

FemChem Newsletters

Issue 2, December 2019



TU
WIEN

FEMCHEM ACTIVITIES 2019

Developing, Expanding, Making a Difference

2019 was a special year for FemChem. After electing its first Board Team in November 2018, the focus was getting to work: This included **developing** new seminars & workshops and FemChem's online presence, as well as **expanding** the network by gathering new members and presenting it towards new audiences. Finally, FemChem has already started to **make a difference** by initiating a survey about the 'Presentation of the situation of senior & junior scientists (m/f) at the Faculty of Technical Chemistry'. Therefore, we are very happy to hereby present to you our achievements of 2019, which were made possible only by the collective effort and initiative of all participating women of FemChem and the financial support from the Dean's office!



Competence
Enhancement

Communication
& Information



Identity & Diversity

Div_ID
Dive Into Diversity



Networking

Let's review FemChem's year 2019!

- Apr. 15th Origin Workshop
- Jun. 14th 100 Years of Female Students at TU Wien
- Sep. 26th "Difficult Conversations" Seminar
- Oct. 4th 2nd FemChem Scientific Workshop
- Oct. 17th "Communicating with Influence" Seminar
- Nov. 7th Annual Meeting

First Female Professor of the Faculty: Ruth Birner-Grünberger

Interview with Dean Prof. Herbert Danninger

Survey 'Situation of senior & junior scientists at the Faculty of Technical Chemistry'

8 Travel Grants Awarded

100 YEARS OF FEMALE STUDENTS @ TU WIEN: PRESENTATION OF FEMCHEM

by Bettina Mihalyi // June 14th, 2019

THROUGHOUT 2019, 100 YEARS of female students at TU Wien was celebrated with several events, which ranged from talks and workshops to exhibitions and award ceremonies. Among this, the library of Technical Chemistry and Mechanical Engineering set up a special exhibition, which can be visited until spring 2020 (see also Outlook Section of the present Newsletter). The whole extent of activities can be found at <http://dietechnik.at/>.

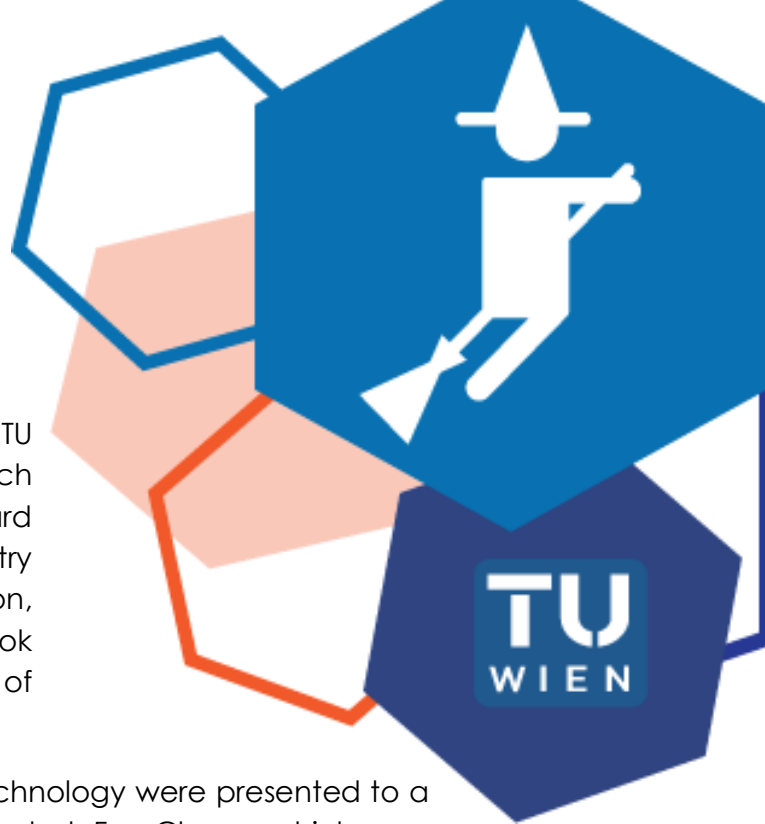
Within this framework, several networks for women in technology were presented to a broader audience on June 14th, 2019. This also included FemChem, which was presented by its current chair, Bettina Mihalyi. She recapitulated FemChem's origin and history, as well as its aim and current activities:

To enhance communication among women working at the Faculty of Technical Chemistry by creating a 'Start-up Group' consisting of 2 women per faculty and one member of the Committee on Equal Treatment. The name 'FemChem' was assigned to it in spring 2016. The first tasks that were undertaken were the design of a logo, a meeting with the Dean of the Faculty of Technical Chemistry and the establishment of rules for the FemChem travel grants awarded to female Master and PhD students, as well as early PostDocs.

