

2025 Felton Jenkins Hall of Fame Award Application for Kerri Shelton Taylor
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December 1, 2025

To the Selection Committee:

It is my distinct honor to nominate Dr. Kerri Shelton Taylor, Associate Professor of Chemistry at Columbus State University, for the Felton Jenkins Jr. Hall of Fame Faculty Award. Dr. Taylor exemplifies the highest ideals of the University System of Georgia through her deep commitment to teaching excellence, transformational mentorship, and her unparalleled impact on student success across the STEM disciplines.

Across her career at Columbus State University, Dr. Taylor has consistently elevated academic rigor while promoting a culture of belonging, innovation, and intellectual curiosity. Her teaching philosophy—rooted in experiential learning, equitable access, and real-world application—has reshaped how students encounter chemistry, a subject often perceived as intimidating or inaccessible. Through dynamic curricular design, active-learning pedagogies, and industry-aligned experiences, she has made chemistry both *conquerable* and *meaningful* for students from all backgrounds.

One of Dr. Taylor's most significant contributions is the development of CHEM 1715, an innovative seminar that introduces chemistry majors to the landscape of scientific careers through interactive lectures, alumni engagement, field experiences, and foundational professional skill-building. This course has become a model of early academic integration and has demonstrably strengthened student confidence, retention, and long-term STEM persistence. Her use of flipped-classroom strategies, Perusall, Aktiv, and collaborative problem-solving structures in Organic Chemistry I and II has further transformed foundational STEM instruction at CSU.

Dr. Taylor's commitment to inclusive excellence is equally extraordinary. Her recent collaboration with students to design audible chemistry modules for visually impaired learners represents a pioneering, equity-driven contribution to STEM education. She consistently seeks opportunities to ensure that every student, regardless of preparation, identity, or ability can meaningfully access and apply chemical concepts.

Beyond the classroom, Dr. Taylor stands as one of CSU's most impactful student mentors. She has guided more than 40 undergraduate researchers and multiple graduate students, the majority from underrepresented groups in STEM. Under her leadership, students have produced over 50 presentations, secured competitive national fellowships including the ACS Organic Chemistry SURF, earned museum and scientific society awards, collaborated with international researchers, and published in peer-reviewed journals. Her mentees describe her as life-changing, transformative, and the reason they pursued, and believed they could pursue graduate education, medical careers, and professional research paths.

Dr. Taylor's leadership as Tower Day Coordinator has elevated one of CSU's signature academic events into a campus-wide scholarly symposium. Under her direction, participation increased by 77%, formats expanded dramatically—including a 124% increase in poster sessions—and three historically separate conferences were unified into a single, interdisciplinary celebration of research and creative activity. Her vision has transformed Tower Day into a cornerstone of academic life and a powerful platform for student achievement.

Her excellence has been recognized widely through awards such as:

- 2024 Presidential Culture Award
- 2024 Educator of the Year
- 2024 Faculty Teaching Excellence Award
- 2023 Faculty Research and Scholarship Award
- 2023 Governor's Teaching Fellow
- Multiple nominations for the Presidential Awards for Excellence in STEM Mentoring

These honors reflect the esteem she has earned from her students, colleagues, and the broader academic community.

Dr. Taylor embodies the spirit of the Felton Jenkins Jr. Hall of Fame Faculty Award. She is a gifted educator, an innovative scholar, a tireless mentor, and a campus leader whose work has elevated our institution and profoundly shaped the lives of her students. It is with the highest confidence and strongest endorsement that I submit her nomination.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'D' and 'A' followed by a long horizontal line.

Dustin Anderson, Ph.D.
Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs
Columbus State University

EDUCATION

Certificate of Christian Leadership, Highlands College Leadership Institute, Birmingham, AL 2023-2025
Certificate of Digital Photography, Columbus State University, Columbus, GA 2019
Doctor of Philosophy in Chemistry, The University of Akron, Akron, OH 2011-2016
Master of Science in Chemistry, The University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY 2008-2011
Bachelor of Arts in Chemistry, Miami University, Oxford, OH 2004-2008

PROFESSIONAL/RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Tower Day Coordinator, COLUMBUS STATE UNIVERSITY Aug 2023 – present

- Plan and execute with event logistics, facilitating presentations, and helping create a multidisciplinary research conference for students and faculty across all disciplines to present and discuss their research, scholarship, and artistic work.

Associate Professor, Columbus State University Department of Chemistry Aug 2021 – present

Assistant Professor, Columbus State University Department of Chemistry Aug 2016 – July 2021

Co-Instructor, Columbus State University Department of Chemistry – Akron, OH Spring 2016

- Taught weekly lectures on Monday and Wednesday evenings to a class size of ~130 students. Discussed the core topics of Organic Chemistry 2. Conducted 75 min lecture in a PowerPoint presentation in large classroom. Prepared course materials (syllabus, lectures, exams, additional study aids, etc.), held weekly office hours and enforced curricula (arranged and graded course materials).

