

# Filling the critical need for radiochemists

A new radiochemistry trainee program at WSU will help address a critical shortage of scientists in the nuclear energy industry.

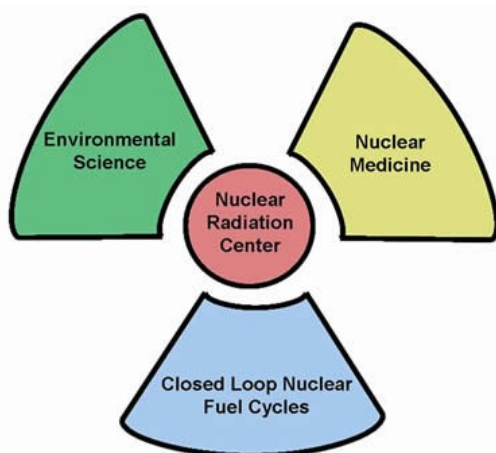
Supported by a \$3 million U.S. Department of Energy grant, the program will enhance training at WSU and enable our graduate students to work alongside radiochemistry experts at the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, Idaho National Laboratory, and Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory for the next five years.



Nathalie Wall

“Researchers and staff trained in America’s nuclear era in the late 20th century are retiring in large numbers, and the current supply of trainees will not be able to keep up with demand,” said Nathalie Wall, associate professor of chemistry and director of the WSU radiochemistry traineeship. “This program will provide our students with a variety of research experiences and a pipeline of potential employees well-educated in radiochemistry.”

Students selected for the traineeship, which begins this fall, will be assigned a mentor at one of the national laboratories based on the specific discipline they are interested in studying.



During the first academic year of the two-year program, students will conduct independent research under the guidance of a WSU faculty member and their national laboratory mentor on topics such as nuclear forensics, environmental radiochemistry, and radioactive waste management.

The following summer, trainees will spend anywhere from a few weeks to a few months getting real-world experience at the national laboratories.



During the final summer, students will present their research at professional meetings.

The program includes a partnership with the Colorado School of Mines, which will broaden and deepen the curriculum available to trainees at both universities through the use of online coursework and video lectures. In addition to scientific experience, program participants will receive guidance on non-scientific skills, such as compiling effective résumés and interviewing for jobs.

-By Will Fer