Following the initial phase, the main aim of FemChem was established in a seminar in August 2017, which also led to the first extension of the group of women actively taking part. FemChem was then officially launched with a Kick-Off event in April 2018, which also resulted in a refinement of its organizational structure in 4 working teams (Identity & Diversity, Competence Enhancement, Networking, Communication & Information) and a Board (3 women of each working group and one chair). Shortly afterwards, in June 2018, the first scientific workshop took place in TU the Sky, already with more than 45 participants. Finally, in November 2018, FemChem elected its first Board for a duration of two years.

Since then, a lot has happened: Besides regular Board meetings and quarterly Jour Fixes with the Dean, FemChem also launched its website (<http://femchem.chemie.tuwien.ac.at/>), held several seminars and workshops (read later), organized a second scientific workshop and acquired a lot of new members.

The aim of FemChem is to create an attractive working environment and to influence the situation of female researchers at the Faculty of Technical Chemistry. This includes transparency and fairness in communication and decision making, respectful and appreciative behavior, and the active encouragement of equal opportunities. FemChem views itself as a platform for the exchange of ideas, information and experience. It is not a service institution, but a group of women, who actively want to participate. All female researchers of the Faculty of Technical Chemistry should feel addressed and represented – and they are all welcome to join this initiative!



2ND FEMCHEM SCIENTIFIC WORKSHOP

October 4th, 2019

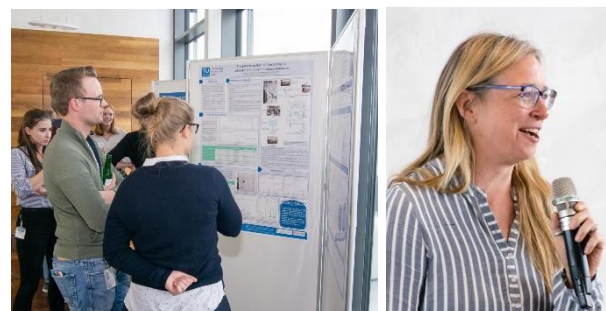
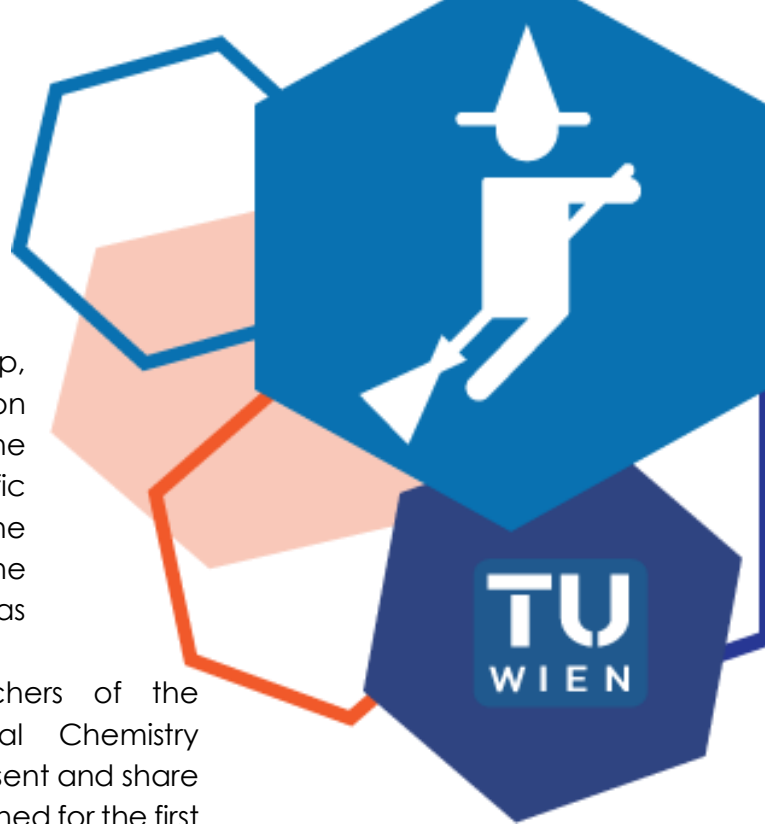
FOLLOWING THE SUCCESS of the 1st scientific workshop, FemChem returned with the 2nd scientific workshop on October 4th, 2019. For the second year in a row, the workshop took place at TU the Sky. 17 scientific presentations were given and 10 posters presented in the poster session. More than 90 people attended the symposium, indicating that the interest in the event has increased since its first launch in 2018.



