



WPI

CHEMISTRY & BIOCHEMISTRY



Wednesday, April 29th, 2026

12:00 PM

Gateway Park 1002

Dr. Junhong Chen

Crown Family Professor of Molecular Engineering

University of Chicago

Lead Water Strategist and Senior Scientist

Argonne National Laboratory

“Molecular Engineering of Field-Effect Transistor Water Sensors Based on 2D Nanomaterials”

This talk will unveil a powerful approach to real-time water sensors through molecular engineering of 2D nanomaterials in a field-effect transistor platform. The working principle of the sensor is that the conductivity of 2D nanomaterial channel changes upon binding of chemical or biological species to molecular probes anchored on the nanomaterial surface. As such, the presence and the concentration of analytes (e.g., PFAS, heavy metals, bacteria, and nutrients) can be determined by measuring the sensor resistance change. The patented technology allows for real-time detection of deadly contaminants with high sensitivity and selectivity in field settings for one-time testing or in-line continuous flow testing. The sensor signals can be wirelessly transmitted to a central control station so that the health status of the entire water distribution system could be monitored remotely in real time. The envisioned smart water distribution system can significantly mitigate risks to ensure a safe water supply. The talk will focus on the molecular engineering aspects of the sensor device (e.g., engineering nanomaterial channel, molecular probe, and device passivation) through both theoretical and experimental approaches. The talk will end with a brief introduction on the translation of the platform technology from concept to prototype product.

Host: Dr. Rong Wang