

The Global Reach of Younger Chemists during the ACS National Meeting in Boston

Contributions by Leland Johnson and Felicia Lucci, German Exchange Steering Committee

On behalf of the German Exchange Steering Committee, we would like to share some of the best moments from the highly successful visit to Boston by younger chemists from around the globe. Numerous volunteers from the NSYCC, the national Younger Chemists Committee (YCC), and local industries assisted in executing programming for 40 participants in each and every event, including representatives from our local section and international participants in the exchange. With tremendous budgetary support from many organizations, this well-choreographed and complex visit was successfully accomplished during the 250th ACS National Meeting.

At this time in 2001, readers of *The Nucleus* were reading stories about a new and successful international exchange program developed by NESACS and the Gesellschaft Deutscher Chemiker (GDCh), i.e., the German Chemical Society. Mort Hoffman recounted events of the first Exchange Program with Germany, describing the cultural, scientific, professional, and social events, including scientific presentations, discussions on education in Germany and the United States, and coordination with the American Chemical Society (ACS), the board of NESACS, the Younger Chemists Committee of NESACS (NSYCC) and others. Heavily involved in these efforts were the founders and early adopters of the program, Mike Strem, Ruth Tanner, Mort Hoffman, Bob Lichter, and Amy Tapper.

In addition to reeling in the solemn days following 9/11, readers of *The Nucleus* were allowed to escape with hope for the future of our chosen profession, chemistry. There was hope that this amazing new program could transcend political and cultural differences while providing opportunities for younger chemists from both our section and Germany to reach out and to discuss their research on an international stage. These interactions would set the students apart from their peers and improve their professional networks while broadening their view of the world.

Flash forward to 2015. Fourteen years later, the original founders are still having a crucial impact on the program while inspiring new leaders to continue with the work of the founders. This year the program expanded to include two additional international exchange programs inspired by and modeled after the Exchange Program with Germany. These new groups opened up new channels for international collaborations for all the younger chemists involved.

We thank our generous sponsors—The budget approved by NESACS supported a majority of the activities during the week!

- The Northeastern Section of the American Chemical Society
- James Flack Norris Trust (NESACS)
- Henry A. Hill Trust (NESACS)
- The American Chemical Society (ACS)
- Younger Chemists Committee (YCC)
- Membership Activities Committee (MAC)
- Local Section Innovative Program Grant (IPG)
- Global Initiative Grant (GIG)
- Corporation Associates Local Section Grant (CA)
- The Northeast Region- P3 Award (NERACS P3)
- Gesellschaft Deutscher Chemiker (GDCh)
- JungChemikerforum (JCF)
- European Association for Chemical and Molecular Sciences (EuCheMS)
- European Younger Chemists Network (EYCN)
- The Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC)
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More than a year ago, plans began to take shape for the German Exchange Steering Committee to host a joint exchange program with National YCC during the 2015 ACS National Meeting. More than twenty international delegates, representing 7 countries, would travel to Boston to represent the German Chemical Society Younger Chemists Committee (GDCh-JCF) and the European Young Chemists Network (EYCN). A third exchange program, International Young Chemists Network (IYCN), would also join us for a portion of the week, bringing an additional 25 participants representing 15 more countries. From the arrival of the first flights, delegates and our volunteers were constantly on the move, participating in the ACS meeting and networking events while enjoying the culture of New England.

The week began on Saturday, August 15th, at Logan International Airport with flights from Frankfurt, Madrid, London, Amsterdam and elsewhere. After clearing customs, nearly twenty participants traveled to the College Club of Boston with Felicia Lucci, Ruth Tanner, Martin Isaks, and Leland Johnson. Perfectly positioned in Back Bay, the College Club served as the operations hub for volunteers and the living quarters for delegates during the week. Shortly after arrival at the hotel, the NSYCC, led by Felicia

Lucci, began aiding our guests by distributing maps, schedules, and registration credentials to each of the 20+ delegates and supporting members.