The Female researchers of the Faculty of Technical Chemistry came together to present and share their scientific work, joined for the first time by their male counterparts, which accounted for around 45% of the participants.

We were very pleased to welcome among us Dean Herbert Danninger, as well as the designated Dean, Prof. Marko Mihovilovic. It was a delight for all the early stage researchers who presented their work to be joined by the newly appointed Prof. Ruth Birner-Grünberger, who supported the workshop with the presentation of her own research.

The full day event gave the opportunity to the participants to get acquainted with the presenters' work and generated intellectually stimulating scientific discussions. The exchange of scientific ideas was also on the focus of the poster session, which followed after the conclusion of the oral presentations.



The event offered the opportunity of networking among female and male members of the scientific faculty during the breaks between scientific sessions. A buffet with a variety of refreshments and finger food supplemented the breaks. We would like to express our gratitude to the Vice Rector for providing the room and to the Department of Gender Competences for supporting us with food and drinks.

LET'S MEET PROF. RUTH BIRNER-GRÜNBERGER ...

the first female Professor of the Faculty

IN SPRING 2019, THE FEMALE professorship position at the Faculty of Technical Chemistry at TU Wien was awarded to Prof. Ruth Birner-Grünberger. On behalf of FemChem, we would like to extend a warm welcome to her. In the following, we would like to shortly introduce her to you:

Ruth Birner-Grünberger studied Technical Chemistry in Graz. For her Master thesis, she went as far as to the RMIT (Royal Melbourne Institute on Technology) in Australia to work on bacterial membrane lipids and proteins. She then returned to TU Graz for her PhD (supervised by Günter Daum), focusing on yeast mitochondrial lipids. Afterwards, she stayed at TU Graz as a Postdoc in the group of Albin Hermetter in a large consortium project called GOLD (genomics of lipid-associated disorders) led by Rudi Zechner.

It was during that time that Ruth Birner-Grünberger obtained her first own grants and developed activity-based proteomics of lipases. After her habilitation in biochemistry in 2007, she started her own group at the Medical University of Graz, where she set up and led a core facility for proteomics. In 2011, she was appointed Associate Professor at the Institute of Pathology at Meduni Graz. Since 2013, she has been head of the Omics Center Graz. In July 2019, Ruth Birner-Grünberger was appointed Full Professor at the Institute of Chemical Technologies and Analytics of TU Wien.

Ruth Birner-Grünberger has been a guest professor at institutions around the globe, namely ETH Zurich (2016), UC-Berkeley (2017) and the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg (2018). She further has had many functions in different research societies: as president of the Austrian Proteomics and Metabolomics Association (2015-2019, now vice president), as member of the General Council of the Human Proteome Organization (HUPO) (since 2017) and as a board member of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Fettwissenschaft (since 2019).

In her private life, Ruth Birner-Grünberger likes to go skiing (off-piste) and sailing (skipper), to play the guitar and to enjoy Fantasy and Science Fiction books and films. She is married to her student love, Martin, a technical chemist as well, and they are living together with Strizzi, a tomcat that has invaded their home.



... AND THANK PROF. HERBERT DANNINGER

for his help in raising FemChem

AS PROF. HERBERT DANNINGER is resigning as Dean of the Faculty of Technical Chemistry by the end of 2019, FemChem wanted to say a special "Thank you!" for his great support in establishing FemChem at the Faculty. We therefore met him for a personal interview talking about his career and experiences, women's advancement and – of course – FemChem. Chair Bettina Mihalyi conducted the interview for FemChem.

Part 1: Career history and personal experience

FemChem: Could you give us some brief information about your family/life situation, education and career?

