

## Congratulations to our 2013 Chemistry staff award recipients!

by Jill Bagwe

In 2010, the Department of Chemistry established annual staff recognition awards in three categories: Outstanding Administrative Support; an award in the areas of Teaching, Research or Technical Support; and a Chemistry Booster award. In November 2013, the department put a call out for nominations and several were received and the following staff members were selected to receive an award. In acknowledgment of their award, our recipients shall receive a framed certificate, an original, framed art piece of a pewter inuksuk plus they will all be treated to a celebratory dinner in early March.

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For the category of 2013 Outstanding Administrative Support, the recipients were nominated as a team simply because there was no way to be able to parse out the excellence between the two of them and that is our IT team of **Shelley Garrett** and **Tyler Peterson**. This award is intended to recognize staff who consistently provide outstanding administrative service to the Department of Chemistry with a focus on providing outstanding service, fostering innovation, creating a positive influence in the workplace and demonstrating leadership qualities.



When Shelley Garrett joined the department of chemistry in March of 2009, it was quickly obvious that she possessed natural leadership qualities coupled with a strong customer service model. These traits enabled her to be the natural successor for the Lead IT Administrator when the position was vacated in July 2011. For the past five years, Shelley has been indefatigable in providing on-call, 24/7 service to our department. One of her nominators relayed an incident in which he had a catastrophic hard drive crash on his computer very late on a Saturday night and so he bought a replacement computer on the Sunday. Shelley came in on the Sunday night and set up his new computer so that he could give his lecture presentation the next day.

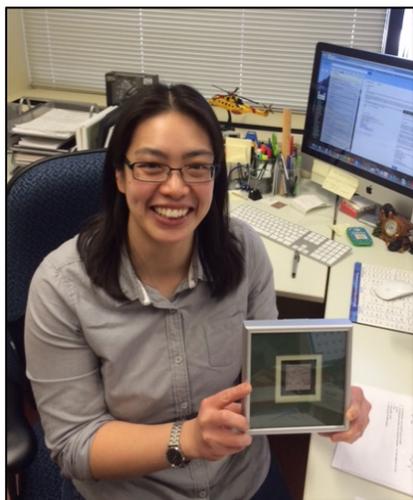
Tyler Peterson was hired into the Department of Chemistry in late August 2011 from the "Genius Team" of the Apple Store. During his time at Apple, he honed his skill set of providing effective technical support in a tight turnaround time and with a high level of customer satisfaction. That training dovetailed well in his role as Computer Analyst in the department with phenomenal results. If an immediate resolution is not found, Tyler is known to pursue solutions and follow up on them with the user. For example, one of his nominators was concerned on how he might be able to access resources on campus (i.e. Google or Gmail) while he was in China and Tyler not only found a workaround solution in using a Virtual Private Network, he set it up for that colleague too!

As a team, Shelley and Tyler lead the much-needed upgrades for our more antiquated computer systems. Most notably, the two successfully transitioned the CHEM 211 practicum off of *Foxbase* and the 30+ yr old Macs needed to run it, and on to modern computers using the programs of *Moodle* and *Google Docs*, thereby bringing this practicum into the 21<sup>st</sup> century! This project took the better part of a year to complete and several trials over run in the summer, but when it ran in the Fall 2013, it went off without a hitch.

For any of us who have needed to call upon, it is self-evident why both Shelley and Tyler are the worthy recipients for this year. Tyler is the day-to-day maintenance of our computers and Shelley is the long-term project planner for the department and together, they are the “ying and yang” of the IT, but they are much more than that. In reading their nomination package, words such as “patient, capable, prompt, friendly, indispensable” were used to describe the Shelley-Tyler team over and over again. For the past two and a half years, this remarkable duo have supported Chemistry’s IT needs, but as many of you are aware, in late August 2013, all IT positions in the Faculty of Science transitioned over to the University of Alberta’s, ‘Information Services and Technology unit and as such, they are no longer eligible for this award after this year. Their nominators realized this fact and felt it was apropos to give them this award now in recognition of their many loyal contributions to Chemistry. We couldn’t agree more and wish them all the best in their new roles.

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The Outstanding Teaching Support Award is to recognize staff who consistently make a positive contribution to the teaching (and research) success of the Department of Chemistry and as with the administrative award, includes providing outstanding service, fostering innovation, creating a positive influence in the workplace, and demonstrating leadership qualities. For 2013, that recipient is **Hayley Wan**.



