

## 2022 NESACS / GDCh Student Exchange Program

Eleven students were selected to represent NESACS at the 2022 *Frühjahrssymposium* in Hannover, Germany as a result of interviews conducted in November, 2021.

The main group of delegates and three accompanying others (Jackie O'Neil, Jens Breffke, and Zemen Berhe) were met at Hamburg Airport on March 20 by Elisabeth Kapatsina of the German Chemical Society (GDCh), who was to be their guide, adviser, and close companion for the week. A charter bus brought them to their hotel in Hannover. That evening the delegates were welcomed by their *JungChemikerForum* (JCF) hosts at a dinner featuring classic German food and beer.



Delegates and their JCF/GDCh hosts tour Hannover (© NESACS)

On Monday morning, the delegates (Figure 1) went on a tour of the city of Hannover, led by a tour guide who captivated them with his stories and sense of humor. Among the sites they visited where the Neues Rathaus, which was completed just before World War I, and Aegidienkirche, a church that was built in 1347, heavily damaged in an air raid in 1943, and left in ruins as a war memorial.

After an afternoon of free time on Monday, delegates toured the campus of Leibniz University on Tuesday morning, visiting many chemistry research labs and an ornate lecture hall in the Institute for Inorganic Chemistry.



(a) Delegates' tour of Leibniz University included this one and many other research labs and (b) a staged lecture in the impressive Kali-Chemie-Hörsaal. (© NESACS)

Tuesday afternoon was spent on a guided tour of the magnificent Herrenhäuser Gardens. Though the gardens lacked much of their warm weather color and greenery, delegates enjoyed the sculptured evergreens, magnificent buildings and monuments, and interacting with the gilded statues.

Wednesday morning began with a guided tour of the Sprengel Museum, which holds one of the most significant collections of modern art in Germany. The tour was followed by the delegates first of several visits to a COVID-19 test center prior to checking in at the *Frühjahrssymposium*. That afternoon they enjoyed coffee and cake with the JCF executive board, and that evening attended a networking event hosted by Covestro AG.

Thursday and Friday mornings began with more COVID-19 tests followed by full days of *Frühjahrssymposium* technical programming. Most of the delegates presented their research in poster sessions; however, the JCF program committee had selected Kludja Caushi and Ryan Tripker to give oral presentations.

On Friday evening delegates had the opportunity to sample Hannover night life (by participating in a growing *Frühjahrssymposium* tradition: the bar crawl. As one delegate put it: 'It

was such a delight to be able to talk with people in a casual setting where I could connect with them on a more personal level. It was also fun to share laughs and drinks together!

The symposium ended at mid-day on Saturday. During the closing ceremony the symposium organizers noted that the theme of the *Frühjahrssymposium 2022* had been 'Communicating the Future'. In support of that theme, they judged all the oral presentations to determine which one made the best use of visual technology. They presented their *Best Gif of Them All Award* to NESACS delegate Ryan Tripker.



Ryan and his *Best Gif of Them All Award* (© NESACS)

Saturday evening the NESACS delegates were the guest of the JCF at a formal farewell dinner. Unfortunately, by then three participants had tested positive for COVID-19 and were in isolation at the hotel.

On Sunday the healthy student delegates scheduled to return to Boston did so, and those with extended stays went on to their next destinations before returning to Boston between March 31 and April 2.

Following their return to Boston the student delegates presented their research at the 23rd Annual Northeast Student Chemistry Research Conference hosted by the Northeastern Section Younger Chemist Committee in a virtual format on April 23. Afterward, it was announced that Hannah Boyce had won the Outstanding Oral Presentation Award.