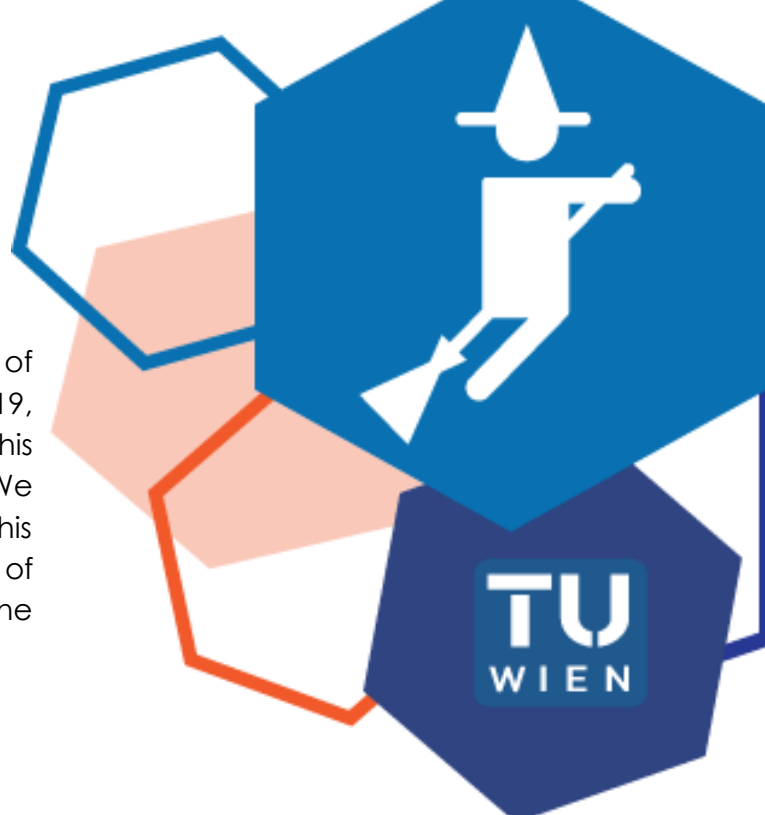
Prof. Danninger: I am one out of 7 children, which is really determining one's character. You learn to fit into a community, but you also have an incredible sense of togetherness. Another consequence was that I was not allowed to waste any time during my studies, because after me there were other brothers and sisters who wanted to study. As all of this had to be financed by one salary only, the priority is efficiency. I always intended to study something technical, and like my sister, who was two years older and gave me the chance to witness her studies a little, I chose Technical Chemistry. I then got a position as a study assistant, which meant financial relief. Later I was employed as a contract assistant and then as a university assistant – and finally stayed at the TU Wien.

FemChem: What helped you to obtain a leadership position and what are the specific challenges associated with it?

Prof. Danninger: I was fortunate to have academic teachers who supported me without restraint, naming especially my former supervisor Gerhard Jangg, but also Peter Ettmayer, Werner Wruss and the former head of the institute Benno Lux. There were of course also mentors outside of TU Wien: Brigitte Weiss and Roland Stickler from the University of Vienna, as well as Werner Schatt and Hans-Jürgen Ullrich from TU Dresden; to all of them I am grateful for their support. What helped me to get into a leadership position – first as head of the institute (2004) and later as dean (2011) – was the prevailing situation: Someone was needed to do the job.

What was particularly challenging for me as a leader under the given circumstances was to distribute the insufficient resources in a fair manner. Especially when I was appointed Dean of the Faculty of Technical Chemistry, the financial situation at the TU Wien was not the best; there were for example hiring freezes. However, I have to say that the Faculty always cooperated – even in those difficult times.

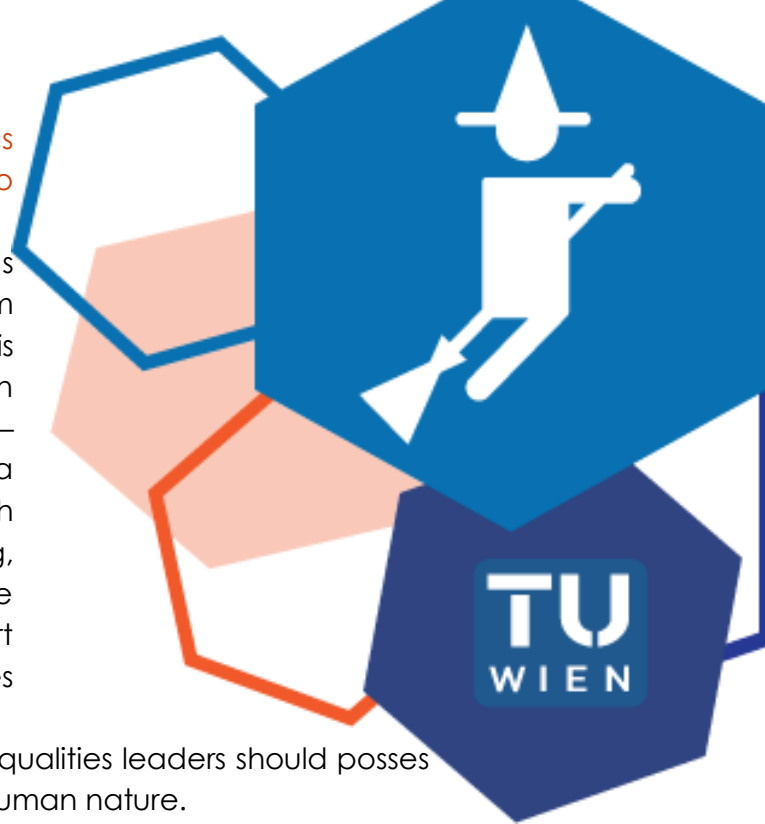
On the other hand, the most rewarding aspect of my position for me personally was to be able to support and promote (young) colleagues with their research and careers.



