The University of North Dakota celebrated its 129th birthday with special recognitions and awards during the Annual Founders Day event. Chemistry Faculty members receiving awards at this event were Dr. Evguenii Kozliak, Professor of Physical Chemistry, and Dr. Julia Zhao, Associate Professor of Analytical Chemistry.

Dr. Kozliak shared the UND Award for Interdisciplinary Collaboration in Research or Creative Work with his frequent collaborator, Dr. Wayne Seames, Chester Fritz Distinguished Professor of Chemical Engineering. This award recognizes outstanding interdisciplinary, collaborative work in the past three years by two or more UND faculty investigators. Drs. Kozliak and Seames have established nationally recognized research programs in three distinct areas. Two of these, “renewable fuels and chemicals” and “the sustainable use of coal” formed the basis for the establishment of the SUNRISE research and education supercluster (http://www.und.edu/org/sunrise/). Thus the indirect impact of their work has gone well beyond the specific impacts from their research, changing the ways researchers of different disciplines interact with each other.

Dr. Zhao received one of 43 North Dakota Spirit Faculty Achievement Awards.

The Spirit Award honors faculty members who have made significant contributions to mission of the university. Over the last several years, Dr. Zhao has maintained one of the largest research groups within the department and has been a tireless mentor for graduate, undergraduate and even high-school researchers. She has also been instrumental in winning National Science Foundation funding for a departmental electron microscopy facility and a $2.5M Department Defense award that was funded in consort with the California company, NanoSys, Inc. Both projects have provided a significant boost to the university’s profile in nanoscience and nanotechnology.