

Conference Report

PCC Christmas Symposium Basel

Alain Baiyoumy, John Coats, Adriano D'Addio, Annika Huber, Werner Jauslin, Charlotte Kress, Nadja Niggli, Jiaming Peng, Giacomo Persiani, Björn Pfund, Pascal Rieder, and Vittoria Chimisso*

*Correspondence: V. Chimisso, E-mail: vittoria.chimisso@unibas.ch, University of Basel, Department of Chemistry, Mattenstrasse 24/a, CH-4058 Basel.

Keywords: Chemistry Symposium Basel · PhD Chemistry Community Basel

Introduction

As every end of the solar year, and with the holidays approaching, the PhD Chemistry Community (PCC) of the University of Basel gathers international professors and local outstanding postdocs to organize an in-house Christmas Symposium. The PCC Symposium has its own long tradition and wants to be the coronation of a flourishing academic year. The PCC aims at bringing closer together the graduate students of the chemistry department, bridging the differences between the research groups and promoting inclusion, exchange, and collaboration by organizing department research seminars, networking events, and social gatherings.

In close collaboration with the Department of Chemistry, it provides thus a platform for graduate students to increase their network and scientific knowledge of the other groups and is attentive to the needs of its fellow colleagues. As the PCC is a graduate student association, every year, a number of highly motivated, proactive and dynamic people come together as PCC board members to run these activities as students for students. Fig. 1 shows the current board members, when it was still safe to take a picture together.

Christmas Symposium Basel 2021

This year's edition of the PCC Christmas symposium was held online, as the rise in Covid-19 cases spiked to a worrying rate. Nonetheless, the online format was still rich in exchange, comments, questions and it kept the audience engaged for the whole duration of the symposium. In fact, the highest number of online participants was 104, with an average of 90 people connected. The participant number never went down below 78. The lecture sessions were chaired by **Vittoria Chimisso**, **Annika Huber**, **Adriano D'Addio**, **Giacomo Persiani**, **Pascal Rieder** and **Werner Jauslin**. The poster session was chaired by **Jiaming Peng**. The lectures were held by four invited keynote speakers and two exceptional postdocs from the University of Basel.

Prof. Dr. Andreas Walther (University of Mainz) opened the symposium by presenting living and programmable materials. From time-programmed self-assembly to energy-driven synthetic cell merging, he kept the audience engaged and underlined the importance of interdisciplinary approaches to science.

Dr. Christina Wegeberg (University of Basel) presented a strategy to increase the photoluminescence of earth abundant $3d^6$ complexes for greener photophysical applications.

Prof. Dr. Murielle Delley (University of Basel) showed the latest achievement in heterogeneous catalysis, by using less polluting, low impact materials for more sustainable hydrogenations.

Prof. Dr. David Leigh (University of Manchester) highlighted his most impressive and pioneering work with molecular machines and energy driven molecular motors.

Dr. Dimitrios Synttrivanis (University of Basel) provided an insight into supramolecular catalysis, mainly focusing on molecular capsules as host and its application to terpene cyclizations in the synthesis of complex natural products.



Fig. 1. The PCC board of 2021. From left to right: P. Rieder, A. D'Addio, V. Chimisso, A. Huber, C. Kress, G. Persiani, B. Pfund, J. Peng, W. Jauslin, J. Coats, without A. Baiyoumy and N. Niggli.

Prof. Dr. Sascha Hoogendoorn (University of Geneva) presented her most recent work on the primary cilium and its role in the Hedgehog signaling cascade by connecting novel CRISPER/CAS9 screening methodologies with interdisciplinary chemical biology approaches.

Poster Session and Prizes

The poster session was opened by a poster pitch competition, which was won by **Mariia Beliaeva**. The poster session was held online, on a platform which enabled the presenter and audience to interact and exchange questions and answers. The poster session was split into two sessions and allowed for a vivid scientific exchange. The poster prize winners were **Adriano D'Addio**, **Raphael Vogel** and **Tanno Alexander Schmidt** (Fig. 2). The prizes were awarded by professors of the Department of Chemistry, which were chosen as judges: **Prof. Dr. Murielle Delley**, **Prof. Dr. Konrad Tiefenbacher** and **Prof. Dr. Daniel**

Häussinger.

Additionally, this year the Department of Chemistry introduced an award for the Best PhD Thesis of the year. The students who not only graduated in 2020 with the highest grade of 6.0, but also collected an outstanding publication record and actively contributed to the development of the Department of Chemistry were awarded. The commission awarding the students is composed by the head of the department **Prof. Dr. Olivier Baudoin**, and **Prof. Konrad Tiefenbacher**. The three awardees of the Best PhD thesis for 2020 are **Dr. Anja Stämpfli**, **Dr. Mirjam Schreier** and **Dr. Pierre Thesmar**.

Acknowledgements

The Department of Chemistry of the University and the Ressort Nachwuchsförderung are gratefully acknowledged for generously funding and actively supporting the PCC activities all year around.

Received: December 17, 2021



Fig. 2. From left to right: best poster pitch presentation winner Mariia Beliaeva, poster prize winner for best poster, Tanno Alexander Schmidt, Adriano D'Addio, and Raphael Vogel.