SPIE Student Chapter Erlangen-Nuremberg

Current officers:

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Current Members: 37; Alumni: 3
Student Members:

1) Hani Abou Hadba
2) Mohammad Alomari
3) Ismail Barakat
4) Muhammad Abdullah Tariq Butt
5) Nicolae Cadin
6) Manuel Dillmann
7) Jörg Eismann
8) Reza Elahi
9) Mikhael El-Khoury
10) Thomas Fersch
11) Fabian Gumpert
12) Shiela Harkhoe
13) Richard Hünermann
14) Mohamed Ismail
15) Hassan Jarkas
16) Hadil Kassab
17) Manuel Kerscher
18) Liaisan Khismatova
19) Lucas Kreiss
20) Frances Lenahan
21) Masoud Mardani Samani
22) Mathews Emmanuel Soris
23) Maria Navis Soris
24) Hazem Mohamed Safwat Mesilhy
25) Sara Mohajerani
26) Temitope Onanuga
27) Akash nag Oruganti
28) Maximilian Piszko
29) Pranita Pradhan
30) Jaypee Quino
31) Phillip Lino Rall
32) Uday Krishna Ravi
33) Thomas Reitberger
34) Ramon Springer
35) Felix Thoma
36) Martin Vorndran
37) Dereje Shewaseged Woldeamanual
38) Burak Yürekli

Alumni Members:

1) Muhammad Bilal Jan
2) Andreas Erdmann
3) Marcus Barkowsky
I) Activities in 2016/2017

1) Christmas Party 2016

An already established tradition is the SPIE Christmas party which has taken place also in 2016 just before the Christmas break. The main idea of this event is to have a nice get together and furthermore get to know the new chapter members. Since our chapter is quite international, it is always a nice way to introduce the students to the German Christmas culture including special sweets as gingerbread and drinks as “Feuerzangenbowle”, displayed in the picture top right. Moreover it was a perfect opportunity to share experiences, discuss future plans and give the new members a warm welcome to our chapter. Together we started making plans for the upcoming year and even motivated some more students to join our chapter. The picture below shows the members playing musical chairs, breaking the ice in a nice and funny way.

![SPIE Christmas party 2016: Members and soon to be members playing musical chairs to break the ice.](image)

2) Lecturer Visit Event

In June 2017 the SPIE student chapter Erlangen-Nuremberg organized a visiting lecturer event for the first time. This event was supported by the school of advanced optical technologies (SAOT), such that not only master but also Ph.D students could attend. The event was entitled “Telling Better Stories...” and was giving by the career coach Ph.D David Giltner.

The main goal of this event was to provide the opportunity to the early career scientists and graduate students to learn how to build their professional career in industry. The instructor, Mr. Giltner, holds a PhD in physics from Colorado state university where he performed
fundamental research in laser spectroscopy. He loves to tell the story of how he transitioned from an academic career path to design and build a rewarding and exciting career in industry. Now he is an author and career coach. He is working on developing the needed skills of scientists and engineers to build a rewarding career in industry and be effective in a product development environment.

The event started with an introduction presentation on “How is working in industry different than working in Academia?” just to grab the audience’s attention on the main points on which the industry differs from the academia. The presentation lasts for an hour with a following extensive Q&A session. The second part, which was the main part, was about how to prepare ourselves for a job interview in the industry by learning how to tell better stories during the interview. This part lasts about 90 minutes with a Q&A session. The last part was a rehearsal interview with two students from the audience in which Mr. Giltner interviewed these two volunteers as a product manager and guided them through the whole interview on how to tell better stories which attracts the managers in industry based on their professional experiences from their CV.

The event finished by coffee and fresh traditional snack gathering where the students had more opportunity to talk with the lecturer and moreover discuss between themselves.

3) Trip to World of Photonics Exhibition and Conference in Munich

In June 2017 a group of fourteen students took the opportunity to visit the World of Photonics Exhibition and Photonics Congress in Munich. This conference included several sub conferences as CLEO / Europe EQEC, Digital Optical Technologies, ECBO, EOS, LIM and Optical Metrology. This overwhelming amount of topics gave a great opportunity to get to know many different topics and also to gain knowledge on topics one is not familiar with. Altogether, it almost covered the complete photonics spectrum. Many talks and posters fully satisfied the different professional interests of the students. The conference however was only a small part of the World of Photonics: clearly the major focus lies on the massive exhibition. Over 1200 companies from 42 nations came together, which is a great opportunity for students to make new contacts, have an overview about the latest photonic
technologies and especially to meet possible future employers. Booth parties on each day after the exhibition closed gave an even better opportunity to chat with the companies on a not so strict business like basis.

The trip was organized by the SPIE-FAU student chapter Erlangen in cooperation with the Elite Master Program in Advanced Optical Technologies (MAOT). While MAOT paid the transportation and entry fees for all fourteen MAOT students. Different than in other chapters we did not just send one officer to the conference but used the SPIE officer travel grant to cover the accommodation for five days for all students that attended. Without the travellers grant, we would not have been able to organize this great trip with such a big number of members.

During the five days of conference, several student workshops were offered by Jean-luc Doumont. Before the actual conference started a leadership workshop, guided by Jean-luc and Tasha Chicovsky was given not only for officers, but all members that wanted to attend, which was a big improvement to the prior conference in Brussels. In the following days also workshop on e.g. "Effective Scientific Writing" were given. As insured by Jean-luc, the workshops were not only very interesting and informative but the students were also involved in sharing their personal input as well as connecting with other participating students from all over the world.

