American Association for the Advancement of Sciences is the Communications Chair, former CSW President Dr. Jason Schaff is the Treasurer, Prof. Alex Zestos of American University is the Outreach and Volunteering Chair, and our CSW Past President Dr. Allison Aldridge is the Fundraising Chair. Additionally, Prof. Steven Cummings of Howard University is hard at work serving as a liaison between the committee and Howard University officials.

The local organizing committee is currently seeking to fill additional roles which require different levels of commitment. Furthermore, we hope to have volunteers to organize and preside over symposia, and make suggestions for plenary speakers. We encourage you to share your thoughts or volunteer using our Google survey: https://tinyurl.com/yjtcvaxr.

Upcoming Tour Opportunity on November 13th

The AIChE National Capital Section cordially invites interested CSW members to join us for a tour of George Mason University's Central Heating and Cooling Plant at the Fairfax Campus.

Location:
10403 Rivanna River Way, Fairfax, Virginia 22030
(at the northeast corner of Shenandoah River Lane and Patriot Circle)

Date & Time:
9 a.m. Friday, November 13 (estimated duration 1 hour)

Please RSVP to slawski_brian@yahoo.com, and you'll receive a confirmation. There is no cost for the tour, beyond Mason's parking fees (e.g., at nearby Shenandoah Parking Deck, $5 for 1 hour, $9 for 2 hours). We'll have to cap the attendance at 20 people.

Mason's CHCP provides chilled water, high-temperature water, and auxiliary diesel storage for educational, research, and other needs of the Fairfax campus. Plant manager Rod Billones will give us an inside look at how this facility meets constant demand from the ever-expanding university.

Learn more at https://tinyurl.com/mthy4uew

CSW Luncheon Celebrating 50-, 60-, and 70-year members on December 5th

Date: Saturday, December 5, 2026
11:30 a.m. Check-in
12:00pm - 2:00p.m. Lunch

Please RSVP by noon on Wednesday, December 2, 2026 to csw@acs.org. Please provide the name(s) in your party with your response. Space is limited and will be taken on a first come basis.

Location: Wildfire – Tysons Corner
2001 International Dr, McLean, VA 22102
https://www.wildfirerestaurant.com/tysons

Cost: $0.00 Honorees with one guest (by invitation only)
$40.00 Members / Nonmembers
$20.00 Students / High School Teachers

View the flyer for more details: https://tinyurl.com/4p9xsfp2

View the list of Honorees: https://tinyurl.com/2xj6ex4a

From Chemistry to Community: CMA Gives Back

CMA came together at the Ronald McDonald House to prepare and serve meals for families staying close to their loved ones receiving medical care. Through teamwork, compassion, and a little time in the kitchen, we made meals that matter and helped make a difficult time a little easier for families.













Chemistry Olympiad: Coming Soon

If you have students interested in the US National Chemistry Olympiad next spring, the registration should open around November. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please reach out to Lauren Ragle (lragle@gwu.edu). For more information about the US National Chemistry Olympiad, please visit https://www.acs.org/education/olympiad.html.

On the USNCO website, you will note that there are several useful tabs across the top of the page. If you would like to encourage students as a mentor, please learn more information about being a mentor at https://www.acs.org/education/olympiad/volunteer/mentors.html. The role and responsibilities will start in December. Lauren is happy ot connect with new potential mentors to discuss the role and responsibilities to our wonderful high school students.

We also have coaches for our students. Current and past coaches have recorded useful videos for our students who need to study for the exam. You can find these tutorials at https://www.acs.org/education/olympiad/prepare-for-exams/coaching-program.html.

If you are interested in participating as a student or encouraging a student to participate, your school does not need to have a Chemistry Club. At Chemical Society of Washington, we host the local exam for any students who are home schooled or do not have a host teacher at the national ACS headquarters building in DC. Learn more about how to apply when the application opens at https://www.acs.org/education/olympiad/participate.html.

The exam is very rigorous. I know many students enjoy learning new information. Even if you do not participate, the resources are free from ACS and you can share with any high school (and college) students you mentor or happen to otherwise be connected with.

The local exam will take place across our local section with any interested students able to participate. The national exam will take place at Montgomery College in April. We can only send 17 students (maximum 2 per school) to the national exam. More information will follow for the students who qualify.

Accepting Nominations for the 2026 Hillebrand Prize: Recognizing original contributions to the science of chemistry by a member or members of the Chemical Society of Washington (CSW)



William Francis Hillebrand
December 12, 1853 – February 7, 1925

American Chemist
ACS President 1906

Nominations are being accepted for the 2026 Hillebrand Prize Award.

