

About

News

Faculty

Departments

Degree Programs

Research

Contact Us

A History of Excellence: Chemistry at Sichuan University

The College of Chemistry (CoC) at Sichuan University (SCU) has a history of more than 100 years. The chemistry class of the Science Department at the Sichuan School of Higher Education, which was the predecessor of the College of Chemistry, was established in 1907. Over a century of discovery and experience has nurtured an excellent academic atmosphere and a great educational tradition, both of which contribute to a comprehensive system for cultivating scientific experts.

The CoC has built a relatively complete system for growing scientific experts. The College was among the first group of university units approved by the Ministry of Education for postgraduate education. Accordingly, the College has been recruiting doctoral candidates since 1986. In 1999, the College was authorized to award doctoral degrees for the first-level discipline of Chemistry and it was authorized to establish post-doctoral research stations one year later. Our MSc and PhD programs cover various fields of specialization in Chemistry including Inorganic Chemistry, Analytical Chemistry, Organic Chemistry, Physical Chemistry, Polymeric Chemistry & Physics, Green Chemistry, Chemical Biology and Radiochemistry. In 2008, the College was designated as a National Base of Basic Science Research and Teaching Personal Training. In the following year, the Chemistry program at CoC was selected as one of the featured disciplines in China and was awarded the National Teaching Team on "Green Chemistry". Moreover, the College was appointed as the National Key Unit of Radiochemistry in 2011.

The CoC benefits from excellent faculty and staff. Overall, the College boasts 191 faculty members involved in the field of Chemistry. It includes 129 full-time teaching and research staff (66 Full Professors and 46 Associate Professors), 51 of these research-active faculty members are doctoral supervisors; 90% of the teaching and research staff have a doctoral degree. It is worth mentioning that all of the faculty who are under 40 have doctoral degrees. Furthermore, SCU boasts several distinguished faculty members involved in the field of Chemistry. It includes two inducted members of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (one is a joint hire), one inducted member of the Chinese Academy of



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Engineering, three Ministry of Education Changjiang Scholars, one Changjiang Chaired Professor, six awardees of the National Science Fund for Distinguished Young Scholars (one of whom earned a type B fund), one National Teaching Master, one professor for "the Thousand Talents Plan", five

awardees of the National Science Fund for Outstanding Young Scholars, six professors for the "Recruitment Program for Young Professionals," two professors for "the Ten-Thousand Talents Plan" (one is awarded "the Leading Scientific Expert for Scientific Innovation" and the other is awarded "the Outstanding Young Scholars"), five professors within "the Thousand and Hundred Talents Plan of Sichuan Province," and 12 academic leaders of Sichuan Province.

The College of Chemistry has made many great achievements in research. Our College boasts severalkey centers and laboratories, including the National Engineering Laboratory for Eco-Friendly Polymer Materials, the National Engineering Laboratory for the Preparation of Bio-Oil from High-Energy Vegetative Matter (co-constructed with the College of Life Sciences), the National the Key Laboratory for Green Chemistry and Technology, and the Engineering Research Center for Environmentally Friendly Polymer Materials (Ministry of Education) etc. In 2010, the College was awarded the "Innovative Research Group" designation from The National Natural Science Foundation on the subject of "New Reactions and Strategies for Highly Selective Organic Synthesis". In recent years, members from the College have been awarded a second prize of China's State Natural Science Award, a second prize of the National Award for Technological Invention, a first prize and two second prizes of the Natural Science Award from the Ministry of Education and three first prizes of Science and Technology Progress in Sichuan Province. Moreover, ESI ranked the Chemistry Discipline at SCU among top 1‰ in December of 2014. Despite these many achievements and accolades, the College of Chemistry continues to strive to improve and make progress.