PUBLICATIONS/PUBLISHED WORKS – HIGHLIGHTED TEXT – UNDERGRADUATE AUTHOR

- Fine, C. Devera, C. Shelton, K.L.**, Dabke, R. "Development and evaluation of audible modules: chemistry learning for visually impaired students." JCE. **2025**, **102**, **1**, 78-83. DOI: 10.1021/acs.jchemed.3c01276
- Shelton, K.L.** "Chemistry in the Museum: Elucidation of 1920s Medical Kits." SECEIJ. **2023**, Winter 24, 16 (1), 36-59.
- Shelton, K.L.**, and Gonzalez, J. "Bringing Chemistry Majors into Real-World Settings to Increase Motivation and Performance." The Chemical Educator, **2023**, 28, 1-6.
- Dabke, R. **Shelton, K.L.** & Melaku, S. Interlocking Toy Building Blocks as Teaching Modules for Undergraduate Organic Chemistry-Based Course for Allied Health Majors. J. Chem. Educ. **2022**, 99 (7), 2726–2732.
- Ramos, S., Shelton, K.L.**, "Chemical Investigations of Pasaquan & Interdisciplinary Paint Restoration." The Chemical Educator. The Chemical Educator, **2022**, 27, 51-57.
- Wilson, J. A., Lin, Z. J., Rodriguez, I., Ta, T., Martz, L., Fico, D.**, Johnson, S. S., Gorden, J. D., **Shelton, K. L.**, King, L. B., "Synthesis, characterization, and antimicrobial activity of lipophilic N,N'-bis-substituted triazolium salts." J. Heterocyclic Chem. **2021**, 1. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jhet.4403>
- Ramos, S., Spires, J.**, Brooks, A., Bush, R., **Shelton, K.L.** "Mystery Science Museum 3000" Columbus, GA, July 2020 – January 2021, The Columbus Museum Curated Exhibit. <https://columbusmuseum.com/exhibitions/current-exhibitions/mystery-science-museum-3000.html>
- Lin, Z., Bies, J.**, Johnson S., Gorden, J.D., **Strickland, J.**, Frazier, M., Meyers, J. M., **Shelton, K.L.** "Synthesis and anti-proliferative activity of N,N'-bis- substituted 1,2,4-triazolium salts against breast cancer and prostate cell lines." Journal of Heterocyclic Chemistry, **2019**, 56 (2), 533-538.

SERVICE CONTRIBUTIONS

Service to University

- American Medical Student Association Faculty Advisor, Fall 2024 – present

- Pre-professional Advisory Committee Chair, Fall 2024 – present
- Student Research and Creative Endeavors (SRACE) Committee Member, Fall 2022 – Spring 2023, 2020 – Spring 2021
- Tower Day Committee Member, 2020 – 2022
- Scholastic Honors Award Committee Chair, Fall 2019 – present
- National Scholarship Committee, STEM liaison and Member, Fall 2019 – present
- Center for Global Engagement Scholarship Committee Member, 2019 – 2023
- Competitive Pre-Med Studies Program Departmental Representative, Fall 2018 – present
- American Chemical Society, Member, Fall 2014 - present

Service to Profession

- Chemistry Section Chair, Georgia Academy of Science, 2025 – 2028
- NSF Reviewer, 2022-present
- ACS MEDI YMCC Mentorship Program, Mentor, American Chemical Society, 2024 – 2025
- L'Oreal Reviewer, 2024-present
- Phenix City Regional Science Fair Judge, Spring 2024– present
- Councilor, Georgia Academy of Science, 2022 – 2025
- Southwestern Georgia LSAMP Alliance Judge, Spring 2023
- Louis Stokes Midwest Regional Center of Excellence NSF LSAMP Judge, Spring 2021
- Louis Stokes Alliance Minority Participation Mentor, 2019 – present
- Co-adviser, Gamma Sigma Epsilon National Chemistry Honor Fraternity, Chi Delta Chapter, 2018 – 2023
- Georgia Academy of Science Member, 2017 – present
- National Chemistry Week Tie Dye, Spring 2017– present

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Core Course Design Institute Teaching Mentor, Columbus State University, Fall 2024 – Fall 2025
- USG Mental Health Training, Columbus State University, August 26, 2024
- 2024 Women in Leadership Mentorship Program, January 2024-June 2024
- Powerful Communication: Powerful Communication Harnessing Effective Techniques to Enhance Your Style, CSU, February 22, 2023
- National Computational Science Institute (NCSI): Computational Chemistry for Chemistry Educators (CCCE) workshop, June 2022

AWARDS AND DISTINCTIONS

- Nomination for 2025 Presidential Awards for Excellence in Science, Mathematics and Engineering Mentoring
- **Nomination for 2024 Felton Jenkins, Jr. Hall of Fame Faculty Awards**, Columbus State University
- Awards: 2024 Presidential Culture Award, Columbus State University, December 2024
- Awarded the 2024 **Teaching Mentor for Core Course Design Institute**, Columbus State University, Fall 2024-Fall 2025
- Awarded the 2024 Faculty Teaching Excellence Award, Columbus State University, 2024
- Awarded the **2024 Educator of the Year Award**, Columbus State University, Spring 2024
- Awarded the 2024 ACS Division of Organic Chemistry Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF)
- Awarded the 2023 Faculty Research and Scholarship Award, Columbus State University, 2023
- Awarded the **2023 Governors Teaching Fellow**, Columbus State University, 2023