Nominations are invited for the 2026 Hillebrand Prize, awarded annually for original contributions to the science of chemistry by a member or members of the Chemical Society of Washington (CSW), the local section of the American Chemical Society. The Hillebrand Prize is the most prestigious honor given each year by CSW and is recognized nationally as a mark of significant accomplishment in chemistry. The Hillebrand Prize originated in 1924 and is named for Dr. William F. Hillebrand (1853- 1925), an internationally-recognized pioneer in analytical chemistry and one of Washington's most distinguished early chemists.

The prize carries an honorarium of $2000. Many previous Hillebrand Prize recipients have won numerous other national and international awards, including three who have received the Nobel Prize.

View the list of past award winners: https://capitalchemist.org/2018/06/hillebrand-prize-recipients-by-year/

The nominating package should contain the following:

Nominating Letter – limited to 1000 words

The letter should focus broadly on the chemical accomplishments of the nominee, rather than their bio, leaving the finer points to those submitting seconding letters. Biographic details (degrees, positions held, major activities, etc.) will be given in the nominee's CV. The letter should begin with the major theme(s) in the nominee's research career with perhaps a summary of how these evolved over the years to create breakthroughs or push the field in a new or very productive direction.

Describing the nominee's major contribution(s) is extremely important and should be the bulk of the letter.

There is no preference or restriction for the specific area of contribution so long as it represents a significant accomplishment in chemistry. Anything is fair game: synthetic or analytical, experimental or theoretical, bio- or inorganic, etc. This section might detail such things as: the major techniques used in their research and how these were applied to a specific area to bring about significant results not previously achievable; if their research resulted in the development of a new experimental/instrumental technique or use of an existing technique in an innovative new way; how techniques the nominee developed became standard in that area; the impact the nominee's work had on influencing other areas of research; development of new reagents, catalysts or reaction conditions; development of a new computational method or theoretical approach; etc. The nominator should provide evidence in support of these statements. This could include information about the number of citations, impact factors of certain articles (or aggregate numbers), especially influential articles/book chapters, important invited talks, previous awards by other societies, patents, funding, important leadership positions, etc. Mentioning an extremely productive collaboration is possible so long as the role/contributions of the nominee are clear. The award is not given for mentoring students (as a specific criteria) but nominators often mention if this has occurred, especially if these students have gone on to significant positions of their own.

Two Seconding Letters – limited to 500 words each

It is helpful if these be from established experts in the nominee's field, and best if they are from experts at institutions other than the nominee's unless a notable expert in the nominee's area is also from the nominee's institution.

Curriculum Vitae – the candidate must be a member of CSW

The CV should strongly emphasize individual academic backgrounds, appointments, publications, presentations, and patents.

List of Publications

This is critical in determining the specific scientific contribution of the nominee or team.

Proposed Citation – limited to 25 words

This is a brief statement that should be understood by chemists in almost any area. It should avoid highly specialized language but still give the reader the area of accomplishment and why this is a significant accomplishment in chemistry. In some ways it is a one or two sentence abstract of the first paragraph of the nominating letter. Since this is only 25 words, you may simply want to provide 1 or 2 examples of previous awardees.

We strongly recommend that the nominator collect all materials and forward in one email, preferably as PDF files(s), to csw@acs.org. Nominations will be active for three years.

If you would like to verify the eligibility of an individual as a nominee or nominator, please contact the CSW Administrator at csw@acs.org. All materials must be received by November 15, 2026. The Prize will be presented at a CSW dinner meeting in Spring 2027, or on a date mutually agreeable.

If you have any questions about the award or the procedure for nominating someone for the award, please contact our office at csw@acs.org.

Accepting Nominations for the 2026 Charles L. Gordon Award: Recognizing Excellence in Service

Named after Charles Gordon for his years of service as managing editor of the *Capital Chemist*, the Charles L. Gordon Memorial Award is given in recognition of exemplary service by a CSW member to the profession of chemistry, to the science of chemistry, and/or to the Chemical Society of Washington. Nominations are invited for this award, consisting of a plaque that will be presented at a CSW dinner meeting to be announced in 2027. A written nomination should include a description of the accomplishments on which the nomination is based. Additional documentation that includes seconding letters and the nominee's CV are welcome.

The nomination should be submitted electronically to csw@acs.org. Please contact CSW (csw@acs.org), if you have any questions.

Accepting Nominations for the 2026 Leo Schubert Award: Recognizing Excellence in Chemistry Teachers

The Chemical Society of Washington (CSW) is pleased to announce the call for nominations for the Leo Schubert Memorial Award to recognize an outstanding high school chemistry teacher in the Washington, D.C. area. The award was established in 1979 to honor Dr. Leo Schubert (1916-1978), a chemistry professor at American University who devoted much of his career to developing programs for high school teachers and students. The Schubert award consists of a $500 honorarium and a certificate, which will be presented at a CSW dinner meeting to be announced in 2027.