Over the past five years, the College and its faculty were awarded many critical research grants and high-impact research programs from national and provincial funding agencies. These include 170 research grants from the NSFC (including three major programs and six key programs), 15 national key projects such as the "973 National Basic Research Program" and the "Program 863 (State High-Tech Development Plan)", over 106 projects at the provincial level or above. For many years, the professors and associate professors within the CoC have published more SCI listed papers, per faculty, than any other college in SCU. Our graduate students consistently rank near the top in publishing papers in SCI Journals, with more publications per graduate student in SCI than any other college in SCU. Additionally, PhD graduates from our College have won the "Hundreds of Excellent Doctoral Dissertations" award for several years. Overall, faculty from our College in the last five years have published over 1500 papers listed in SCI and over 60 papers published in top-ranking international Chemistry journals, such as AngewandteChemie International Edition, the Journal of the American Chemical Society, and others. Members from the College also have filed 210 invention patent applications, 130 of which were granted.

Research fields distinctive to our program include, but are not limited to, Green Organic Synthetic Chemistry, Environmentally-Friendly Polymer Materials, Critical Nuclide Separation and Nuclear Waste Disposal, Catalytic Chemistry, Biosensors, and Conversion Technology of Biomass. Of particular note, research findings in asymmetric synthesis and halogen-free flame retardant materials discovered by faculty in our College have made a great international impact. Specifically, the chiral N,N'-dioxide—Sc(III) catalyzed asymmetric Roskamp reaction developed by Professor Xiaoming Feng's group at CoC was elevated to the status of "Name Reaction", being designated as the Roskamp—Feng reaction in the book of "Organic Synthesis Based on Name Reactions, 3rd Edition". This designation represents the first organic synthesis transformation to be named after a Chinese researcher working at a Chinese institution. Accordingly, the research achievements of the Feng Group have been listed as one of the "Top Ten Achievements in Science and Technology among Universities in China" in 2011 by the Science and Technology Committee of the Ministry of Education of China and they have been included in the 2012 Science Development Report by the Chinese Academy of Sciences. Research on halogen-free flame-retardant polymeric materials by Professor Wang Yuzhong was selected as one of three research achievements in the field of organic polymer materials to be included in A Collection of Remarkable Achievements of Projects funded by National Natural Science Foundation of China. This research from the Wang group also won the second class award in the State Technological Invention Award. Prof. Wang's research program has solved several technical problems that can be caused by halogen-free flame-retardant polyolefin materials, thus creating large economic benefits totaling over 2 billion CNYs.

Since 1949 when the People's Republic of China was established, our College has made fruitful achievements in cultivating scientific experts and we boast many distinguished alumni. Some of our alumni are outstanding scientists who were elected as members of the Chinese Academy of Sciences or Chinese Academy of Engineering in the 1980s and 1990s, such as Professor Rongti Chen and Professor ShiyangGao, Professor Lun Xiao and Professor Fen'er Chen. Other SCU-CoC alumni have grown into leaders in all walks of life. Currently, our College has 916 undergraduate students, 432graduate students and 167 PhD candidates. In order to nurture more experts in Chemistry, we keep adjusting our education system to better suit the need of students and the market. With an integrated student management system involving students' counsellors, class advisors, course tutors, supervisors and students' family, our students experience well-rounded development to become highly competitive on the job market.

The College of Chemistry collaborates with a variety of universities and research institutions both in China and abroad. Each year, we have over 100 scholars, including Nobel Laureates and editors of SCI Publications, visiting our College to give short lectures and over 100 faculty members going abroad

for academic exchange. The College has established teaching and research cooperation with many institutions worldwide, including universities in the U.S.A., the U.K., France, Germany, Belgium, Japan, Korea, Canada, Australia, Singapore and Hong Kong. In the past several years, we have up to 100 students attending international conferences or symposiums. International cooperation has greatly enhanced our teaching and research.

Since its founding, the College of Chemistry at Sichuan University has served as a leader in China for the development of outstanding chemists and the production of high-impact scientific discoveries. As we progress into our second century, we are dedicated both to maintaining our role as a local leader in science and to extending our global influence through our vibrant and motivated faculty, top-notch facilities, excellent students, and international collaborations.

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