FemChem: In your opinion, what are the characteristics and/or qualities that have been the most beneficial to you in your professional career?

Prof. Danninger: At Brühl's Terrace in Dresden, the Jupiter's motto is stated: "Die Götter geben ihre Güter keinem Faulen" (The gods only reward the diligent), and I think this is a very appropriate description. Even if one is born with a certain gift – which is not one's own accomplishment – it is still necessary to make something of it. Especially in a leadership position it is important to properly engage with people, and in scientific research that implies supporting, but also challenging them, as well as being available when they are struggling. That has to be said: a major part of the job in a leadership position is talking to colleagues – and taking the time to listen to them.

Concluding, from my point of view, the most important qualities leaders should possess are diligence, empathy and a good understanding of human nature.



Part 2: Women in science and research // Advancement of women // Career opportunities for women

FemChem: Did the situation of women in a scientific working environment change over the years or have the structures stayed the same since you started your career?

Prof. Danninger: Nowadays there are a lot more women in chemistry than at the time when I was studying, and you can also see that tendency in the young scientific staff. Women in science are no longer single cases. Today, women are also much more likely to appear at the top of the ranking of appointment candidates – and are then often "courted" by several universities at the same time. In addition, the specific, individually different situation of applicants, e.g. their age and family situation, is nowadays taken into account by commissions – which I personally see as a positive signal.

FemChem: What do you think of measures to advance women (e.g. gender parity)?

Prof. Danninger: In my opinion, it is always a good idea to qualify women instead of only appointing already qualified female scientists at TU Wien. At the Faculty of Technical Chemistry, we have started to announce positions dedicated to women only already some years ago. So far, we have always been able to find suitable candidates for it. However, I am also aware of possible disadvantages: Especially in subject areas where the proportion of female researchers is low, an explicit "ladies only" announcement drastically reduces the number of possible candidates. We risk being criticized for the same reason that women used to argue for gender equality; namely that we cannot afford to exclude half the population if we really want to hire the best. Also forced gender parity in commissions is in my opinion a bit questionable, as it can become very time demanding for the female colleagues at the Faculty, especially if there are not so many of them. I do understand the intention – but well meant is not necessarily well done.

FemChem: What recommendations do you have for women with academic education?

Prof. Danninger: To have confidence in yourself! You can be as great as men; believe in yourself!

FemChem: What do you value about women and/or men in leadership positions?

Prof. Danninger: If one aims to be successful in a leadership position, certain qualities are required that I do not think are related to gender. The ability to make decisions is crucial, but equally important is the intuition for people and their potential.

FemChem: Which measures should be taken to increase the number of women in leadership positions?

Prof. Danninger: In my opinion, fair and equal treatment is crucial when it comes to resources, i.e. finances, rooms, but also conference visits or support for renowned project proposals. We have set up travel grants for our young colleagues in the faculty, which has been very well received.

However, this can only be an impulse, the female colleagues have to make something of it themselves. I see them in open competition with their male coworkers, but I am sure that they are up to this competitive comparison. Together with FemChem, we have just initiated a study aimed at identifying career obstacles for our young female colleagues; once we have the results we will know more precisely where there is still work to do.

Part 3: About FemChem

FemChem: You have supported FemChem from the very beginning – how did you perceive this initiative and its development?