Reflective Statement

It is with great humility and gratitude that I accept the nomination for the Felton Jenkins Hall of Fame Award offered by the University System of Georgia (USG). I constantly strive to be an example for female researchers in a male-dominated field. I have promoted a **commitment to teaching and learning** through the effective elements of undergraduate research, active/collaborative engagement, and experiential community-based learning. My goal, as an academic instructor and researcher in the field of medicinal organic chemistry, is to create an environment where the topics and tasks associated with chemistry are viewed as conquerable, rather than challenging. **Undergraduate research** is a hands-on collaborative and effective way of inspiring and helping students see “past” the problem. Regardless of the topic, I desire to create opportunities for students to obtain practical, hands-on experience that reinforces theoretical concepts learned in the classroom. I encourage them to fail, and to fail often. These “failures” in the lab help encourage students to think critically and solve problems independently, without realizing that they are practicing the scientific inquiry. I am especially supportive of skill development. Students gain valuable lab skills and techniques that are directly applicable to their future careers or further studies. My research group fluctuates in size from 3-8 students per year, which is composed of a variety of diversity and majors (chemistry, biology, health science, nursing, etc.). Students who interact within the classroom and research setting are exposed to a large range of professional backgrounds, instructional approaches and research problems. As a chemist, I try to expose all STEM students to the various forms of chemical analysis, including X-ray diffraction (XRD), X-ray fluorescence (XRF), energy-dispersive X-ray spectrometry in the scanning electron microscope (SEM-EDS), Mass Spectrometry (MS), and Elemental Analysis (EA), to name a few. The most notable instrumentation discussions concerning Nuclear Magnetic Resonance imaging (NMR) – often termed MRI in the hospital setting – helps equip students who desire careers in the medical and pharmaceutical fields. It is imperative that we equip the students as future professionals who are knowledgeable and open to collaboration.

Collaboration among colleagues and across institutions allows the students to concretely observe how to work in research teams, fosters collaboration and effective communication skills, all of which are essential for any scientist. Furthermore, students who work closely with me gain insights into the research process as well as professional development. I empower them to gain real-world application in grant submission and conference presentations. Engaging in research helps students see the relevance of chemistry in real-world scenarios, enhancing their motivation and understanding of any topic. My ultimate goal is to build confidence! I want the students to feel autonomy when successfully exploring a problem and conducting research with self-manifested confidence, which is followed by a sense of accomplishment and encourages further exploration in their fields of interest. Research experience can lead to connections with professionals, opening doors for internships, jobs, or graduate programs. Overall, undergraduate research is an enriching experience that prepares future chemists for success in their careers and enhances their understanding of the field.

I have demonstrated an excellence in **student engagement and support** while promoting the **impact of life beyond the classroom**. As an Associate Professor, I have integrated student success in the research agenda of Columbus State University. Firstly, by actively mentoring numerous undergraduates each

semester, I have established meaningful connections that helped to generate *six research papers, one creative endeavor, and over 50 scientific presentations, while efficiently teaching a full load of courses.* Furthermore, the **commitment to teaching and learning** has taught my students how to effectively promote critical thinking, problem-solving, or global and multicultural understanding. For instance, My time as a mentor with the ACS Division of Medicinal Chemistry Young Medicinal Chemist Committee (ACS MEDI YMCC) Mentorship Program has led to a collaborative relationship between CSU undergraduates and me with a post-doc chemist at Poznan University of Technology ([Poznan](#), Poland) to develop learning aids to assist with organic chemistry curriculum.

The **impact beyond the classroom** is noted through my role as Tower Day Coordinator. In my time as Coordinator, I have worked diligently, since Fall 2023, to elevate the visibility and impact of CSU's Tower Day by aligning it more closely with the strategic goals of the university. Notably in 2025, I led the integration of three major academic conferences, (1) Tower Day Undergraduate Conference, (2) Dr. Gregory P. Domin Graduate Conference, and (3) the Dr. Ellen Roberts Faculty Conference, into a unified, campus-wide symposium. This transformation provided broader opportunities for collaboration and professional development for students and faculty of all levels through partnerships with the CSU Career Center and external vendors, such as EBSCOhost. These enhancements spotlighted pathways for students and faculty to concretely see academic and career success as professionals in the community. This effort yielded positive, tangible results over the two years of being Tower Day Coordinator during Spring 2024 and Spring 2025. In the most recent year, CSU saw measurable growth across several key metrics:

- The number of total presenters increased by 77% (2024: 94; 2025: 166).
- Undergraduate participation rose by 51% (2024: 94; 2025: 142).
- Graduate and faculty involvement surged by 26% (2024: 19; 2025: 24).
- We expanded presentation formats, including a 124% increase in poster sessions (2024: 25; 2025: 56) and a 136% increase in mentor-led sections (2024: 2; 2025: 5).
- While student oral presentations remained steady, the overall diversity of presentation types enriched the academic experience for all attendees (2024: 26; 2025: 26).

Sincerely,

Kerri S. Taylor
Kerri Taylor

Mentoring Roles

Number of Students

Department of Chemistry Advisor to Chemistry Students	16
Advisor/mentor for CSU Honors Students	18
Mentor for Undergraduate Research Students	41
Coordinator for Teaching Assistants	16
Graduate Student Mentorship	4
Co-Mentor for Medical Research Students	3 (2022-24)
Core Course Design Institute Teaching Mentor	2 (2024), 6 (2025)
American Chemical Society Young Medicinal Chemists	2
2024 Women in Leadership Mentorship Program	1

Summary of Teaching Artifacts/Evidence and Strategies**I. Effective Teaching Strategies:**

While at CSU, I incorporated **multiple elements that are enlisted in an immersive, experiential learning** and created a seminar class – CHEM 1715 – that informs and empowers our chemistry majors. Freshmen and sophomore chemistry students are introduced to career opportunities and research across various disciplines through featured presentations talks by university researchers, industry representatives, and local companies (ie. beverage development, water treatment, and chemical industry). This course is a “living user’s manual” for their chemistry degree and future careers as successful, resourceful chemists. CHEM 1715 was implemented to give students confidence and assurance that they have unlimited options as a chemical specialist. This course is offered in the Fall semester and serves to assist all chemistry majors towards their goals of being a specialist in their chosen field. This course is spotlighted in a publication written to show the **student success** at CSU (Shelton, K.L., and Gonzalez, J. “Bringing Chemistry Majors into Real-World Settings to Increase Motivation and Performance.” The Chemical Educator, 2023, 28, 1-6.) Course instruction is accompanied by reading, writing, and multimedia assignments that spotlight essential undergraduate research skills, such as literature reviews, quantitative reasoning, critical use of primary sources, the identification of a research problem, critical analysis of texts, and confrontations with safety measures. These immersive experiences equip the students with a background of chemical knowledge and soft skills critical to utilizing their chemistry degrees. This course also enables the students to see their potential future as professional chemists. The results from CHEM 1715 enrollment and participation lead to involvement in departmental activities and student organizations. Students have reported a stronger sense of clarity and confidence as chemistry majors. My work can be noted in the Chemical Educator article (see enclosed CV).

