

Wednesday 20 Apr 2011

# PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

## A Capstone Course in Culinary Chemistry

Keith Symcox  
*The University of Tulsa*



Two challenges continually surface in the quest to teach the next generation of chemists. One is how to convey the relevancy of the material so that the student is motivated to put out the effort to learn. The other is how to take the knowledge gleaned from disparate coursework during their schooling and teach them how to transfer that knowledge into a synthetic whole. Efforts to meet the first challenge are common in the undergraduate curriculum, as witnessed by the increasing amount of “chemistry in real life” examples placed in the general chemistry curriculum, the use of more and more pharmaceutical examples in organic and analytical coursework, and the increasing emphasis on environmental issues in physical chemistry courses. Efforts to teach students to synthesize material from different courses are more limited for several reasons. First, students in the course will probably have different life and course experiences, which can make finding a common starting point difficult. Second, the divisional nature of chemistry instruction often leads to the attitude that material from other divisions is someone else’s responsibility. Third, most “real world” problems are interdisciplinary, quite complicated, and often do not lend themselves to simple and/or elegant solutions. We have made a start at addressing these transferability issues by designing a senior level chemistry course entitled “The Chemistry of Cooking”. Food and cooking are topics which are immediately relevant to almost everyone, yet it is an area usually ignored in the undergraduate curriculum of the chemistry major.

**5:30-6:30 pm Social Hour**  
+ tours of new Chem building  
**6:30-7:30 pm Dinner**  
**7:30-8:30 pm Presentation**

**The University of Oklahoma**  
Stephenson Life Sciences Research Center  
2955 South Jenkins Avenue, Norman, OK  
map: <http://www.ou.edu/home/beta/map/index.html>



OU map  
QR code

### Catering from Billy Sims BBQ

Sliced Brisket  
Sliced Turkey  
Potato Salad  
Cole Slaw  
Soft Drinks  
Dessert: Key Lime Pie & Chocolate Cream Pie

### Cost

\$20 members  
\$5 students

### RSVP Deadline

Friday, Apr 15<sup>th</sup>, 5 pm  
Contact: Chuck Rice  
405-325-5823

*RSVP is REQUIRED to attend the presentation (refreshments).*

[rice@ou.edu](mailto:rice@ou.edu)

### Keith Symcox Biographical Sketch

Keith Symcox is an instructor of chemistry at the University of Tulsa. He received his BS degree from the University of Oklahoma in 1983. He received his Masters in Chemistry under Michael Abraham at OU in 1987. Since 1991 he has held the positions of Instructor and Director of Freshman Chemistry laboratories at the University of Tulsa. He is the author of several books of laboratory experiments for general chemistry. He is married to Marina (PhD, biochemistry from OU 1991), and has three children Kevin, Carl and Miranda.