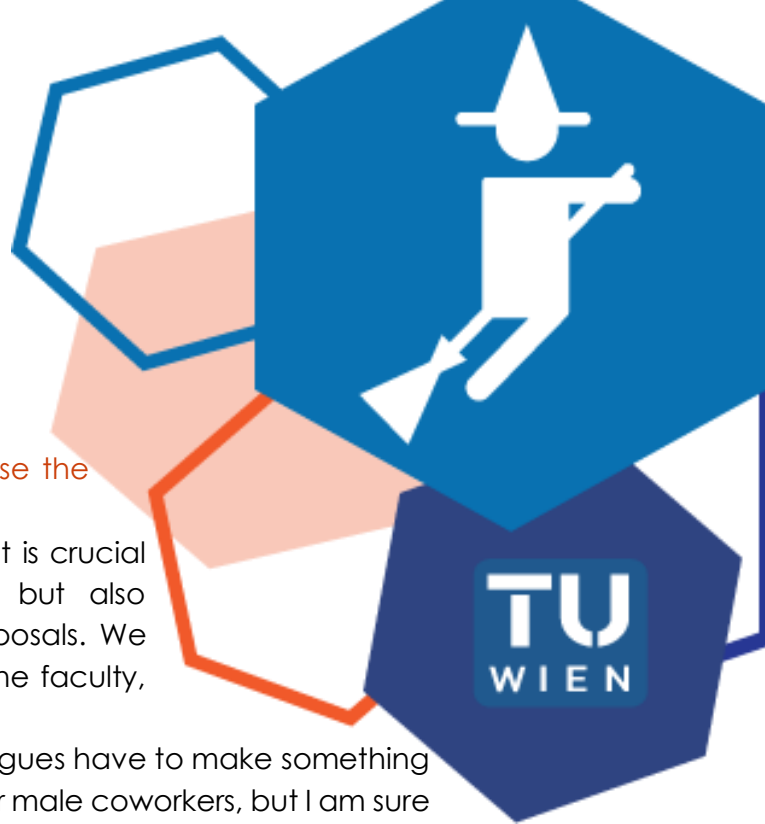
Prof. Danninger: I am very glad about this positive development and hope that it will continue just as successfully. It is particularly pleasing that FemChem has largely arisen from contributions and effort within the group and has been received so enthusiastically; I only had to provide some financial support. This great commitment from FemChem itself was a very positive surprise for me.

FemChem: In your opinion, what is crucial for the sustainability of this initiative?

Prof. Danninger: It will be necessary to inform young female colleagues about FemChem as soon as possible and awake their interest – according to the slogan: “What can FemChem offer you and what can you offer FemChem?”.

FemChem: Where do you see FemChem in 10 years?

Prof. Danninger: I believe FemChem will be primarily a tool for networking among colleagues. I hope that special support measures for women will no longer be necessary. However, communication and exchange of opinions and experiences will always be required, and FemChem can serve as a platform for this.



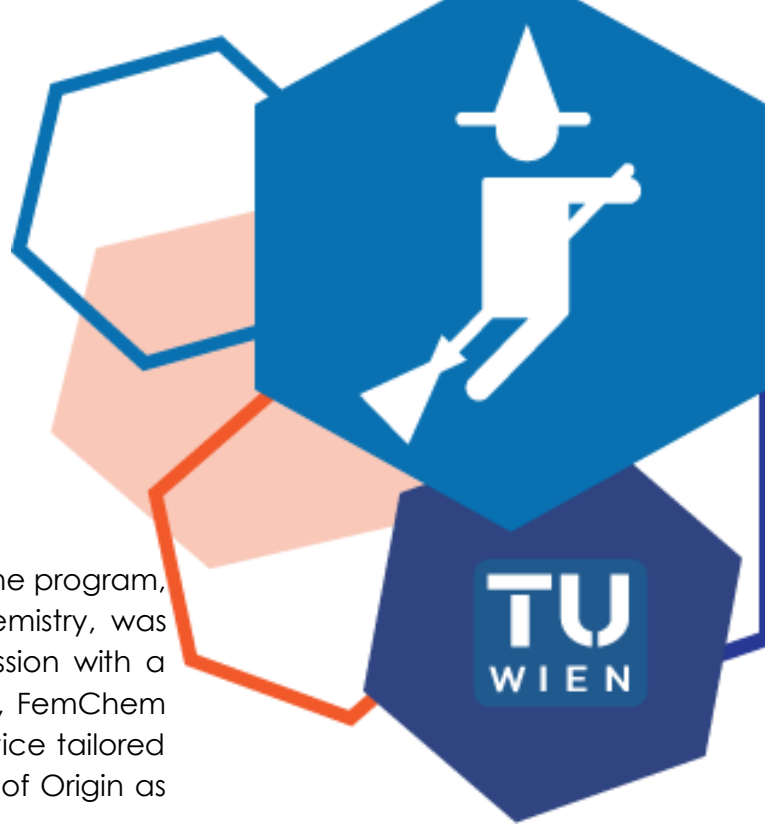
ORIGIN SEMINAR

by Markus Höhnen // April 15th, 2019

THE FIRST FEMCHEM SEMINAR of FemChem's Competence Enhancement Team successfully took place on April 15th, 2019. Our first course was part of the hard skill program DI Markus Höhnen (ADDITIVE Soft- und Hardware für Technik und Wissenschaft GmbH) held in the form of a seminar on the use of Origin for beginners as well as advanced users.