Immediately the group departed for the first of many engaging dinners; this one at Maggiano's Little Italy in Back Bay. The younger chemist at the dinner included twelve members of the JungChemikerForum (JCF) from Germany and six participants from Younger Chemists Crossing Borders (YCCB), as well as the chairs of the JCF, EYCN, and NSYCC. Over a welcome reception and dinner, an inviting atmosphere was enjoyed as participants began to compare and contrast the activities of young chemists worldwide. Energized by cheerful networking, good food, and a few adult beverages, the dinner kicked off the events of the week in style. Brian D'Amico diligently recorded scores of images on Saturday evening, contributing to hundreds of photos he collected throughout the week. Each picture will serve as permanent record of the development of global friendships and a reminder of the bonds created as a result of participation in the joint exchange program.



Members of the 2015 GDCh-JCF Exchange to Boston pose after the welcome dinner with the NSYCC at the welcome dinner at Maggiano's Little Italy in Back Bay, Boston. Image courtesy of Brian D'Amico

Starting on Sunday, August 16th, the chemists traveled daily to the Boston Convention and Exposition Center (BCEC) to listen to technical presentations and engage in

scientific discussions. For many of the European delegates, they had never attended a scientific meeting as large as the ACS national meeting. At first the number of talks overwhelmed our guests, but they immediately began attending presentations relevant to their own research. During the week, the delegates gave more than 30 talks; these talks initiated collaborative discussions. The technical program left a fantastic scientific impression on our guests. As relayed by one of the JCF members, “The ACS Meeting & Exhibition was an amazing experience. I have never been to such a big meeting before. Furthermore, the exchange with American colleagues was very inspiring, and the whole atmosphere between the different people was great... Definitely an experience I will remember for the rest of my life.”

On Monday, delegates, alumni, and society representatives participated in an all-day symposium and lunch at the Seaport Hotel in Boston. The title of the symposium was Younger Chemists Exchanging More than Currency: First—Euros and Dollars; Next—Rupees, Rands, and Reais. The past, present and future operations of various exchanges, the personal experiences of several delegates, and entertaining, yet poignant “my-path-to-here” presentations ruled the symposium schedule. After nine hours in one room, we each took away several action items from the Seaport Hotel. Specifically, young chemists’ organizations worldwide have the potential to impact the progress of both their societies and individual participants. Regardless of location, each organization provides multiple opportunities for personal growth and unforgettable experiences.



Alumni of the Exchange Program with Germany, Lauren Wolf (2003, now with C&EN) and Leland Johnson (2006, now with Conditas Biotechnology Group and 2016 Chair-Elect, NESACS) spoke to Monday's audience about the positive impacts of the exchange on personal career paths and the influence of the exchange on other similar programs. Image courtesy of Mort Hoffman.

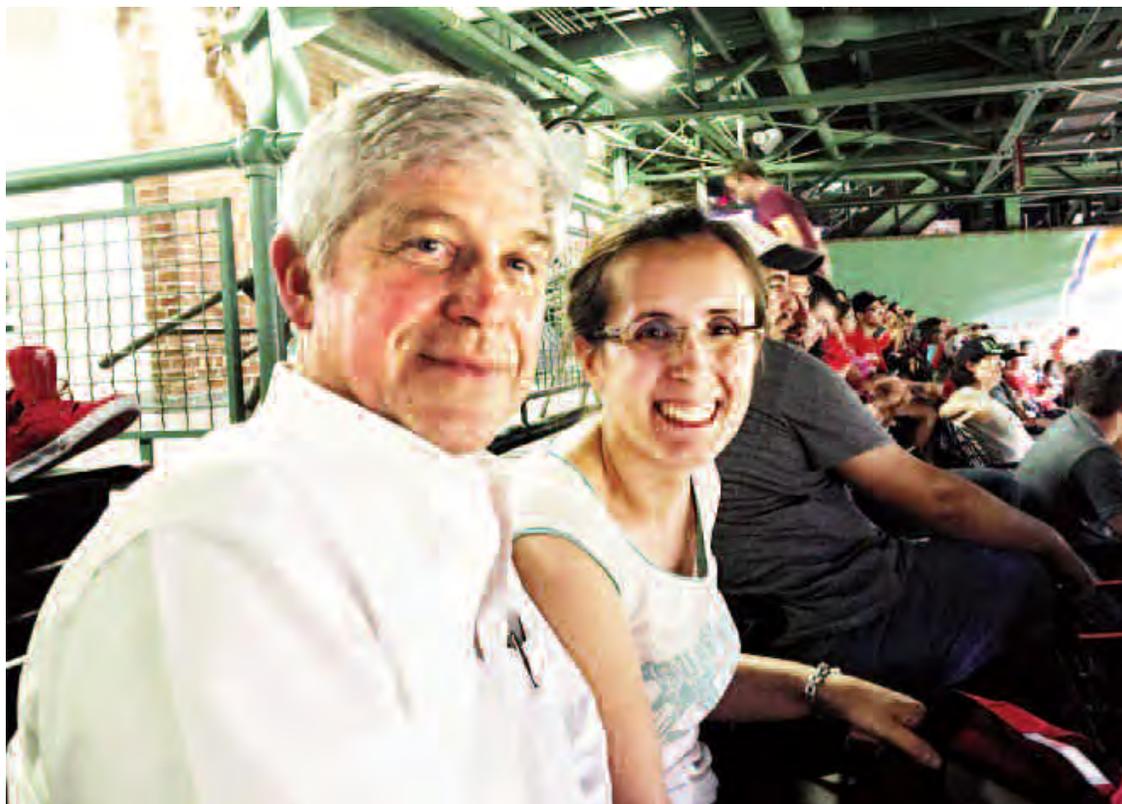
Discussions about the impact of young chemists continued on Wednesday during a meeting for an ACS initiative to develop a global network for young chemists. The workshop featured passionate discussions about global inclusion of all young chemists, demonstrating the commitment of the next generation of scientists to their home societies and to international collaborations. In addition to furthering intercontinental relations, the event provided local young chemists with the opportunity to become actively involved with the international activities of the ACS. Many participants of International Young Chemists Network (IYCN) programming joined us for the remainder of the week to continue to build upon these relationships.

