

Editorial

This December issue of CHIMIA hosts Life Sciences Switzerland (LS²) as a guest editor: we are particularly thankful to CHIMIA and the Swiss Chemical Society (SCS) for this opportunity to present LS² to the broad CHIMIA readership.



Who are we? LS² (www.ls2.ch) is the largest non-profit organization for Life Scientists in Switzerland. It emerged from the former USGEB (Union of Swiss Societies for Experimental Biology) when three societies, Swiss Society for Molecular & Cellular Biosciences, Swiss Proteomics Society, and Swiss Physiological Society, merged into a single grass-root organization in January 2016 and became LS² sections. In addition, three additional societies have already established strong partnerships with LS², Swiss Society of Experimental Pharmacology (SSEP), Swiss Society for Anatomy, Histology & Embryology (SSAHE) and the Swiss Chemical Society (SCS), to enhance collaborations and expand LS² scope and mission. Beyond a more efficient flow of information, the partnership between LS² and SCS is leading to a number of common actions, including scientific sessions in LS² and SCS annual meetings and this joint LS²– CHIMIA issue.

What do we do? With this backbone, LS² represents a unique platform to foster and support the interests of Life Sciences and their scientists in Switzerland. Above all, LS² organizes the renowned **LS² Annual Meeting**, which will take place very soon (February 2–3, 2017) in Zurich (www.ls2-annual-meeting.ch), and the **Annual Physiology** and **Proteomics section meetings**. With support from the Swiss Academy of Sciences (SCNAT), LS² provides 30–40 **travel grants** to PhD students each year (www.ls2.ch/funding/travel-grants). In addition, the LS² office and board have implemented **LS² Satellite Meetings** to promote early career scientists at major Swiss Life Sciences events. The first event preceded the prestigious Louis-Jeantet symposium in Geneva, while the second will open the ‘Frontiers in Medicinal Chemistry’ meeting in Bern in February 2017 (follow updates on: www.meetings.ls2.ch). To reach out to the general public, LS² presented a booth during ‘**Planète Santé: LIVE**’ (November 24–27, SwissTech Convention Center, Lausanne), fostering inspiring public debates and interactions with the approx. 30'000 participants. Altogether, we aim at providing our nearly 1200 members and the public with a unique communication and interaction platform across the country.

Why a joint LS²–CHIMIA issue? Life scientists and chemists have a long tradition of common interests that have crystalized notably in the development of biological chemistry, with the synthesis of natural products, pharmacology and biochemistry as a new discipline in the 60s and 70s. More recently, the traditional boundaries between the fields of chemistry and biology have become more blurred, particularly in new cross-disciplinary areas of research that are developing at the interface between traditional fields, including in particular Chemical Biology. In this issue, LS² wishes to capture exciting developments in life sciences in Switzerland and to offer a cross-section of Swiss research and core facilities, at this cross-disciplinary interface. Moreover, all scientists, including of course chemists and life scientists, share common fundamental interests. Scientists should speak with a single voice in national political debates on education, research and developments, including those that made the headlines, both towards the government and funding agencies and towards the public. To this end, you will also find in this issue transcripts of the presentations made at the 2016 Annual Meeting of LS² by Mauro dell’Ambrogio, State Secretary for Education, Research and Innovation, and by Aysim Yilmaz, Head of the Division Biology/Medicine at the Swiss National Science Foundation

The Editorial Board of CHIMIA warmly thanks Dr. Carolin von Schoultz, Dr. Anna Brandenburg, and the LS² Presidency for organizing this issue on ‘Life Sciences in Switzerland’ and providing an interesting insight into an area so closely allied to chemistry.