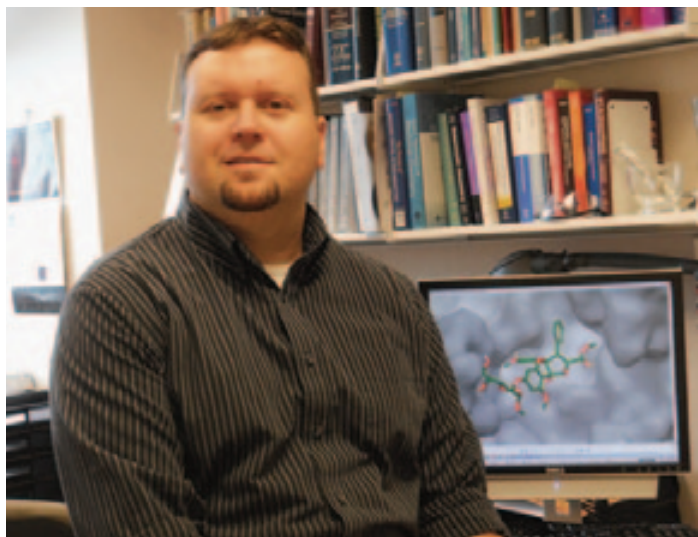


Meet a New ASP Member

by Dr. Diane S. Swaffar

ASP continues to welcome many new members to the Society throughout the year. We are pleased to feature new member, **Dr. James R. Fuchs**, who is currently Assistant Professor in the Division of Medicinal Chemistry and Pharmacognosy at the Ohio State University (OSU) College of Pharmacy in Columbus, Ohio. We are grateful to Dr. Fuchs for taking time from his busy schedule to give us the opportunity to get more acquainted with him.



Dr. James Fuchs in one of his synthetic labs at OSU.

How did you hear about the ASP?

Dr. Doug Kinghorn here at OSU introduced me to ASP. My group had been doing synthetic work on a project with Doug, and he invited me to present some of our work at the 50th Anniversary ASP meeting in Waikiki, Hawai'i, in 2009. Honestly, I did not know what "pharmacognosy" was prior to getting to Ohio State!

Why did you join ASP?

I was immediately hooked after attending the meeting in Hawai'i. The science was excellent and the people in the society are great! I hope to continue building relationships and collaborations with ASP members and further the study of natural products.

Do you belong to any other scientific societies?

Yes, I am also a member of the American Chemical Society and the American Association for Cancer Research.

What are your current research interests in pharmacognosy?

I am a medicinal chemist who specializes in the synthesis of natural products and their derivatives. We are primarily interested in anticancer agents with novel, or at least interesting, mechanisms of action. Recently, however, we have also begun working with collaborators in the area of infectious disease. Essentially, it is the compound that dictates the specific application, but we want to

know how and why it works and if we can somehow make it better. I was always taught that nature is the best chemist. The diversity and complexity of natural products in regard to both their chemical and biological properties are amazing.

What is your scientific background?

I received my B.S. degree in Chemistry from the University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio. I did two years of undergraduate research and realized that I enjoyed making molecules. I went to Penn State, State College, Pennsylvania, for my Ph.D. studies in organic chemistry and carried out the total synthesis of natural products, mostly alkaloids, in the laboratory of Dr. Ray Funk. It was during my graduate studies that I became interested in how these molecules exert their biological activities. This ultimately pushed me into the field of medicinal chemistry and postdoctoral studies at the Scripps Research Institute, La Jolla, California, with Dr. Dale Boger. I was fortunate enough to move straight from La Jolla to my present position at Ohio State, where I have been for three years now.

What would you like to achieve through your membership?

I want to stay up to date on work being done in the field. I also see membership as a good way to interact with the scientists involved in the isolation of these wonderful compounds. I think that natural product chemists and synthetic chemists really can learn a lot from one another and can do great things when they work together.

What do you like doing in your spare time?

I do not feel like I have a lot of spare time, but what time I do have, I typically spend with my wife and daughter. I also enjoy running (although I am not very good at it) and painting, both of which I find very relaxing. I am also a big sports fan, so I am excited about the start of football season.

What are you currently reading?

I really do not read too much outside of the lab. My wife acts as my filter for novels. If she thinks I will like a book and recommends it to me, I usually end up reading it. Recently she recommended *Tyrannosaur Canyon* by Douglas Preston. She thinks I'll enjoy the scientific side of the story. Besides, my father is really into fossil collecting and paleontology so I grew up very familiar with that field. I have made it through the prologue, but not too much more. ■