Active/collaborative learning with flipped model: Furthermore, I use effective teaching strategies (Perusall and Aktiv) to enhance student learning in the CHEM 3111/3112 curricula. The courses are arranged with a student-oriented, problem-solving style of learning that makes students active participants in their education. This goal of the flipped classroom is meant to empower students to connect with the material, their colleagues, and the teacher. The lectures range from Socratic-style reflection, give-and-take discussions, as well as in-class problem solving sessions in the classroom. Each of these examples evidence my endeavors to promote student success and build confidence in organic chemistry for all STEM majors. For the Organic Chemistry 3111/3112 series, the format of the class period was modified to create a classroom design, where the time during class is designated to facilitate directed problem-solving sessions and activities with students. Perusall (interactive social learning platform to actively annotate content in class) is used to expose students to directed readings to maximize the amount of time spent on problem solving. I innovated the flipped model and incorporated more discussion in the lecture settings with the implementation of Aktiv (Top Hat Technologies) into the lecture assignments. The in-class and homework assignments enable students to practice problem solving and critical thinking skills, which has been noted through strong positive feedback in student evaluations. Students have increased interactions with the content, which helps increase the rate of student success.

II. Student Engagement and Support-

Research/Creative Endeavors: Since joining the institution, I have maintained a constant teaching load, served on thesis committees, supervised at least 31 undergraduate students and 3 graduate students. Of those 34 students, 80% identify as minority or under-represented groups. I am constantly evaluating and improving teaching tools and measures to seek out ways to enhance my students' learning opportunities. I assist all my students in the preparation of grant writing and poster/oral presentations at professional conferences. Additionally, I also travel alongside all my researchers as an involved academic mentor. My students have become highly successful chemical specialists in various parts of industry, academia, and society. Even when my formal teaching and mentoring responsibilities to them are over, I continue to consult informally about their careers.

Evidence of Teaching Innovation: As a chemical researcher, I have been collaborating with Dr. Rajeev Dabke to develop innovative methods of reaching various learning communities. Chemistry is a central science and ubiquitous to everyone's daily life. One publication focused on developing a method of physically using Interlocking Toy Building Blocks to teach organic chemistry content to Allied Health Majors. Our work can be noted in the Journal of Chemical Education article (see enclosed CV- Impact Factor: 3).

Evidence of active learning across various communities in STEM is demonstrated in a recent development and evaluation of audible modules to enhance chemistry learning for visually impaired students. Preliminary work has been collaboratively completed with two CSU chemistry students to provide an assisted learning experience, which aims at exploring the sense of hearing as a source of knowledge. Providing an equitable and immersive experience is critical to student learning. However, visually impaired or blind students are limited with regard to select hands-on experiences. The purpose of this research is to design and evaluate 'audible' modules and titration modules to help demonstrate chemical reactions and acid-base chemistry for visually impaired students.

III. Impact Beyond the Classroom:

Experiential community-based learning: Instances of active learning have been extended outside of the CHEM 1715 classroom to serve all majors. This Alumni Speaker Series brings CSU alumni back to campus to share their stories and career advice with current students. Speakers have earned a Columbus State University degree with a specialization in the field of chemistry. This also includes CSU alumni who work in Columbus, GA along with alumni from as far out as Texas. Speakers come from the EPA, Refresco, Inc. (Cott Beverages/RC Cola), Alcorn, and Integrity Innovations Group. Students engage with the alumni and faculty through a lunch and a question-and-answer sessions.

Immersive experiential learning field trips: Experiential Learning and Immersive Experiences are used to show students chemistry careers in real-time within their regional area. Field trips are meant to challenge the students' perspective of a typical chemist - a German male working at a bench. My classes have visited an Atlanta coffee roaster, the Columbus Water Works, the Tellus Science Museum in Cartersville, local soft drink manufacturers, and research university chemistry labs.

IMPACT BEYOND THE CLASSROOM – AWARDS EARNED BY MY MENTEES

- Georgia Association of Museums Student Project Award – Jordan Spires and Shyrisse Ramos – 2021
- CSU's Annual 'Tower Day-Undergraduate Research Conference' First-place poster presentation – Harris Carlise - 2022
- CSU's Annual 'Tower Day-Undergraduate Research Conference' First-place prize for the virtual poster presentation – Cassidy Fine and Courtney Devera – 2023
- Georgia Academy Science Best Poster – Katie Powell – 2023
- American Chemical Society Division of Organic Chemistry Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship – Presley Simmons - 2024



The Columbus Museum is at The Columbus Museum.

May 14, 2021 · 🌐

The Museum would like to congratulate Jordan Spires (middle left) and Shyrisse Ramos (middle right). Ms. Spires and Ms. Ramos both received the [Georgia Association of Museums](#) Student Project Award for their work on our recent exhibition "Mystery Science Museum 3000." Rebecca Bush (left) was the primary staff liaison for the project and Holly Beasley Wait (right) is a GAM awards committee member and executive director of the National Civil War Naval Museum here in town.

