



**Message from the Editor (Pranshu Puri):** *In this edition, we focus on the upcoming 2025 FL-ACS committee elections. Inside, you'll find detailed biographies and position statements of the nominees, highlighting their qualifications and vision for society's future. Don't miss the opportunity to review and cast your vote to shape the next leadership team!*

## NOMINEES FOR 2025 OFFICERS



### **Nominee for Chair: Dr. Kari Basso- Biography**

My name is Kari Basso, I am currently the Director of the Mass Spectrometry Research and Education Center at the University of Florida and previously I was the Director of the Mass Spectrometry and Proteomics Facility at Ohio State University (1999 – 2014). I have been doing mass spectrometry-based research since graduate school at Louisiana State University. I love my current role at UF because I have much more direct involvement with graduate students in their PhD journey.

**Position Statement:** I attended the FL-ACS FAME meeting when I was a graduate student at LSU in 1998! I have been officially involved with FL-ACS and FAME since 2018 when COVID derailed my turn as Chair for the 2020 year. Fortunately, I have been allowed to serve again in the traditional capacity. FAME is a wonderful local meeting where researchers from several local chapters meet to share their research. I very much enjoy working behind the scenes to organize it. I have met so many wonderful people through FL-ACS and I hope you plan to attend our next meeting on September 12- 14, 2025 at the Innisbrook Resort! We also through strategic planning have exciting new plans for more member activities for the FL-ACS.

Recently the Chair-Elect unfortunately resigned, leaving the Chair position vacant for 2025. I have accepted the request of the Executive Committee to serve as Chair for one more year. We have great new leaders coming up with me and I look forward to working with them!



### **Nominee for Chair-Elect: Dr. Stefanie Habenicht- Biography**

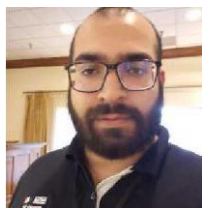
Dr. Habenicht is a Lecturer/Assistant Instructional Professor in the Department of Chemistry at the University of Florida (2019-present) and faculty advisor to the ACS Student Chapter at the University of Florida (2022-present). She earned the equivalent of a B.Sc. (2010), M.Sc. (2011), and PhD (2015) in Chemistry at the Friedrich-Schiller-University in Jena, Germany, and taught Organic Chemistry 1 and 2 as an adjunct lecturer at the University of Florida before joining the department full-time.

**Position Statement:** I am honored to be considered for the position of Chair-Elect Designate for the Florida Local Section of the American Chemical Society (FLACS). With a robust background in teaching, mentoring, and research, I am committed to fostering a welcoming and engaged community within our local section.

As a faculty advisor to the local ACS student chapter, I have had the privilege of working with some of our brightest, most involved undergraduate students. This experience has further enriched my understanding of the diverse needs and aspirations within our community.

My involvement in Chemathon, an annual event at the University of Florida that attracts high school students from around the state for a day of competition, research lab tours and hands-on activities, has allowed me to contribute to an educational event that fosters a sense of community and helps spread an appreciation for chemistry to a broader

audience. Seeing the student's excitement and enthusiasm has been an incredibly fulfilling experience and organizing aspects of this event has equipped me to add value to upcoming FAME meetings. Overall, I am excited to expand my horizons and venture into serving a broader community through FLACS.



#### **Nominee for Secretary: Pranshu Puri- Biography**

Pranshu Puri grew up in Punjab, in northern India, and earned his B.Sc. with distinction from Punjabi University Patiala in 2015, followed by an M.Sc. in Chemistry from Thapar University (TU) in 2017. During his master's program, he began his research training, spending the summer of 2016 at Guru Nanak Dev University to gain hands-on experience in advanced research laboratories. Following this, he completed his thesis on AIE-based moieties at TU. After a brief research tenure in India, he joined the University of Florida's (UF's) Ph.D. program in Chemistry in 2019, which he is currently pursuing. He now serves as Secretary for the Florida-ACS (FL-ACS) and represents the UF Chemistry department in the Graduate Student Council.

**Position Statement:** As a current secretary of the FL-ACS, I am driven to support our mission of fostering scientific discovery, community engagement, and professional growth. In this role, I am responsible for maintaining a well-coordinated meeting schedule, accurately documenting meeting minutes, conducting elections, and ensuring seamless communication between our board and members.