Nominations for the award must be comprehensive in describing the nominee's accomplishments in areas such as innovation in teaching, writing curricula, outside teaching, papers published, involvement in science fairs, and postgraduate study. The application may also include supporting letters, as well as any supporting documents that concisely illuminate the nominee's accomplishments.

To be eligible for the CSW Schubert award, the nominee must currently teach chemistry at a secondary school in the geographic region of the Chemical Society of Washington, which includes metropolitan

Washington, D.C. and the neighboring counties in Maryland (Montgomery, Prince George's, Charles, Calvert and St. Mary's Counties) and Virginia (Arlington, Fairfax and Loudoun Counties). The region of CSW also includes six counties on the Eastern Shore of Maryland: Caroline, Talbot, Dorchester, Wicomico, Worcester, and Somerset.

The CSW Schubert Award nomination form is available via our website: https://tinyurl.com/29k2vvh4

Alternatively, a pdf version of the nomination form can be obtained by an email request to csw@acs.org. Completed nomination forms can be sent directly to csw@acs.org. Please contact csw@acs.org if you have any questions.

Applications are now being accepted: Student Travel Award - ACS Spring 2027 Meeting

The ACS Spring 2027 Meeting will be held in New Orleans, Louisiana, on March 21-25, 2026.

The Chemical Society of Washington is pleased to announce a student travel award to defray travel and/or registration costs to the Spring 2027 National ACS meeting. Eligible expenses include meeting registration, travel expenses, airfare and lodging. Applicants should submit the following by Midnight December 1, 2026 to CSW (email: CSW@acs.org):

- A cover letter stating how and why attending this ACS meeting will promote his/her career;
- The applicant's CV;
- A letter of recommendation from the student's mentor explaining why the student deserves the award and how this will help his/her professional development;
- An accepted abstract with proof of acceptance.

Within three weeks of returning from the ACS meeting, the awardees should submit receipts for any or all of the eligible expenses described above, after which the Treasurer of the Chemical Society of Washington will issue a check to each of the awardees.

The award is open to students who are graduate and undergraduate students in the jurisdiction of the Chemical Society of Washington. The award is not intended for post-doctoral fellows. There will be a maximum of four awards available. Each award will be for up to $1,000 of eligible expenses based on the review of the above materials.

After returning from the conference, awardees will be asked to draft a short (1-page) summary of their experiences for posting to the Capital Chemist website and to present their posters, if applicable, at one of the upcoming CSW dinner meetings.

ACS Division of Analytical Chemistry Younger Chemists Conference Travel Grant

The ACS Division of Analytical Chemistry is offering travel awards for Younger Chemists (under age 40) to travel to a meeting to present the results of their research. Individuals who may not have previously

been able to participate in professional meetings are particularly encouraged to apply. Applications are due Nov 1st for winter and spring meetings and May 1st for summer and fall meetings. More information is available at https://acsanalytical.org/award/younger-chemists-conference-travel-grants/. The application forms will be available when the application period is open.

Committee on Minority Affairs Meeting Schedule

The Committee on Minority Affairs (CMA) had a great start with our first meeting in February! We're excited to announce that we'll now be hosting monthly meetings via Zoom and would love for you to join us.

Upcoming Dates

- November 5, 2026
- December 3, 2026

Meeting Details
Topic: CSW CMA Committee Meeting
Time: 7:00 PM

Join via Zoom
Meeting ID: 958 2100 7951
Passcode: cswcma

The Capital Chemist

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The **Chemical Society of Washington** (**CSW**) is the local ACS Chapter for the Washington, DC area and serves approximately 3,500 members.

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CSW Calendar of Events

- November 5: CMA Meeting
- November 5: CMA Career Conversations event
- November 6: CSW Dinner Meeting
- November 13: Tour of GMU's Central Heating and Cooling Plant
- November 15: Voting ends for CSW Election
- November 18: CSW Board Meeting
- December 1: Deadline to apply for CSW Travel Award
- December 1: Deadline to express interest in CSW Communications Chair position
- December 3: CMA Meeting
- December 5: 50-, 60-, 70-year Member Luncheon
- March 12, 2027: STEM Day @ Arlington Traditional School

The following CSW members contributed content to this month's newsletter: Wesley Farrell, Carissa Hunter, Stephanie Moffitt, Lee Nagao, Lauren Ragle, Aditya Savara, Jason Schaff, and Nevart Tahmazian.