Congratulations!

#GamAwards #MuseumColumbus #WomenInSteam #art #museum #history



Text for Screenshot on left: The Columbus Museum would like to congratulate Jordan Spires (middle left) and Shyrisse Ramos (middle right). Ms. Spires and Ms. Ramos both received the Georgia Association of Museums Student Project Award for their work on our recent exhibition "Mystery Science Museum 3000." Rebecca Bush (left) was the primary staff liaison for the project and Holly Beasley Wait (right) is a GAM awards committee member and executive director of the National Civil War Naval Museum here in town. Note: this exhibit and research were executed during COVID.



Fall 2023/Spring 2024 Taylor Lab celebrating winning the ACS DEIR grant funding with making tie dye lab coats.

Chemistry major claims top national American Chemical Society undergraduate fellowship

October 18, 2024

Columbus State University [chemistry](#) major Presley Simmons is among the 16 college students nationally to claim a 2024 Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship from the American Chemical Society. The fellowship is the top national undergraduate fellowship for organic chemistry undergraduates. Simmons is the only fellow from a Georgia college or university and among only a few from the Southeast.

The ACS Division of Organic Chemistry competitively awards these fellowships, which include a \$6,000 stipend so organic chemistry students like Simmons can conduct summer research. It evaluates applicants on the merits of their research proposals, academic records, faculty recommendations and passion for laboratory science.

Simmons, a senior from Clarkesville, Georgia, presented her research at the 2024 Virtual SURF Symposium in early September.



Text for Screenshot on left: Chemistry major, Presley Simmons, claims top national American Chemical Society Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship. Her research is focused on developing a pharmaceutical 'Trojan horse' approach to cancer treatment.

Spring 2024 Honors Celebration: Taylor earns Educator of the Year



STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT – EXTERNAL PRESENCE IN THE RESEARCH FIELD

CSU Chemistry Students Present at GURC Conference: Science at the Capital



Text for Screenshot on left: Columbus State University Chemistry Students, Mr. Lance Crane, Mrs. Caitlin Parker and Mr. Miles Simmons (listed in alphabetical order; image on right) attended and presented research at the Georgia undergraduate research Poster Session, which was held on Tuesday, February 20, 2024, at the Georgia Capital, Atlanta. These CSU Students were 3 of 25 abstracts presented by talented students from 12 colleges and universities across the USG institutions across GA. The goal of the event is to have some of our best and brightest STEM research-focused students present their work to the various constituents at the Capitol. In previous years, this has been a great event for students to showcase the importance and impact of Undergraduate Research to GA state officials and policy makers.

CSU Chemistry Students visit Georgia Bureau of Investigations to help continue efforts on Collaborative Research Project on the Stability of Latent Prints (image on right)

The intention is to help understand how to “keep” the composition of the fingerprint so it can be studied for physical review purposes (latent print identification) and arson (heat and combustion). The goal of this research project is to determine a way for both the latent print and debris labs to test the same materials without damaging the evidence.



Department of Chemistry

- On Oct. 21, 2022, students from the Department of Chemistry hosted Columbus High School Girls in Engineering Math and Science (GEMS) to celebrate National Chemistry Week’s “Women Chemistry Trivia.” Gamma Sigma Epsilon and American Chemical Society collaborated with the Columbus community in the spotlight and sponsorship of “Women Chemistry Trivia.”



- The HIP of undergraduate research was emphasized all semester long and resulted in the production of in-person presentations at the fall 2022 Herty Medalist Undergraduate Research Symposium (HMURS) meeting in Atlanta, GA (students pictured at left with faculty member Kerri Taylor, far right) and the American Chemical Society Southwest Regional Meeting in Baton Rouge, LA. Students from Drs. Taylor, Banerjee, and Holley showcased work executed and gathered in the CSU undergraduate laboratories.

- The Department of Chemistry partnered with the Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation (LSAMP) organization to transport their students to Valdosta State University on September 23, 2022, to meet Clarice Phelps (CSU Chemistry students with Phelps pictured at right). Phelps is the first Black woman to be involved in the discovery of a periodic element, Tennessine. This day trip consisted of a lunch, professional development by interviewing scientists in the region, and a keynote speech by Phelps.
- Lance Crane was awarded a \$1,400 Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) Ladder Scholarship. Crane and Alisha Kennedy (Biology) were the first students to be awarded from CSU. Both students received full scholarships to take the MCAT Ladder Full Preparation course.



Chemistry Seminar—A Living User's Manual for Majors

The Department of Chemistry has discovered how to spell success for its majors: S-E-M-I-N-A-R.

Created and taught by chemistry professor Dr. Kerri Taylor, the 1-credit Introductory Chemistry Seminar (CHEM 1715) provides students with a living user's manual by giving students a sense of security and confidence in their choice of chemistry as a major. The course helps students answer many questions from lab safety to the methodology and ethics of writing lab reports. Key to the course is answering this question: What can a graduate do with a degree in chemistry?

Field trips, invited guest speakers and topical presentations provide excellent real-world learning opportunities and contribute to students' understanding and appreciation of chemistry in various aspects of society. Field trips to the Columbus Water Works, Refresco (formerly Cott Beverages), John Emerald Distillery, and the Columbus Museum help students see how various companies and organizations use chemists and chemistry in their everyday operations.

