Celebrating Excellence in Research

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Celebrating Excellence in ResearchWhen chemistry professor Russell Schmehl joined Tulane University in 1982, he considered it a privilege to be a part of a research-focused university. More than 30 years later, he is being honored for his dedication to Tulane, his research, and his students.

Schmehl was honored at the 8th annual School of Science and Engineering Research Day on April 10 as the Outstanding Faculty Researcher for elevating both the student experience and university status. Research Day celebrates the scholarly contributions of both faculty and students. Following the Outstanding Faculty Researcher ceremony, dozens of alumni, faculty, staff and students viewed the almost 100 research posters submitted by students.

Schmehl's impressive scholarly career has focused on the study of photochemistry. His research looks at harnessing the power of solar energy into chemical and electrical energy. During his presentation, he explained how important solar energy is becoming as humans continue to consume more energy. He noted that if just five percent of Louisiana was covered in solar panels, it would support all of the state's energy needs.

Throughout his Tulane career, Schmehl has published over 100 papers and mentored 22 Ph.D. students. In addition to his own research, Schmehl works diligently to enhance research initiatives for the entire chemistry department. He has helped raise almost $2 million to support department-wide research initiatives.

Described as "humble to a fault," Schmehl credits his success to the wonderful colleagues and students who have worked with him over the years.

“If you don’t have good people around you, you are unlikely to get very far,” says Schmehl. “Tulane has been a wonderful place and allowed me to grow.”

Continuing the day’s celebrations, one graduate student and an undergraduate student team took home honors at the poster competition. Connor Dolan, a junior studying neuroscience, and Louis Taylor, a junior studying cell and molecular biology, captured the top prize in the undergraduate category for their project that developed a tissue imaging system called CLARITY to collect 3D data of the vascular system. J. Lowry Curly, a graduate student pursuing his Ph.D. in biomedical engineering, received top honors for his project that utilizes engineered data to advance drug discoveries.

The 8th Annual Research Day was a real success, as award winners were celebrated and students, faculty, staff and alumni came together to recognize the importance of research at the School of Science and Engineering.