

# Conference Report

## Swiss Summer School ‘Trends in Organic Synthesis’

Villars-sur-Ollon, August 18–22, 2019

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The ‘Villars Summers Schools’ have a long tradition and date back to the *séminaires du 3<sup>ème</sup> cycle* of the 1960s. Previously organized by a consortium of universities (Bern, Fribourg, Neuchâtel, Genève, and the EPFL; later joined by the University of Zürich), the summer schools are now a Swiss national event organized by the Division of Fundamental Research of the SCS.

The Swiss Summer Schools are one-week out-of-town courses and conference-type events for MSc, PhD and postdoctoral students with a focus on a selected topic. They offer a platform for the active scientific exchange between students and lecturers, and between the participants themselves.

### The Program and Lectures

The 2019 Villars Summer School was on ‘Trends in Organic Synthesis’ with a focus on synthetic methods in general, photoredox catalysis, radical chemistry, flow chemistry, and aspects of physical organic chemistry. The invited lecturers are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Lecturers, their affiliations and topics of their lectures

Prof. Darren Dixon, University of Oxford	Total synthesis
Prof. Corey Stephenson, University of Michigan	Photoredox catalysis
Prof. Shunsuke Chiba, NTU Singapore	Synthetic methods
Prof. Ilhyong Ryu, Osaka Prefecture University	Flow and radical chemistry
Prof. Herbert Mayr, LMU Munich	Physical organic chemistry
Dr. Joanna Wencel-Delord, CNRS / University of Strasbourg	Synthetic methods

Each invited lecturer delivered two one-hour lectures followed by an extensive 15-minute discussion. These lectures were complemented by talks of researchers from industry (Table 2) giving insight into their work.

The industry lecturers were present for at least one full day, making themselves available for discussions with the participants.

### Participants, Highlights and Feedback

Last but not least, the 52 participants, mainly students from Swiss universities and the EPF Lausanne, made an essential contribution to the program by presenting their work in the form of posters or research telegrams.

Table 2. The lecturers from industry, their affiliations and content of their presentations

Drs. Maud Reiter and Lionel Sautan, Firmenich	Discovery and synthesis of fragrances
Dr. Christoph Boss, Idorsia Pharmaceuticals Ltd.	Medicinal chemistry
Dr. Fridtjof Schroeder, Givaudan Schweiz AG	Discovery and synthesis of fragrances
Dr. Steffen Eller, ChemSpeed	Lab automation, workflows
Dr. Michaël Bersier, Lonza	Process design

The industry lectures, a new item in the program, gave the participants insight into the research performed in Swiss chemical and pharmaceutical companies. The industry lectures also marked one of the highlights of this summer school.

*Helvetica Chimica Acta* offered awards for the two ‘best’ presenters in each category (posters, short communications). In addition, perfumes sponsored by Firmenich went to two students



Fig. 1. Short student presentation. Answering a question from the audience using the flip-chart.



Fig. 2. Dr. Christoph Boss, industry lecturer, in discussion with students during the poster session.



Fig. 3. Discussing science in a relaxed atmosphere (poster session): Prof. Darren Dixon with student.

for their contributions to the discussion following the lectures. The Jury, consisting of the team of lecturers, had a difficult choice to make; the number of top-performers was remarkably high.

The Poster Session also added to the excitement and the excellent atmosphere. It is nice to discuss science and to establish personal contacts with a drink in your hand (see Figs 2 and 3).

The feedback from students and lecturers – academic or industry – was excellent. The topics presented, the quality of the lectures, and, most of all, the accessibility of the lecturers were greatly appreciated. The academic as well as the industry lecturers, on the other hand, enjoyed working with very active, well-trained and highly motivated students. The web site <https://sem19-1.chemistrycongresses.ch/en/> will give you more information about the event.

We would like to thank our sponsors for their financial contribution as well as for their commitment to support the event by the presence and direct involvement of their researchers. Finally, the conference venue and its nice staff greatly contributed to the success of the 2019 Villars Summer School. We are looking forward to the next edition of the Summer School at the Eurotel-Victoria in Villars. Only the weather will need to improve: Too often clouds hid the wonderful view of the Alps.



Fig. 4. Prof. Ilhyong Ryu during his lecture on flow chemistry.

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