Another way this course helps chemistry majors is by equipping them with the soft skills necessary to be successful in the real world. Course instruction is accompanied by reading, writing, and multi-media assignments that spotlight essential undergraduate research skills such as literature reviews, quantitative reasoning, critical use of primary sources, the identification of a research problem, and critical analysis of texts. These immersive experiences help students improve their communication with others, both inside and outside their discipline.

CHEM 1715 has created an environment for chemistry majors to debunk the stereotype that a chemist can only be a male wearing a white coat in the research lab setting. Since the class' inception, the number of majors has begun to rise. Enrollment in the course has increased over the last three years from 11 to 20 students. Upon completion of the course, a large number of students become involved in student groups and in undergraduate research. The course has invigorated their love of chemistry.

One student said this about her experiences at Columbus Water Works:

[When thinking of a chemist, most people would picture] "a faceless nerd in some far off lab that lives and breathes on nothing but math and science. Devoid of all social skills and isolate themselves to the rest of the world. This couldn't be further from the truth. [The trip to the Water Works helped me] to discover how something so simple as... add[ing] carbon to river water to make all the dirt to clump up [would be the way] to start purifying water....[I wondered] if this is just one job for chemistry, then what other jobs could be out there for my degree? Maybe medical school does not have to be the only option [for] me and all chemistry majors out there. It makes me excited to see what happens next on my journey to more knowledge about the chemistry working world."

A trip to Refresco helped another student realize how chemists can work in places the student didn't even know about and in ways the student never thought about:

"My perspective has definitely been broadened in my use of my chemistry degree.... Before this trip, I had never really put much thought into soft drinks and beverages....The slightest deviation from the formula can cause the drink to taste different from its intended taste. This field trip... has broadened my mind to different career possibilities....It amazed me how this facility is in charge of sending out product[s] to the whole world. The chemist in charge explained that he gets the opportunity to travel to different countries to create new flavors and work with them to produce product[s] that they want. This interests me greatly, because not only do these chemists get to be innovators but they also get to travel."



Students enrolled in Fall 2018 CHEM 1715 Introductory Chemistry Seminar at Columbus Water Works.



CHEM 1715 students at John Emerald Distillery.

Student Feedback from Louis Stokes Alliance Minority Participation (LSAMP)

“Dr. Taylor profoundly shaped my journey. Her belief in my potential and consistent support made all the difference. I never imagined pursuing a PhD was possible for me, but her scientific expertise and thoughtful mentorship opened doors I didn't know existed. I am forever grateful for her guidance” - **Destini Thornton, PHD Student, Auburn University**

“Dr. Taylor is one of the most caring and dedicated professors that I have had. There is never a bad time for you to ask for help. She is constantly making herself available to her student's even when it may not be the most convenient to her. She holds her students to a standard of “if you can think it, you can do it”. She has helped not only in my research but just to keep me on track when it came to receiving a Bachelor of Science when so many times, I wanted to take the easier route of getting a bachelor's of the arts. If it was not for Dr. Taylor, I would not have been able to accomplish as much as I have now, to which I owe her a million thanks for helping me in the career I have now, which is to help other students that were like me.” - **Nevaeh Davis, MHA Student & Faculty, Strayer University**

"As a student who has been mentored by Dr. Kerri Taylor for the last four years, I can confidently say that she is a cornerstone of support and inspiration for students in the LSAMP program and beyond. She was one of the first people to recognize my potential and encouraged me to pursue STEM research, a path I hadn't initially considered. Her belief in me and her willingness to guide me through challenges in research and academia have been life changing. What sets her apart as a mentor is her dedication to creating a nurturing and inclusive environment where minority students, like myself, can learn and thrive. She understands the barriers that underrepresented groups face in STEM and actively works to break them down by providing opportunities, resources, and unwavering encouragement. Through her mentorship, she has not only helped me grow as a researcher but also cultivated a community of students who support and inspire one another. Her impact extends far beyond the lab or classroom—it's about empowering students to believe in themselves and their ability to contribute meaningfully to science and society." - **Alisha Kennedy, Pre-Med, MS Student, Columbus State University/First Year Medical Student, Mercer University**

Student Feedback from my first research student (Chemistry)

“I want to first thank Dr. Kerri Taylor for her mentorship during my time at CSU. I am currently a 5th-year undergraduate student who has been an undergraduate research student in the Taylor Lab. I first learned about Dr. Taylor through a student organization event hosted by the American Chemical Society student chapter that highlighted the research that was going on at the time. After I learned about Dr. Taylor's research, I immediately connected with her through email. Thanks to her enthusiasm, I have enjoyed my time working in her lab as well as conducting various research projects. She has also provided opportunities for me to attend local, regional, and national conferences that highlighted my research projects under her supervision. Furthermore, we published a journal article in the Journal of Heterocyclic Chemistry in 2019 with us as the primary author and primary principal investigator for the project. She has provided a tremendous amount of support that allowed me to get to this point in my career at CSU. Additionally, her support also allowed me to receive several scholarships, and notably, I have received

scholarships from the Honors College as well as the national Barry Goldwater Scholarship. Dr. Taylor has guided me step by step throughout the past couple of years to help me become a more successful researcher and to prepare me for future graduate school. I have also attended several of her classes which allowed me to experience her wish for the success of the students in the class while providing challenging course works. The classes that I have taken from her include Organic Chemistry I and II as well as Synthetic Organic Chemistry which was a graduate-level course. She has also actively participated in supporting student organizations such as the American Chemical Society CSU student chapter. For example, she was the main coordinator for the Tie-Dye Event during the annual National Chemistry Week ever since I have become a student at CSU. I believe Dr. Kerri Taylor is a valuable asset for the students and the Department of Chemistry at CSU, and she is a fantastic principal investigator that has and will produce more important research in the field of Medicinal Chemistry.” – **ZiJie Lin, PhD student, University of Pennsylvania**