In the morning session, a presentation of the scopes of the program, open to all members of the Faculty of Technical Chemistry, was introduced and in the afternoon, a practical Q&A session with a limited number of participants was held. In this session, FemChem members had the possibility to receive professional advice tailored to their research questions that require the application of Origin as data processing software.

Both sessions were attended by a number of interested women. The program was supplemented by buffet accompanied networking breaks sponsored by the Faculty of Technical Chemistry.



SEMINAR “DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS”

by Waltraud Ferz-Steinbauer // September 26-27th, 2019

THE MAIN FOCUS of the seminar was to acquire the skills and self-confidence required in order to achieve effective communication in difficult conversations. Mrs. Ferz-Steinbauer offered an insight to the participants into the following topics:

- ✓ Dealing with different views
- ✓ Dealing with one's own feelings and those of others
- ✓ Listening actively and asking questions
- ✓ Dealing with killer phrases
- ✓ Perceiving the influence of emotions and expressing one's own feelings
- ✓ Steps to follow in difficult conversations



The possibility of networking was augmented during the seminar breaks which were accompanied by a buffet sponsored by the Faculty of Technical Chemistry.

Based on the positive feedback received by the participants, FemChem is determined to continue organizing workshops that aim to improve the competences of the faculty.

SEMINAR “COMMUNICATING WITH INFLUENCE”

by Kate Montague // Oct. 17 & 18th, 2019



THE SEMINAR WAS FOCUSED on developing a certain skill set that can support influential communication.

Mrs. Montague of Avocets Consulting targeted the following topics:

- ✓ Develop self-awareness of how you come across to others
- ✓ Discover how to analyze and use body language effectively
- ✓ Develop greater confidence and influence in a difficult negotiation situation
- ✓ Understand and manage the inner critic to achieve a positive mindset
- ✓ Develop effective listening techniques to achieve greater understanding
- ✓ Guide communication towards an effective outcome

Networking activities were accompanied by a buffet sponsored by the Faculty of Technical Chemistry.

TRAVEL GRANTS FOR FEMALE STUDENTS

2019: 8 Travel Grants approved

IN 2019, 8 TRAVEL GRANTS were awarded to female Master and PhD students of the Faculty of Technical Chemistry. This initiative aims to support the career of female researchers already at an early stage by enabling them to present their work at conferences or workshops.

We very much want to congratulate the **recipients of the 2019 travel grants:**

Clara Freytag

Yazgan Diren Mete

Clara Isabel Garcia Yago

Verena Pramhaas

Marianne Lahnsteiner

Teresa Seifried

Birgit Meindl

Eva Maria Wartha

FemChem also wants to thank the Dean's office for providing the financial means. All information on criteria and application can be found at <http://femchem.chemie.tuwien.ac.at/index.php/grants/>.

ANNUAL MEETING

November 7th, 2019

THE 4TH FEMCHEM ANNUAL MEETING took place at TU The Sky on November 7th, 2019. The FemChem team came together to present their work and progress in the course of 2019, joined by interested female faculty members. We were honored to welcome Dean Herbert Danninger in this meeting, as well as the designated Dean, Prof. Marko Mihovilovic.

Following a warm welcome and some opening words from Bettina Mihalyi, Dean Herbert Danninger presented certain facts and figures pertaining to the advancement of women within the Faculty of Technical Chemistry.



The highlight of 2019 in terms of female representation in the Faculty of Technical Chemistry was the first female professorship assigned to Ruth Birner-Grünberger at the Institute of Chemical Technologies and Analytics of TU Wien.

Taking a look into the future, the Rectorate has set the goal of increasing the Pre-Doc and Post-Doc positions announced specifically for women within the time frame of 2019-2022.

Representatives of the 4 FemChem teams (Networking, Communication & Information, Competence & Enhancement, Identity & Diversity) presented an overview of performed activities and ongoing projects. These included several seminars and workshops as well as FemChem's updated website.

The presentation sessions were concluded by the presentation of the first survey initiated by FemChem's 'Identity and Diversity' Team 'Presentation of the Situation of Senior & Junior Scientists (m/f) at the Faculty of Technical Chemistry', which is currently ongoing (see also next article for details).



The participants then had the opportunity for further discussion accompanied by an assortment of finger food and drinks, courtesy of the rectorate.



