

Charles H. (Butch) Atwood

Butch Atwood is a native of Laurel, MS. After matriculating through the Laurel City Schools he headed off to Millsaps College in Jackson, MS where he received his BS in Chemistry. Graduate school at Florida State University immediately followed. He received a PhD in nuclear chemistry in 1979. Postdoctoral work at the Australian National University occupied the next three years of his life. In 1982, Butch began pursuing his present passion of teaching and improving learning in chemistry classes with a new position at the University of Georgia. For three years Butch and his wife, Judy, lived in Athens, GA and raised their two children. In 1985 they moved to Macon, GA to start work at Mercer University. After 10 years at Mercer the University of Georgia's chemistry department invited Butch to return to assume the position of general chemistry coordinator. This work occupied the next 16 years of his life. In 2011 the University of Utah invited him to become the Ragsdale Professor of Chemical Education. Butch and Judy left Athens in July of 2011 leaving behind a great job to assume a fantastic one in Salt Lake City.

Butch and his research group look at methods to improve success rates in large general chemistry classes. Recently they have raised the success rate at the University of Utah to over 85 %. His interactions with Utah high schools include AP labs for high school students that are taught at the University of Utah. Butch hosts workshops for high school teachers twice a year. During the summer he also holds a six weeklong chemistry enrichment program for high school students. He has just been asked to help the College Level Entrance Program assess their test questions.