Peer Observation from Alumni and Colleagues

I have known Dr. Taylor for six years and have nothing but positive things to say about her. Dr. Taylor reached out to my office six years ago requesting a forensic chemist give a presentation to one of her classes. My first thought was that this would be a routine presentation given to any college/high school class, but what Dr. Taylor is doing is above and beyond a simple class. She is fostering a positive view of chemistry and in doing so, students are becoming curious as they're eagerly start looking into the plethora of career opportunities available to them. Dr. Taylor has developed a freshman chemistry class dedicated to showing undergraduate students the many different career options they have. Through this class, she has cultivated many different relationships in the chemistry community to help her students. Some of her community chemists participating in the class include an organic chemist, a biochemist, an analytical chemist, and myself a forensic chemist. We do this because of her dedication and commitment to her students. She is motivating undergraduate students to get excited about chemistry and their future in the field. Being an alumnus of CSU, I only wish that Dr. Taylor was teaching when I was a student. There is no doubt in my mind that Dr. Taylor deserves this award. – **Victoria Oehrlin, Georgia Bureau of Investigation**

“Dr. Taylor has the ability to engage students in discussion about their careers, an incredible trait. Her passion and dedication goes beyond her love for teaching. I could see this during my lectures in her class. With her full teaching schedule and research, she takes upon herself to go over and beyond to bring resources like myself and many others from outside, through her own efforts/contacts, to further the knowledge of her students and expose them to career opportunities in the field of science, theoretical and applied. This is an incredibly innovative way to teach and engage students and prepare them for the world. 4. She is driven, caring, compassionate and inspiration to CSU students and all women.” – **Prem Virmani, Creator of RC Cola, Refresco Inc.**

Peer Observation from Chair – Floyd Jackson, CSU Chair of Department of Chemistry

“It is with great enthusiasm that I endorse Dr. Kerri Shelton Taylor's application. Dr. Taylor is a tenured Associate Professor in the Department of Chemistry at Columbus State University (CSU) and she teaches

organic chemistry for STEM majors. One of the most impactful aspects of Professor Taylor's professional contributions is her unwavering commitment to student success. Her efforts in this area are both innovative and far-reaching, extending beyond traditional classroom instruction to create a vibrant and supportive learning community within the Department of Chemistry.

Dr. Taylor has demonstrated exceptional initiative through the development of a new course specifically designed for freshman chemistry majors. This course serves as an intentional entry point into the discipline, helping students establish a strong academic foundation while fostering a sense of belonging in the department. Through this early engagement, she has played a vital role in improving retention and cultivating enthusiasm for chemistry among new students.

In addition, Dr. Taylor continues to coordinate **Caffeinated Conversations**, a monthly gathering that brings together chemistry majors at all levels. These informal meetings provide a platform for students to connect with faculty, discuss academic and career goals, and share experiences in an encouraging and collegial environment. This initiative has significantly strengthened the department's sense of community and has been instrumental in creating a culture of mentorship and mutual support among students.

Beyond the classroom and departmental gatherings, Dr. Taylor consistently mentors undergraduate students, guiding them in both academic and research pursuits. Her mentorship extends to helping students identify and pursue opportunities for research presentations, internships, and graduate studies. She also enhances students' professional readiness by connecting them with industry and government professionals through invited guest lectures and networking sessions. These interactions provide invaluable real-world perspectives that help students understand the relevance of chemistry in solving contemporary challenges.

The outcomes of Dr. Taylor's efforts are evident in the increased student engagement and enthusiasm for chemistry, as well as in the growing recognition of student research achievements at conferences and symposia. By seamlessly integrating teaching, mentoring, and professional development, Dr. Taylor has made student success a defining feature of her academic portfolio.

In summary, Dr. Taylor's leadership in fostering student success has had a transformative impact on the Department of Chemistry. Her initiatives have strengthened student engagement, built community, and positioned students for continued academic and professional achievement. These accomplishments underscore her dedication not only to teaching excellence but also to cultivating the next generation of scientists.." – **Floyd Jackson, CSU Chair of Department of Chemistry**

Student Engagement and Support

The Tower Day Conference highlights students' and faculty's academic and creative achievements across all disciplines. It provides a space for students and faculty from all majors to come together to present, discuss and network about their innovative research and artistic creations. These outcomes reflect a shared commitment to academic excellence, and I am eager to continue building upon this momentum. I believe that my experience, vision, and collaborative approach make me well-suited to further enhance Tower Day as a signature event that showcases the intellectual vibrancy of our campus.

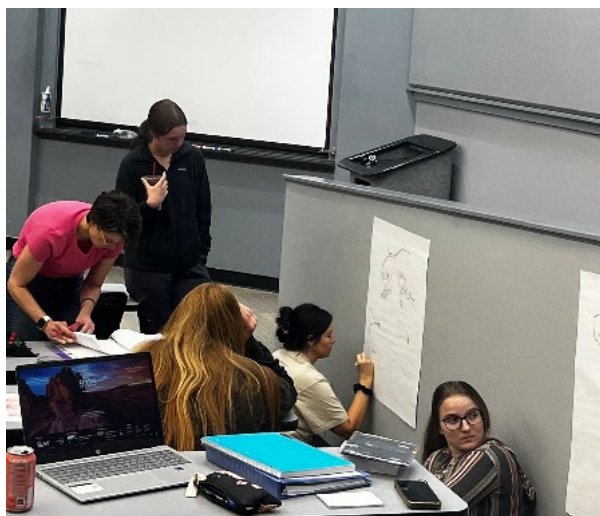
Tower Day Data

	2025	2024		Growth from 24 to 25	
Number of presenters total	166	94		Number of presenters total	77%
Undergraduate	142	94		Undergraduate	51%
Graduate/Faculty	24	19		Graduate/Faculty	26%
Types of submissions				Types of sections	
Student Oral	26	26		Student Oral	0%
Poster	56	25		Poster	124%
Mentor led sections	5	2		Mentor led sections	150%
Topic of mentor led session	Health Science	Biology Internship			
	Biology Capstone	Chemistry Seminar			
	Biology Internship				
	Ecology				
	Cyber Security				