Hayley Wan came to Canada for a PDF appointment with Fred West, after the completion of her PhD in Organic Chemistry in 2003 at Durham University in the UK. After her appointment with West and brief appointment in the Lowary lab, she went on to a position at NINT as a Technical Officer for a year. She returned to the U of A for a brief period as a Research Associate in the Food Science department before returning back in Chemistry in January 2009 in her current role as Organic Laboratory Coordinator. In her capacity as a lab coordinator, her nominators note “she consistently makes positive contribution to the teaching mission of the department and does so with a near Zen-like personality that immediately puts those around her at ease and which creates an exceptional working and training environment.”

Hayley is responsible for the support of Chemistry 164, 26X, and 36X, as well as manages and teaches the safety orientation seminars for our new staff and students. She is known to dedicate a great deal of time to streamlining experiments and work towards improving the teaching and learning environment for her TAs and their students and her efforts have not gone unnoticed. One of her former Teaching Assistant relayed the following observation of Hayley: “Dr Wan is an individual who cares about what she delivers and for the individuals her charge. She genuinely cares about her TAs, staff and students and because of this, she is able to deliver a high quality of work.”

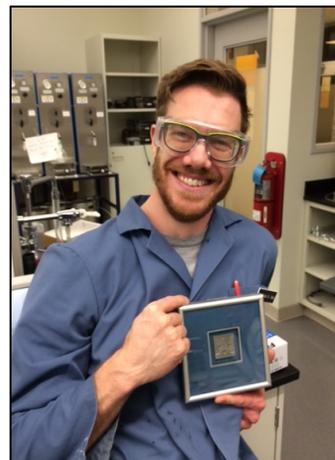
In addition to providing an indispensable service to both the department's organic chemistry teaching mission and safety training, Hayley's nominators emphasized that 2013 was the completion of a capstone three-year, TLEF-funded, chemical education research project in which she was heavy involved, entitled "*Virtu-O-Chem: Enhancements of Student Learning and Safety in Organic Chemistry with a Virtual Organic Chemistry Laboratory*". This project developed a dozen of on-line tutorials meant to better prepare students and increase their learning experience and student survey results have been extremely positive.

In her nomination package, her nominators stated, "Clearly, Hayley is the right person to move our organic chemistry labs forward with a modernization of the suite of experiments to enhance the student experience; her professionalism, patience, flexibility and extremely hard work should not go unrecognized." The selection committee agreed and it is for these reasons that she is being awarded the 2013 Outstanding Teaching Support Award.

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The recipient of the 2013 Booster Award is **Matthew Kingston**. This award is created to recognize those individuals who contribute to a positive culture within the department, bring the best of themselves to work on a regular basis throughout the year in performing his/her regular job duties and are a good ambassador of the Chemistry department. This individual will provide exceptional service to clients, are innovative and have an enthusiastic approach to work and contribute to a healthy work environment/wellness.

Every day, Matt provides exceptional service to the hundreds of students who take organic chemistry courses and who rely upon his accurate sample preparations for their lab results. He interacts with a large number of graduate and undergraduate students, and has developed a fantastic rapport with them all. As his nominator stated, "It is nice to know that you can go the storeroom window and Matthew will be there to greet you with a smile on his face. His enthusiasm, jokes and fun stories contribute to the storeroom being a positive place to work and visit. " However, Matt is not only being recognized for his friendly, easygoing demeanor, but for his commitment to safety in the workplace as well.



Matt Kingston was hired into the department in October 2008 as the 1<sup>st</sup> floor Chemistry Storeperson after a stint at QSV Biologics. From this previous position, he brought knowledge of laboratory safety to the Storeroom and as such, he assumed the lead role in safety in the Storeroom. With that, it was a natural extension for him to volunteer as Chair of the department's Safety Committee in July 2013 for a two-year period. Since this installment, he has worked closely with the APO and the Faculty Safety Advisor to promote a culture of safety in the department and is working on developing new policies and recommendations on transport of cryogenics, fire safety in the research lab, and use of Tygon tubing in the labs. In addition, he provides excellent ideas towards improving how experiments are run within the undergraduate laboratories. He has a willingness to assist with the labs' operations and works towards creating a better, safer working environment for students, teaching assistants, and staff. Matt truly embodies all of the criteria of this award and therefore, is a very deserving recipient of the 2013 Booster Award.