![President Maximilian Piszko and two student chapter members from Erlangen with officers from all over the world at the leadership workshop given by Jean-luc.](image)

Besides the soft skill workshops more events as a fellow’s lunch, a welcome reception and poster sessions were organised. These social events gave an incredible chance to get connected and maybe even find a new visiting lecturer for the upcoming year. Moreover taking the students away from the conference area, as e.g. in the impressive Ratskeller in the very centre of Munich, was another great opportunity to get to know other researchers while introducing Bavarian culture, food and of course beer, to the international audience.
Being surrounded by skilled and successful people from across the globe not only serves to enrich our portfolio of knowledge, it also contributes to social skills to help learn how to interact more effectively within the scientific community and among other international students. The numerous professional benefits as well as the opportunity to experience this event with old friends from MAOT and to connect with new friends, who all share the same interests, made it a great experience for everyone who took part.

4) Hiking in the Franconian Switzerland

As our home university is close to the Franconian Switzerland, end of May we got another chance to get together and went together on a hike trip, the “Fünf Seidla Steig” (literally five-beer-hill-climbing). The track is about 20 km and has 5 traditional breweries along it. At each brewery one takes a small break, orders a beer and some food.

We met in the Erlangen bus station in the morning and travelled to Gräfenberg. It was a nice chance to socialize for the members so that they know each other in more detail. After we reached Gräfenberg with the train, we had a break straightaway at the first brewery. Then, alternating, we hiked for a few kilometres and had beer at nice breweries. The weather was awesome and we met a whole lot of fun people on our round hike. After seven exhausting hours of hiking, we finally reached the last brewery and had some well-deserved Franconian food. Generally it was an event where we had lots of fun and integrate each other which in return strengthens the team spirit between the members of the student chapter. The cost for the tour was covered by the student chapter for participating members, as well for some of the beers on the trip.

![Participants at the first stop: Still full of energy and not completely exhausted.](image-url)
5) SPIE-FAU Best Thesis Award 2017

Also this year our SPIE student chapter awarded one master student with the ‘Outstanding Thesis award’. Still, the motivation is to promote the outstanding work of one Master student, where the main focus of her/his thesis is on applied optical technologies. Due to a very good collaboration with the master study program in Advanced Optical Technologies, also this year we could ensure a qualitative evaluation of the submitted theses. For this, in May 2017 the applications were first evaluated by the chapter officers and a detailed analysis as well as a recommendation was given to the MAOT study committee. This committee decided then to award the work of Andreas Leber, with his thesis about ‘Flexible Thermoplastic Elastomer Optical Fibres for Sensing of Extreme Deformations’. As Andreas Leber was still working at MIT the certificate as well as the 200 € prize money could not be handed over to him personally at the graduation ceremony of the Friedrich-Alexander-University Erlangen-Nuremberg, but were send to him via mail and bank wire.

6) Introduction to New Students

As the new semester started we arranged an introduction meeting for the new MAOT students in November 2017. They were informed about SPIE in common and also about the additional benefits of being a student member in a SPIE student chapter. Past activities were summarized and our future planned activities were informed to the new students. After a presentation was given, drinks, snacks and also pizza was provided. This event helped us to encourage new students to join our chapter and moreover we could answer their questions. They also had time to discuss their expectations from a student chapter. After this meeting, several students joined SPIE and our SPIE student chapter, which contributed to our good standing by new members.

President Maximilian Piszko and Treasurer Phillip Rall giving the presentation to the possible new chapter members.
7) Daily Business

Besides all these bigger events, the officers are always working on the daily business of the student chapter. This includes:

- Introduction event to new students (November 2017)
- Social events to integrate new members to the group and to sustain the bonds within the group (e.g. visit of the Erlangen Beer Festival “Berg”)
- A weekly consulting hour: since we had so many events that relied on the support of all the members, the officers decided to have a fixed time slot in the week to address the questions, problems and suggestions of the chapter members.
- Webpage Maintenance

8) Upcoming Events

1) Christmas Party
2) Outreach Event
3) Optical Design Live Challenge
4) SPIE Photonics Europe Conference
5) Company visit

II) Financial Balance

| Budget in December 2015                   | +130.55 €  |
| Officer travel grant                     | +1200 €    |
| Activity Grant                          | +1217 €    |
| Visiting Lecturer Grant                 | +1276 €    |
| Support from SAOT for the visiting lecturer | +455 €    |
| Support from SAOT for World of Photonics | +150 €    |

| Christmas Party 2016                      | -126 €    |
| Hiking in Franconian Switzerland          | -117 €    |
| Accommodation/Travel Munich (WoP)         | -1700 €   |
| Best Thesis Award 2017                    | -200 €    |
| Introduction to new students              | -148 €    |
| Visiting Lecturer                         | -1900 €   |
| Balance                                   | +237.55 € |

III) Acknowledgment

Good standing of a chapter is solely maintained by team work and coordination of the chapter member. Thanks to all members who took part in organization of the activities and the Erlangen Graduate School in Advanced Optical Technologies (SAOT) and Master Program in Advanced Optical Technologies (MAOT) which supported our group by giving us the opportunity to use the room of the institute for our events and advised us in different issues.