Active Learning

Post its combined with Aktiv problem sets for In-Class

Below are images for CHEM 3111 students working out organic chemistry problems in an “In-Class” Assignment. Groups are self-created/selected and content is collaboratively discussed. The instructor floats around the room and provides constructive feedback. Students are self-motivated to work through as many problems as possible in the class session. The class is combined in the last 15 minutes and debriefed on each of the problems.



Monday, October 14, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

It is with great enthusiasm that I write in support of Dr. Kerri Shelton Taylor's nomination for the Felton Jenkins Hall of Fame Teaching Award. As an Associate Professor of Chemistry at Columbus State University, Dr. Taylor exemplifies the highest standards of teaching excellence, innovation, and student mentorship. Her commitment to student success is evident in every facet of her work—from her dynamic classroom instruction to her transformative undergraduate research initiatives. She has consistently demonstrated a passion for making chemistry accessible, engaging, and relevant to students of all backgrounds and disciplines.

Dr. Taylor's teaching philosophy is rooted in experiential learning, active collaboration, and real-world application. She has developed and implemented innovative courses such as CHEM 1715, which introduces students to diverse career paths in chemistry through guest lectures, field trips, and hands-on activities. Her use of flipped classroom models and platforms like Perusall and Aktiv has significantly enhanced student engagement and performance in organic chemistry. Moreover, her efforts to create inclusive learning environments—such as developing audible chemistry modules for visually impaired students—reflect her deep commitment to equity and accessibility in STEM education.

Beyond the classroom, Dr. Taylor's impact is profound. She has mentored over 30 undergraduate and graduate students, many from underrepresented groups, guiding them through research projects, conference presentations, and successful scholarship applications. Her leadership as Tower Day Coordinator has elevated the visibility of student research across campus, resulting in a 77% increase in participation and the integration of multiple academic conferences into a unified symposium. These efforts have not only enriched the academic culture at CSU but have also provided students with invaluable professional development opportunities.

Dr. Taylor's dedication to teaching and mentorship has earned her numerous accolades, including the 2024 Educator of the Year Award and the Faculty Teaching Excellence Award. Her students and colleagues consistently praise her for her compassion, innovation, and unwavering support. She is a role model for women in STEM and a driving force behind student success at Columbus State University. I wholeheartedly endorse her for the Felton Jenkins Hall of Fame Teaching Award and believe she embodies the spirit and excellence this honor represents.

Sincerely



Bryan A. Banks, Ph.D. Associate Professor of
History
Interim Dean of Libraries and the Graduate School

To Whom It May Concern:

Dr. Kerri Taylor, Associate Professor of Organic Chemistry, is highly recommended for the Felton Jenkins, Jr. Hall of Fame Faculty Award due to her exceptional dedication to teaching and profound impact on student learning. Her commitment is demonstrated through sustained efforts to advance educational quality in organic chemistry, integrating activities that foster critical thinking and problem-solving. Dr. Taylor's meticulously prepared lectures incorporate real-world applications and current research, making complex concepts accessible. She also volunteers to teach chemistry to elementary school children, sparking early scientific interest.

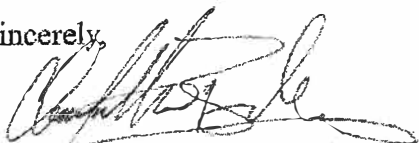
Dr. Taylor's effective teaching involved evidence-based, student-centered methods, including active learning (problem-solving, discussions) and technology integration (simulations, online resources) to enhance understanding of complex topics like molecular structures and reaction pathways. She also organized organic chemistry field trips to companies such as The Coca-Cola Factory and local breweries in GA/AL to connect theory with practical industrial applications.

Beyond the classroom, Dr. Taylor demonstrated a strong commitment to student engagement and support. She was readily available during office hours, providing individualized guidance and patiently explaining challenging concepts. Her mentorship extended beyond academic assistance, as she often discussed career paths in chemistry and encouraged students to pursue research opportunities. I personally benefited from her advice on graduate school applications, which proved invaluable. A testament to her commitment to highlighting student achievements, she actively helps her students to publish their research work, often leading to the students being co-authored on these publications; thereby, she is providing them with critical early career experience and recognition.

Dr. Taylor's impact extends beyond the classroom to the broader teaching and learning community. She has been a proactive contributor to faculty development, sharing her innovative teaching methodologies with colleagues through workshops and presentations. Furthermore, she coordinates CSU's Tower Day Conference at her university, an event that highlights students' and faculty's academic and creative achievements across many disciplines, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration and networking within the community.

In conclusion, Dr. Taylor is an exceptional educator whose dedication to teaching, innovative strategies, profound student support, and broader impact on the academic community make her an invaluable asset. I wholeheartedly recommend her for the Felton Jenkins, Jr. Hall of Fame Faculty Award.

Sincerely,



Charlotte Bush, PhD(c), MPA, BSHS, AAS

Former student – Now pursuing PhD at Liberty University