Though many scientific and societal collaborations were initiated during the meeting, plenty of socializing also occurred. We attended numerous receptions and social events with our guests during the meeting. Post-meeting receptions began on Sunday night with the International Attendees Reception where delegates and international chemical society leaders mingled, built new connections, and offered personal invitations to some of the events planned for the week. On Monday, many delegates attended Sci-Mix to support their colleagues' poster presentations and to converse about scientific results in a more relaxed atmosphere. The networking continued at the Chemluminary Awards and Reception, where we all applauded the Public Relations Committee for receiving two awards. Dancing to 90s pop music continued well into the night. In addition to networking events organized for the meeting, many delegates enjoyed after hours discussions and refreshments with the NSYCC. On Sunday night, the NSYCC hosted a wicked cool get together at the Back Bay Social Club. Originally slated for a small gathering of 10-15 people, nearly 250 chemists of all ages showed up to unofficially kick off ACS week and the week of exchange events.



*Nearly 250 people joined the local NSYCC at the Back Bay Social Club on Sunday evening.
Image courtesy of Brian D'Amico.*

After the scientific program on Wednesday, the cultural portion of the exchange program officially began with a baseball game at Fenway Park. The game was one of the highlights of the exchange, as local members of NESACS enjoyed explaining the intricacies of baseball to our intrigued guests. Sponsored entirely by a generous donation from Strem Chemicals, Inc., we traveled as a group to Fenway Park and enjoyed a win for the Red Sox over the Cleveland Indians! Anticipated for some time, many guests joined us to watch the Red Sox score 4 home runs for an entertaining win, 6-4! Despite some question as to whether the section allowed adult beverages or not, many enjoyed the game and the libations, with additional guests, including 2011 President of the ACS, Nancy Jackson, and CEO of the ACS, Tom Connelly. After the game many continued the night's celebrations in the bustling bars near Fenway Park. At least one of our German delegates commented, "I really liked the baseball game!" Though many on the exchange had never before attended this bedrock activity of Americana, most were able to glean a great deal of background from an explanation of baseball, provided in advance, by NESACS' own Mort Hoffman.



CEO of the American Chemical Society, Tom Connelly, and Education Coordinator for the GDCh, Education and Science, Elisabeth Kapatsina, share a moment at Fenway Park. Image courtesy of Leland Johnson.

