



# 2009–2010 POCC Lecture Series

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Professor Janis Louie

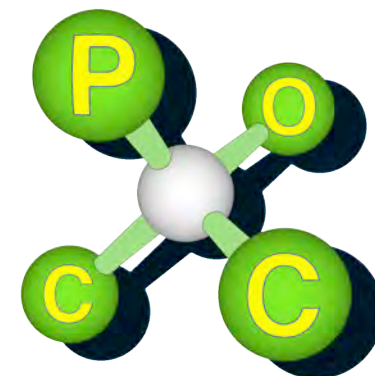
University of Utah

## *"The Versatility of Nickel Cycloaddition Catalysts"*

Carolyn Hoff Lynch Lecture Hall

Chemistry Building, University of Pennsylvania

The Philadelphia  
Organic Chemist's  
Club



POCCclub.org

Janis Louie was born and raised in San Francisco. She received a B.S. degree in 1993 from the Univ. of California, Los Angeles, and a Ph.D. degree in 1998 from Yale University under the direction of John F. Hartwig. After an NIH postdoctoral fellowship with Robert H. Grubbs, she joined the faculty at the University of Utah where she is now an Associate Professor. Professor Louie's research focuses on the discovery and understanding of new reactions catalyzed by transition metal complexes. She has developed a highly active Ni(0) catalyst that effectively mediates a variety of cycloaddition and isomerization reactions. For example, when ligated with electron rich, sterically-hindered N-heterocyclic carbenes, Ni(0) facilitates the cycloaddition between unsaturated hydrocarbons (e.g. diynes, enynes) and heterocumulenes (such as CO<sub>2</sub> and isocyanates) as well as other derivatives (such as aldehydes, ketones, and nitriles) to afford a variety of substituted heterocycles (such as pyrones, pyridones, pyrans, and pyridines, respectively). In addition, the same catalyst system can be applied for the isomerization of vinyl cyclopropanes and the rearrangement of cyclopropylen-ynes. Importantly, all reactions proceed under extremely mild conditions (room temperature, atmospheric pressures, and short reaction times), require only catalytic amounts of Ni/NHC and readily available starting materials, and afford annulated products in excellent yields. With each system, her group has conducted extensive mechanistic investigations.

**Abstract:** Transition metal catalysts possess the profound ability to mediate transformations that are otherwise energetically prohibited. They can accelerate chemical reactions, exert remarkable kinetic control over product distribution, and provide an environmentally friendly method for preparing products with enormous synthetic utility. Towards this end, our group has recently discovered and developed a highly active Ni(0) catalyst that effectively mediates a variety of cycloaddition and isomerization reactions. For example, when ligated with electron rich, sterically-hindered N-heterocyclic carbenes, Ni(0) facilitates the cycloaddition between unsaturated hydrocarbons (e.g. diynes, enynes) and heterocumulenes (such as CO<sub>2</sub> and isocyanates) as well as other derivatives (such as aldehydes, ketones, and nitriles) to afford a variety of substituted heterocycles (such as pyrones, pyridones, pyrans, and pyridines, respectively). In addition, the same catalyst system can be applied for the isomerization of vinyl cyclopropanes and the rearrangement of cyclopropylen-ynes. Importantly, all reactions proceed under extremely mild conditions (room temperature, atmospheric pressures, and short reaction times), require only catalytic amounts of Ni/NHC and readily available starting materials, and afford annulated products in excellent yields (eqs. 1–6). The mechanistic details of these processes, and their potential utility in allowing access to useful molecules direct from easily prepared components, will be discussed.