My organizational experience in FL-ACS extends to the Florida Annual Meeting and Exposition (FAME), where I had the privilege of coordinating the poster session at the 2023-24 conference and now, as Secretary, am actively involved in planning FAME2025. My responsibilities in this event include orchestrating session logistics, facilitating speaker and poster arrangements, and ensuring a productive environment for scientific exchange and networking.

I also bring experience from impactful outreach initiatives, such as organizing the UF Chemistry department's annual Molecular Mania at Oaks Mall. This event attracts over 250 young attendees each year, introducing them to chemistry through exciting, hands-on experiments. Last year, I designed and led a demonstration on quantum dot fluorescence, coinciding with the Nobel recognition of quantum dots, to inspire curiosity and a deepened understanding of science. Additionally, my role as a representative for the UF Chemistry department in the Graduate Student Council (GSC) enabled me to help secure over \$7,000 in travel grants for students, while organizing events that support and connect graduate students across disciplines. My broad experience in administration, outreach, and advocacy equips me to continue advancing FL-ACS's goals, building connections within our community, and empowering members to engage fully in our chapter's initiatives.



#### **Nominee for Councilor: Dr. Carmen Valdez Gauthier – Biography**

Carmen Valdez Gauthier earned her Ph.D. in Chemistry from the University of New Hampshire in 1987 after completing her undergraduate studies at the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru (PUCP). Following her tenure at Salem State University, she joined the chemistry faculty at Florida Southern College in 1999 and became a full professor in 2007. She holds the Jesse Ball DuPont Chair of Natural Sciences. In 2016, she received a Fulbright award that allowed her to teach and conduct research in materials science at the PUCP in Peru. She was recognized as an ACS Fellow in 2018.

Within the Division of Chemical Education, Carmen has been an active member of the International Activities Committee and served as chair for four years. She has also spent six years on the Program Committee, where she cochaired the CHED Program at the ACS national meetings in Boston and New Orleans. Additionally, she has served on the Exams Institute Committee on the Board of Trustees until 2022.

As councilor and former chair of the Florida Section of ACS, Carmen successfully created a chemical education program for high school teachers and university faculty. She established a High School Day program and a day-long workshop, providing teachers with the opportunity to interact with experts in the field, including Nobel Prize winners. Since joining the Committee on Community Activities in 2004, she has chaired the Volunteer Engagement and Recognition sub-committee until 2009 and served as vice-chair of the Membership Affairs Committee (MAC) in 2009. For seven years, she was a member of the Society Committee on Education (SOCED) and served as its vice-chair for three years and chair the committee. In 2022, she was elected by council members to be appointed to serve a three-

year term on the Committee on Committees (ConC), where she chairs the Sub-Committee on Committee Appointment System.

**Position Statement:** Since arriving in Lakeland in 1999, I have been actively involved with the Florida local section. I strongly believe in the local section's ability to foster the collaboration of members from industry and academia in creating programs that will appeal to the broader community. As the councilor of the Florida section, I serve on the FLACS executive committee where I am the coordinator of the National Chemistry Week (NCW) and coordinator of the Chemists Celebrate Earth Week (CCEW); I also participated in the Strategic Planning Retreat and I co-chair the committee on restructuring FAME and participate in the Section By-Laws working group.

I have worked with fellow councilors and committee members to develop programs that address the needs of graduate students and post-doctoral scholars, and I implemented the undergraduate research symposium where undergraduates have the opportunity to present their research at a national meeting. I have also engaged with several international communities to promote informal science education at all levels. At the national level, I have volunteered on committees focused on developing guidelines for teaching middle school science, revising science policy statements, and supporting initiatives that broaden participation for non-councilor members. Additionally, I have supported the senior chemistry committee's initiatives to enhance engagement among senior chemists and members of the education community. At the regional level, I represent our local section on the SERMACS steering committee.

If elected, I will continue to work hard representing you at the regional and national level by 1) serving on committees and working groups, 2) attending the councilor caucus meetings, and 3) increasing collaborations among industry and academia, among international science chapters, and across disciplines. I will continue to support the local section in providing an inclusive community, fostering regional and international collaboration, and promoting student initiatives from kindergarten to higher education. Thank you for your support!

**Get in touch with us!**

