

“Valuing Uncertainty and Catering for Creativity”

Masato Koreeda

Professor of Chemistry and Medicinal Chemistry
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109-1055, USA

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Unlike universities in Japan, most undergraduate programs in the US are in effect serving for students' preparation for their professional schools. In addition, to our dismay, there has been a precipitous decline for many years in the number of students majoring in chemistry and biochemistry throughout the country in the US. The talk will begin with the description of the teaching programs in chemistry at the University of Michigan with an emphasis on the issues and difficulties associated with teaching chemistry at a university level under such predicaments. This will be followed by a chronicle of our continual endeavors for the past decade or so aimed at altering students' perception on the image of chemistry and attracting students to the fields of chemistry and biochemistry. Our strategies have been predicated upon our firm notion that a chemical phenomenon is a manifest of an intricate web of multidisciplinary principles and often a creative treatment of such an observation is needed in ever expanding fields of chemistry and biochemistry. A number of actual classroom examples will also be presented that showcase our approaches to this end.