



2024-2025 POCC Lecture Series

The Student Choice Lecture:

April 17, 2025, 7:30 PM

Prof. Richmond Sarpong

University of California–Berkeley

Break-it-to-Make-it Strategies for Chemical Synthesis Inspired by Complex Natural Products

IN PERSON @:

The CHEM I02 Lecture Hall

Chemistry Building, University of Pennsylvania

6:30 Reception in the Nobel Hall

Food and drinks to be provided!



Submit an Abstract by April 5th!

The Philadelphia Organic
Chemist's Club



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Abstract: Natural products continue to inspire and serve as the basis of new medicines. They also provide intricate problems that expose limitations in the strategies and methods employed in chemical synthesis. Several strategies and methods that have been developed in our laboratory and applied to the syntheses of architecturally complex natural products will be discussed. In particular, new ways to employ the cleavage of core bonds such as C–C and C–N bonds (i.e., break-it-to-make-it strategies) to achieve skeletal editing will be presented.

Bio: Richmond Sarpong is a Professor of Chemistry at the University of California Berkeley where he and his group specialize in synthetic organic chemistry. Richmond became interested in chemistry after seeing, firsthand, the effectiveness of the drug ivermectin in combating river blindness during his childhood in Ghana, West Africa. Richmond described his influences and inspirations in a TEDxBerkeley talk in 2015 (Face of Disease in Sub-Saharan Africa – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nIsY87-zkXA>). Richmond completed his undergraduate studies at Macalester College in St. Paul, MN and his graduate work was carried out with Prof. Martin Semmelhack at Princeton. He conducted postdoctoral studies at Caltech with Prof. Brian Stoltz. At Berkeley (since 2004), Richmond's laboratory focuses on the synthesis of bioactive complex organic molecules.

