

Abbe Center of Photonics organises Alumni Workshop at Jena University on 26 November

Added value through international alumni

Jena (20 Nov 2014) Scientists, PhD and Master's students from 40 countries of the world currently research, teach and study at the Abbe Center of Photonics (ACP) of the Friedrich Schiller University Jena. Many of them are here for a few months like e.g. visiting professors, and others stay in Jena for years. "Our international guests are of utmost importance, regardless of the duration of their residence in Jena," says Dr. Christian Helgert. "They are an essential part of the ACP philosophy. We are convinced that research and teaching on an international level will only be sustainable if our staff and network is also internationally oriented", emphasizes the managing director of the ACP.

Some former scholars and students of the ACP and the Faculty of Physics and are going to visit Jena again on 26 November: they will share their professional experience in industry as well as in university and non-university research in the context of the first international "Photonics and Physics Alumni Workshop". The workshop – organised by the ACP and supported by the central alumni initiative of the university JenAlumni – aims at all current and former students, doctoral candidates and scientists in the fields of optics, photonics and physics as well as the interested public. "Our goal is to show the diversity and challenges of different career paths and options after completing one's studies and doctoral studies," explains Dr. Dorit Schmidt, who takes care of the doctoral students and the alumni programme at the Abbe School of Photonics. The Abbe School is part of the ACP. "Together with the speakers and participants we would like to work out and discuss models and tools which strengthen the connection between the university and its alumni and from which both sides can benefit."

"Additionally, Prof. Dr. Andrew Berger from the University of Rochester (USA) and Dr. Rachel Grange, who will become assistant professor at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich next year, will receive the ACP Alumni Award during the workshop. Both are active in international research and engaged to develop long-term relations and strong bonds between the ACP and its alumni. Furthermore, Dr. Cesar Jauregui Misas from the Institute for Applied Physics at the University of Jena will be honoured for his commitment as a tutor for the students of the Master's programme in Photonics. "Outstanding teaching plays an important role in providing students with the best career opportunities. Moreover, successful graduates are, of course, very good ambassadors and multipliers for the City of Light Jena," explains Dr. Nadine Ritter, the alumni manager of the university. The ACP also created the initiative "present for friends" to motivate students to promote and recommend Jena and its possibility to study Photonics to their friends abroad.

The alumni workshop is part of a project funded by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation for international alumni work. The ACP and the University of Jena are among the eight winners of the first round of the competition "Research Alumni Strategies" which was announced last year by the foundation. It is funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). "We want to provide our alumni work not only on students and doctoral candidates but also give more attention to devoted research alumni," says Dorit Schmidt. The international exchange of scientists as well as maintaining the contacts for longer than the actual guest stay offer added value for both sides: On the one hand, the scientists benefit from researching abroad for their future career. "At the same time, they are valuable multipliers who inform others outside Jena about the university. They play a

key role for the exchange of doctoral students and the initiation of new projects," adds Christian Helgert.

The workshop starts at 9 am, at the Abbe-Zentrum / Beutenberg Campus. Admission is free.

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