

Activity Report

Period:	May 2009 – May 2010
Advisor:	Prof. Hugo Thienpont
Officers:	Els Moens (President) Tom Guldemont (Vice-President) Thomas Geernaert (Treasurer) Lawrence Bogaert (Secretary) Sara Van Overmeire (Past President)

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I. ACTIVITY REPORT

SPIE PHOTONICS EUROPE 2010: PHOTONICS CAREER EVENT STOP WAFFLING AND KICKSTART YOUR CAREER

At the end of March 2008, the SPIE Brussels Student Chapter took the initiative to organize a photonics career event at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB). The target public consisted (and still consists) of students who are doing a Master in Photonics, Master in Electronics or who are in the Erasmus Mundus in Photonics program at our university. Right from the start it has been very welcomed by both students and companies. It was then decided by the board of the Interuniversity Master in Photonics of VUB and Ghent University to hold this event annually, alternately organized by the University of Ghent and our university in Brussels. Last year, it was organized by the IEEE Photonics Benelux chapter in Ghent.

This year, the SPIE Brussels student chapter took the opportunity to collocate the Photonics Career Event with SPIE Photonics Europe, the largest international photonics conference in Europe. The event was held on Tuesday April 13th, in the exhibition hall, meaning that every visitor of the conference had the chance to participate for free. As a consequence, the target public was significantly extended with international students and (young) professionals.

We were very happy to present - despite the economic downturn - 12 fascinating international companies, which are active in photonics and which are at present looking for top-level engineers and scientists.

To explain the students how they should approach these companies, our invited speaker **Rik Moons** first shared some tips and tricks with them about how performing a good job interview.

Rik Moons has 25 years of experience in a variety of functions, during which he interviewed and assessed 100s of job-applicants. Currently, he is professor in Brussels as well as a fulltime consultant in the field of "management and communication". In this context, he is a frequently asked guest lecturer at several universities and engineering organizations.

Then we gave the floor to the companies themselves in a plenary session.

In a 10 minutes talk, the representatives of our **12 invited companies** explained their core business and presented the job opportunities that are currently available in their company. In this context, we had talks from Tyco, ASML, BEST, Philips, Hamamatsu, OIP, Optrima, Agfa-Gevaert, XIO Photonics, FOS&S, Barco and Multitel.

Afterwards, we continued the event with **break-out sessions**, where attendees had the opportunity to talk directly to the company representatives.

Every company therefore had at its disposal a table, located in the entrance hall of the exhibition. Several students took this chance to ask questions, to exchange business cards, to discuss whether the needs of the companies match their interests, or -who knows- to talk to their future employer.

Finally, to promote these personal conversations and networking in a pleasant atmosphere, our Student Chapter offered all the participants an authentic **Belgian Waffle**, to “Stop Waffling and kickstart their career in photonics”.

During the plenary talks, a sheet of paper was passed around, where attendees could write down their name, e-mail address, country and their course of study. This enabled us to provide their contact data to the companies, so that they can contact the students when they have new job opportunities, in the short term as well as in the longer run. In total, more than 80 people supplied us with their contact information.

At the end of the plenary talks, when entering the break-out session, all attendees received a flyer with the contact data of the participating companies.



Fig. 1: Tom Guldemont (our vice-president) introducing the “Stop waffling and kickstart your career” event



Fig. 2: About 80 students attended the event



Fig.3: Els Moens (our president) thanking one of the speakers with a bottle of champagne



Fig. 4: Belgian waffles to accompany the break-out session

*SPIE PHOTONICS EUROPE 2010:
BEST PRACTICES FOR A SUCCESSFULL FUTURE IN
PHOTONICS*

The “Best practices for a successful future in photonics” workshop was organized at photonics Europe 2010 in the Square Conference Center in Brussels, Belgium on Wednesday April 14th 2010. The goal of this event was to bring students and early professionals together in an interactive session.

Together with Dirk Fabian of SPIE Student Services, we brought together 4 top-level speakers all revealing their secrets for a better future in photonics.

The speakers we invited were:

- John Dudley: Physics, photonics and fun: building and sustaining a research career in optics
- Toby Murcott: Talking to the outside World: Communicating your science to journalists
- Ronan Burgess: The do’s and don’ts of EU funding
- Yves Verbandt: Best practices when applying for a European patent

Dirk Fabian provided us with a room, the possibility to subscribe online for the event and some giveaways for the attendees. To thank the speakers, we gave them some Belgian chocolates and a bottle of nice champagne.

We can say that this event was a clear success! With about 100 attendees and lots of interaction between the speakers and the audience, everybody left the session with the feeling that they had learned something that they could use to have better success in the professional future.

To further connect between the students and speakers, we made a reservation in a restaurant for a post-workshop dinner. Unfortunately, none of the speakers could join us, but still several students of

different student chapters had a very nice evening in the restaurant Restobières. We had typical Belgian food and of course Belgian beers!



Dr. John Dudley



Dr. Toby Murcott



Dr. Ronan Burgess



Dr. Yves Verbandt

Fig. 5: The four speakers at the best practices event



Fig. 6: The audience carefully listening to the speakers

FUN ACTIVITIES

1. TONA BBQ

The yearly tradition of the summer BBQ of the SPIE Student chapter was celebrated without mistake in 2009! For a very democratic participation fee our members could enjoy a wide variety of delicious pieces of meat (yes, we also provided some vegetables), beer and wine and in the mean time enjoy the nice weather on one of the grass fields at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel.



