

Conference Report

Third BeNeFri Student Spring Symposium 2025 – A Scientific Day in Fribourg

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The third edition of the **BeNeFri Student Spring Symposium** was held on April 25th 2025, at the Department of Chemistry, University of Fribourg. The event brought together young researchers from Fribourg, Bern, and Neuchâtel to present their research across a wide range of disciplines, including organic chemistry, catalysis, machine learning, artificial muscles, polymers, and more (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1. Group picture of the participants at this year Symposium.

The symposium opened with a welcome address by Gaetano Geraci, President of youngSCS, who introduced the mission of the youngSCS community, presented the day's agenda, and set the tone for a vibrant day of scientific exchange. The program featured two invited talks by principal investigators, alongside four sessions of contributed presentations delivered by young researchers. More than just a series of presentations, the symposium was a chance to build new connections, exchange ideas, and celebrate the energy and creativity of the next generation of scientists.



The event started off with the first invited speaker of the day, **Asst. Prof. Jessica Clough**, from Adolphe Merkle Institute who presented her interesting work on optical mapping of mechanical forces in polymeric materials. During the afternoon session, our second invited speaker, **Dr. Pascal Bertsch**, Senior Scientist at the Food Research and Innovation Centre at the University of Fribourg spoke about his work on the design of Pickering emulsions for digestion modulation and oral delivery of gastric-sensitive therapeutics.

This year, we had a wonderful contribution from PhDs and Postdoctoral researchers from Adolphe Merkle Institute (AMI), University of Bern (UniBE), Paul Scherrer Institute (PSI), and University of Fribourg (UniFR) who gave short oral presenta-

tions which was a great opportunity for the young researchers to share their work on a wide range of topics. The talented attendees who gave the contributed talks for the BeNeFri Symposium were – **Chang Liu** (PSI), **Davide de Luca** (AMI), **Murad Najafov** (UniFR), **Giacomo Rigoni** (UniBE), **Subrata Patra** (UniBE), **Carolina Pierucci** (AMI), **Oindrila Mondal** (AMI), **Abinaya Subramanian** (UniFR), **Xue Wang** (PSI), **Davide Lardani** (AMI), **Nicolas Bruder** (AMI), **Elisa Mégroz** (UniFR) and **Victoire de Cauna** (AMI).

One of the key moments of the symposium was the Best Oral Presentation Award given to Giacomo Rigoni, a PhD candidate from the University of Bern, for his engaging presentation on ‘*Accelerating transfer hydrogenation of sterically hindered ketones with a novel mono-substituted aminocarbene (MAC) ruthenium complex*’. The award, sponsored by Chemistry Europe, was presented by Gaetano Geraci, President of the Young Swiss Chemical Society.



Fig. 2. Gaetano Geraci (right) awards Giacomo Rigoni (left) the prize for the Best Oral Presentation sponsored by Chemistry Europe.

Throughout the day, the scientific program was marked by an impressively high standard of presentations. Each speaker demonstrated excellent preparation, and the diversity and depth of the talks made for a truly engaging and inspiring symposium. The audience responded with lively questions and discussions, reflecting the strong interest sparked by every contribution.

The event concluded with a networking aperitif, generously sponsored by the NCCR Bio-Inspired Materials, offering participants a relaxed opportunity to exchange ideas, connect with regional peers, and reflect on the day's presentations.

Acknowledgements

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Special thanks to Chemistry Europe for sponsoring the Best Oral Presentation Award. We would like to thank the University of Fribourg for hosting the event, the Swiss Chemical Society for their support, as well as the NCCR Bio-inspired materials and the Swiss National Science Foundation for funding. And finally, a big thanks goes to all the curious participants for contributing to this enriching experience.

Photo credit goes to Gaetano Geraci and Gabriela Henriques Silva.

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