

Celebrating Innovation at the 2025 ACS Think Like a Molecule Poster Session

On November 6, 2025, the R.B. Annis Engineering Building at the [University of Indianapolis](#) came alive with scientific curiosity and community spirit as students, faculty, parents, friends, and professionals gathered for the annual American Chemical Society, Indiana Section “Think Like a Molecule” Poster Session. Hosted by UIndy under the direction of Dr. David Styres-Barnett, the event was co-sponsored by the ACS Indiana Section, UIndy Chem Club, and the Rho Chapter of Sigma Zeta. Thanks to all the UIndy student volunteers that helped us set up the stands and poster boards, register students and judges, and guide attendees throughout the evening with warmth and professionalism.

From 4–7 p.m., attendees explored cutting-edge research spanning environmental chemistry, biomedical innovation, and molecular modeling. To encourage early engagement, two lucky pre-registrants (Aiden Munzo and Jalei Edwards) each won a \$50 drawing, adding a touch of excitement to the evening’s scholarly atmosphere.

Honoring Our Judges and Hosts

This event would not have been possible without the generous support of our volunteer judges, who lent their time and expertise to evaluate the outstanding student presentations:

Dr. Joe Burnell, PhD, Kamila Deavers, PhD, Kent Steele, PhD, Ross Poland, PhD, Dr. Sarah Langlais, PhD, Dr. Sarah Justice, PhD, Josh Robinson, PhD, Leandro Estrada, PhD, Dr. Dahbih Chulhai, PhD, Christine Skaggs, PhD, Kyle Hill, PhD, Greg Smith, PhD, Norm Sesi, PhD, and Kymeri Davis, PhD.

A heartfelt thank you to Dr. Meghan McLeod, our longtime ACS Event Chair, whose generous dedication and leadership have shaped this event year after year. Meghan has graciously given countless hours of her time and talents to ensure each gathering is meaningful, inclusive, and inspiring.

This year, she thoughtfully passed the baton to Dr. Heba Salim, who enthusiastically stepped forward to lead future events. Their collaborative transition and shared commitment combined with Dr. David Styres-Barnett’s contributions, created a smooth, welcoming experience for all attendees—and set the stage for continued excellence.

We are deeply grateful for their vision, teamwork, and the lasting impact they’ve made on our community.

Poster Session Award Winners

ACS Chair’s Award (Graduate or Undergraduate Students)

- **First Place: Middy E. Benyah** (\$100) – Ball State University

Designing Bismuth-Based Aurivillius/Pyrochlore Heterojunction Photocatalysts for the Visible Light-Activated Catalytic Degradation of Organic Pollutants

- **Second Place: Doondeeshwar Patnala** (\$75) – Ball State University

Paper-Based Microfluidic Devices for Multiplexed Colorimetric Detection of Disease Biomarkers

- **Third Place: Anna Pritchett** (\$50) – Marian University

Molecular Dynamics Simulations of Candidate Mutations Involved in Eggshell Malformation in Puerto Rican Parrots

Kurek Student Award (Undergraduate Students Only)

- **First Place: Priscila Espinoza & Cristina Avello** (\$100) – Marian University

Lead Contamination in Fast Fashion Children's Clothing

- **Second Place: Donovan Doolittle** (\$75) – Marian University

Utilizing Phytoextraction to Remove Lead From the Community Garden

- **Third Place: Anastasia Faddis** (\$50) – Ball State University

Synthesis of Asymmetrically Disubstituted Malononitriles Using 2-Amino-3-Cyano-4H Chromene Derivatives

Sigma Zeta Award (Graduate Students Only)

- **First Place: Maddie Page** (\$100) – Indiana University Indianapolis

Electrochemiluminescence in Droplets Towards Highly Sensitive Bacteria Detection

- **Second Place: Patricia Tumfu** (\$75) – Ball State University

Design and Synthesis of α -cyanocinnamate Modified Open-Ring Analogs of Ipomoeassin F

- **Third Place: Jannat Jannat** (\$50) – Indiana University Indianapolis

Assembly and Characterization of Polymer Gel-Tethered Lipid Bilayer Inside Microfluidic System



Grand Prize Winner (\$500)

Nia I. Williams – Butler University

- Sodium Variability in Dried Edible Seaweeds: Determination by Flame Atomic Absorption and Dietary Implications
- Undergraduate Student

This year's Think Like a Molecule Poster Session was a vibrant celebration of student research, mentorship, and community collaboration. Congratulations to all participants and winners—and thank you to everyone who contributed!