

A Report on NESACS – GDCh German Exchange 2009

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The ninth annual exchange between the German Chemical Society's (Gesellschaft Deutscher Chemiker) Younger Chemists Forum (Jung Chemiker Forum) and the NESACS Younger Chemists Committee (YCC) took place in March. Prof. Ruth Tanner (U.Mass. Lowell), Prof. Mort Hoffman (Boston University), and Dr. Mike Strem (Strem Chemicals) accompanied the American delegation during their weeklong stay in Essen, Germany. The American delegation was comprised of Boston area graduate and undergraduate students.

The group was well received by the Organizing Committee of Frühjahrssymposium Essen at the Düsseldorf airport on March 8th. The German hosts then provided a walking tour of Essen that concluded at the restaurant Der Löwe, where everyone had the chance to sample authentic Bavarian food and get acquainted. Chemical research in Germany has a long and storied history and during the first few days of the stay the American delegates saw some of it first-hand. On Monday, two Max Planck Institutes in Mülheim an der Ruhr were visited – Max Planck Institute for Coal Research and Max Planck Institute for Bioinorganic Chemistry. The following day, our group toured the facilities of a chemical industry giant Bayer AG in Leverkusen. During the tour, different product groups were introduced, job and career opportunities were explained at Bayer, and then concluded with a trip in the Chempark Leverkusen with an explanation of the modern chemical park concept and the waste management plant. That afternoon, the city of Cologne was visited. On Wednesday, a local Essen company – Evonik Goldschmidt was toured.

The American delegation agrees that the highlight of the trip was that afternoon: most geared up as miners and went 1000 meters below the ground to take “a trip into a pit” and see coal mining. That evening was the welcome reception for the 11th JCF-Frühjahrssymposium at the University of Essen-Duisburg.

During the three-day conference, Andrew Kleinke (Boston University), Courtney Pfluger (Northeastern University), and Daniel Turner (MIT) delivered oral presentations and the rest of the group presented posters at the symposium. In addition to presenting research, everyone was engaged in extensive networking and scientific discussions with German and European students participating at the conference. At the end of the conference two members from the delegation, Erin Iski (Tufts University) and Brian Steinberg (Boston College), were recognized for their poster presentations skills. Erin, who is a 4th year graduate student in Prof. Charlie Sykes lab, presented her work entitled, “AgCl Monolayers on Au(111): Novel, Ultra-stable and Atomically-flat Surfaces.” Brian, who anticipates graduating this year, presented his thesis work entitled “Target Oriented



American delegation at Evonik before (top) and after (bottom) the trip into a pit – Legend for the top picture: Front row (l-r) Daniel Turner, Courtney Pfluger, Christina Li, Deniz Yüksel, Olga Makhlynets, Rachel Tsui, Mariam Ismail, Marina Pellon Consunji. Back Row (l-r) Evonik Representative, Carol Bischof (JCF), Brian Steinberg, Tamara Halkina, Erin Iski, Raeanne Napoleon, Andrew Kleinke, Igor Schapiro(JCF).

Total Synthesis Leads to a New Class of Unnatural Products” which he carried out in Prof. Lawrence Scott’s lab.

At the end of the week, American students were invited to a farewell dinner hosted by Dr. Kurt Begitt, Deputy Executive Director and Director of Education and Professional Affairs of the GDCh and members of the JCF. The American and German delegations exchanged gifts to say thank you for such an eventful week during the meal. Lifelong relationships were forged during the week, and neither group will forget the fun that was had during the ninth annual German Exchange. ◇