Thursday provided a much-anticipated trip to Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute (WHOI). With additional members of the International Young Chemists Network joining us, we traveled down to tour WHOI. Due to our large size (>40 people), we split up chemists of similar background into the Hydrogen-Carbon and Oxygen-Nitrogen groups to tour the Quissett Campus, where we saw the laboratories for carbon dating. The highlight of the tour was seeing Alvin, the research submarine. Between tours we enjoyed the beautiful August day while having a relaxing lunch on the waterfront.



*Kevin Nagel (GDCh), Christine Dunne (YCC, YCCB) and Goswin de Kruijff (GDCh) enjoy lunch at the docks outside of WHOI.
Image courtesy Brian D'Amico*

That evening, Jackie O'Neil (Alkermes) and Jens Breffke (NIST, YCCB) organized an amazing social and professional networking event at Goodwill Park that facilitated networking between younger chemists and society representatives from around the globe. With sponsorship from the RSC, the GDCh, and EuCheMS, representatives in attendance included founding members of the German Exchange Committee, NESACS, EYCN, IYCN, and, of course, the delegates. We were honored to welcome David Cole Hamilton, president of EuCheMS, who joined us for the day.



Forming lasting friendships amongst exchange participants. (left to right) Fernando Gomollón Bel (EYCN Chair), Catherine Rawlins (NSYCC Chair-Elect), and Michael Linden (JCF Chair) at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute. Image courtesy of Catherine Rawlins.

On Friday delegates were temporarily split into smaller, more manageable groups to tour MIT or Harvard. Alumni from our 2014 Jena Exchange arranged tours of university labs. After the tours each group walked along the Charles River to the Sanofi's (Genzyme) Allston cGMP production plant, where Andrew Scholte and his colleagues arranged for lunch and a tour of their facilities. There we explored the well-designed and visionary plant with the site head and others from Genzyme. Our tour guides were helpful, informative, and funny. Each of us learned a great deal about rare diseases and the serious challenges faced by companies who choose to tackle some of the hardest questions in health care.

As our week came to an end, Friday was the evening to say “farewell” to our new friends. We found a dinner and cruise on The Odyssey from Rowes Wharf might be a great venue for the last night the group was together. This turned out to be a great opportunity to reflect on the amazing week of science and fun and to focus on the future events that will certainly bring some of us together again and again. The food on the boat was great! The atmosphere was perfect, despite a bit of rain earlier in the evening. Our group enjoyed all decks on the boat and the many different views of the Boston Harbor and our beloved host city. The celebration continued after departing from the boat. At a local bar many other colleagues we met during the week joined us for a final celebration.



Delegates from three exchange programs converged on Sanofi's Allston production facility. We thank our sponsors for their ongoing support of programs like these. Image courtesy Brian D'Amico.



Delegates from GDCh, YCCB, IYCN exchange program pose for a picture with members of NSYCC and the Steering Committee before boarding the boat for a farewell dinner. Image courtesy of Premier Yachts, Inc.



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In conclusion, the return on investment our section has realized from this program for the last 15 years will continue in earnest for the years to come. Local younger chemists are eagerly preparing their applications for two outbound exchange visits to Europe to attend the JCF-Frühjahrssymposium in Kiel, Germany and the EuCheMS Chemistry Congress in Seville, Spain. Every year, this exchange initiates a passion for international collaborations and reveals the opportunities available within NESACS for young chemists. All but one of our YCC chairpersons has come from the Exchange Program with Germany, while several of our German Exchange Steering Committee members have been Chairs of NESACS. Finally, our section should, based solely or partially on our activities described here, be well positioned to apply for and earn national and international recognition through the following **Chemluminary Awards-**

- 1) YCC
Outstanding Local Section Younger Chemists Committee
- 2) YCC
Outstanding or Creative Local Section Younger Chemists Committee Event
- 3) LSAC and DAC
Outstanding Collaboration Between A Division and Local Section

- 4) Corporation Associates
Outstanding Local Section Industry Event
- 5) Committee on International Activities
Global Engagement Award: Local Section
- 6) Local Section Partnership Award
Most Innovative New Activity or Program
- 7) Outstanding Performance by a Local Section – Very Large Size Category Award
(This is based upon the year-long efforts of the section)

Our committee will work with the other parties involved in our events to self-nominate for these awards. Exchange programs like this could not occur without strong volunteers and without strong local, regional, national, and international support. On behalf of the committee, we thank our sponsors, our volunteers, our participants, and you very much!