Fig. 7: The TONA members at our yearly BBQ

2. STUDENT WELCOME LUNCH

To kick off the fourth year of operation of the SPIE Brussels Student Chapter (2009-2010) we organized a student welcome lunch the 14th of October. All master and PhD students in photonics, and other chapter members were invited. We organized a quiz about our department, the university and about Brussels city. The students teamed up and in an informal way got to know each other, the board members and our advisor Prof. Hugo Thienpont.



Fig. 8: Our students at the student welcome lunch

3. NEW YEAR'S RECEPTION

The student chapter celebrated Christmas and the New Year with all its members and the staff of the department of Applied Physics and Photonics the 8th of January during a drink. Many best wishes and thoughts on how photonics will improve the world in 2010 were exchanged over a fine glass of champagne.

ACCESS TO THE SPIE DIGITAL LIBRARY

The student chapter provides free access to the SPIE Digital Library to all its members. Until now a total of 25 papers were requested with topics ranging from illumination optics, biophotonics, displays, nanophotonics, lasers, spectroscopy and fiber Bragg gratings. For this, the students send an email with the complete reference of the paper. A list of the already downloaded papers is kept to avoid duplicate downloads.



CONFERENCES

From August 1st until August 6th, Tom Guldemont, the vice-president of the SPIE Brussels Student Chapter, was our representative at the SPIE Optics and Photonics Conference in San Diego.

To kick-off SPIE Optics and Photonics, Tom took part in the Student Chapter Leadership workshop. During these first 2 days, he gained valuable insights in, amongst others, motivating new members of student chapters and in organizing, managing and planning photonics related events.

In the context of the Optics and Photonics conference, our vice-president, who has a business economics background, attended several workshops to develop his personal and educational skills, such as "Communicating in industry", "Basic optics for non-optics personnel" and "Optics magic".

As part of the Optics and Photonics Exhibition, Tom was present at a booth in the exhibition hall, presenting a poster that showed the activities that were organized by the SPIE Brussels Student Chapter in the previous year.

Last but not least: during the numerous social events, our future president had the opportunity to meet new people, including Rachel Won, who is an editor at Nature Photonics.



Fig. 8: Our vice-president, Tom Guldemont, at SPIE Optics and Photonics in San Diego

II. OVERVIEW OF PLANNED ACTIVITIES

SCIENCE SHOW

As we did two years ago, we again plan to organize a 'Photonics Science Show' during the Science Week (a yearly outreach event for high school students, that is sponsored by our university). We will inform the students on the importance of photonics and entertain them with all kinds of experiments. This one hour show will be given multiple times in a large auditorium so that we can reach many students, and we intend to make the show both educative and spectacular to increase as much as possible the students' interest in photonics.

FUN ACTIVITIES

Of course, there will again be a student welcome lunch, a New Year's reception and a BBQ. Except from these yearly events, there will probably be some more fun activities organized by the new board of our student chapter.

III. FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The SPIE Brussels Student Chapter was established in April 2006, and the table below shows its actual financial situation.

	Previous balance (May 2009)	\$ 394.62	€297.47
June 5	SPIE Membership 1 st Master students		-€46.80
June 12	SPIE 2009 Student Chapter funds		+ €611.57
October 12	SPIE Digital Library subscription		- €100.85
October 26	Student welcome lunch		-€70.45
December 1	SPIE Membership 1 st Master students		-€53.44
January 4	Account cost		-€37.36
March 31	SPIE Funding		+€657.51
April 8	Roll-up banner with our logo		-€233.53
April 9	T-shirt printing costs		-€366.73
April 13	Presents for speaker of best practice event @ photonics europe		-€84.15
April 19	Presents for speakers of career event @ photonics Europe		-€19.48
April 30	Rik Moons (speaker career event)		-€300.00
	Current balance (May 2010)	\$ 314.22 <i>(currency of May 20st, 2009)</i>	€ 253.76

It should also be mentioned that our chapter advisor, Prof. Hugo Thienpont, has matched the expenses for a large part of our activities and provided full financial support for some others.

Our vice-president, Tom Guldemont, received an SPIE Officer Travel Grant to represent our chapter at the Leadership Workshop at SPIE Optics & Photonics 2009 in San Diego, CA. Els Moens, our president applied for a travel grant to represent our chapter at the Leadership Workshop at SPIE Optics & Photonics 2010 in San Diego, CA.

IV. MEMBER LISTING

Our current list of members looks as follows:

1. Aykut Avci
2. Tigran Baghdasaryan
3. Dieter Bardyn
4. Lawrence Bogaert (Secretary)
5. Arno Bouwens
6. Manly Callewaert
7. Pieter-Jan Cauwenbergh
8. Gordon Craggs
9. Subrata Das
10. Diane De Coster
11. Ben De Pauw
12. Tom Dorissen
13. Anjori Dutta

14. Ruxandra Florea
15. Thomas Geernaert (Treasurer)
16. Akhil Gupta
17. Yannick Lefevre
18. Lisbeth Mechele
19. Els Moens (President)
20. Veena Nair
21. Stijn Roelandt
22. Camille Sonnenfeld
23. Grégoire Van Caloen
24. Sara Van Overmeire
25. Jana Vanderheijden
26. Christoph Vanwaelem
27. Tom Verschooten