FEMCHEM'S 'IDENTITY & DIVERSITY' TEAM AT WORK:

Survey 'Presentation of the Situation of Senior & Junior Scientists (m/f) at the Faculty of Technical Chemistry'

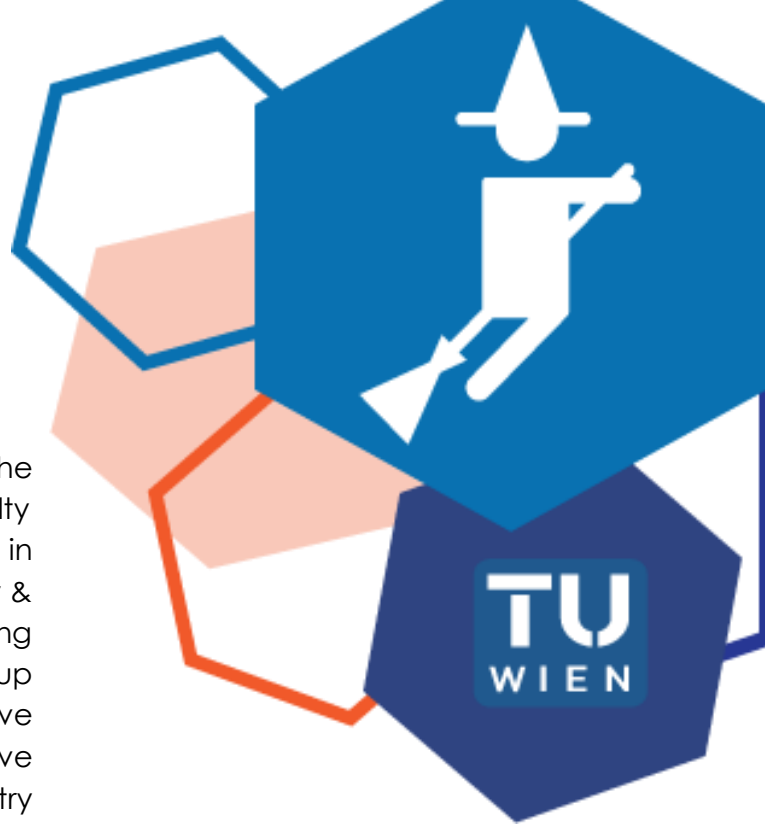
THIS YEAR, 2019, THE FIRST STUDY 'Presentation of the situation of senior & junior scientists (m/f) at the Faculty of Technical Chemistry' was assigned and started to roll in summer! The idea was born from the workshop 'Diversity & Identity', which took place in October 2018. The resulting study was initiated by FemChem, particularly by the group 'Identity & Diversity'. Nevertheless, it could not have happened without the collaboration and the supportive funding by the Dean of the Faculty of Technical Chemistry and the gender competence department of the TU Wien.

What is the study about in detail? Basically, the study is divided into three working packages: the first package includes the interviewing of experienced scientists from group leader level up to institute heads, the second one includes the interviewing of junior scientists, current chemistry PhD students and PostDocs, and the third working package is dedicated to the evaluation of the *state-of-the-art* situation of the Faculty of Technical Chemistry by facts & data.

For this purpose, two gender-experts, namely Dr. Marita Haas and Dr. Bettina Stadler, accepted the challenge of presenting the situation of senior & junior scientists at the Faculty of Technical Chemistry. Marita Haas has 14 years of experience in research and teaching on the topic 'Gender & Diversity'. Working for many years at the interface business and science, she has given advice and support to companies and start-ups in gender & identity questions. The other commissioner, namely Bettina Stadler, studied sociology, political sciences and gender studies at the University of Vienna and at the University of Frankfurt. Currently, she is teaching at the University of Vienna in the field of quantitative methods of empiric social research. Verena Mrazky dedicates her diploma thesis, supervised by Prof. Dr. Eva Flicker and Dr. Angela Wroblewski, to evaluate the *state-of-the-art* situation. Data material will be provided by the Faculty of Technical Chemistry in collaboration with the gender competence department.

The interviews with the junior as well as with the experienced scientists already took place during autumn 2019. An online survey will be carried out during spring 2020, which will be based on the outcome of the performed interviews.

We are looking forward to a large participation!



WHAT'S NEXT?

FemChem's upcoming activities

Seminar with Billie Rauscher // TBA

With FemChem expanding and progressing, new ideas and possibilities are coming up – and with them the need for further content refinement and a regulatory framework of FemChem. Therefore, the members of FemChem are looking forward to their seminar with Billie Rauscher, which will deal with the following questions: How do we connect to our future FemChem alumnae? Should there be a membership fee? How can new members get involved? How do we react to conflicts within FemChem? How can we address both PhD students and senior scientists? And many more ...

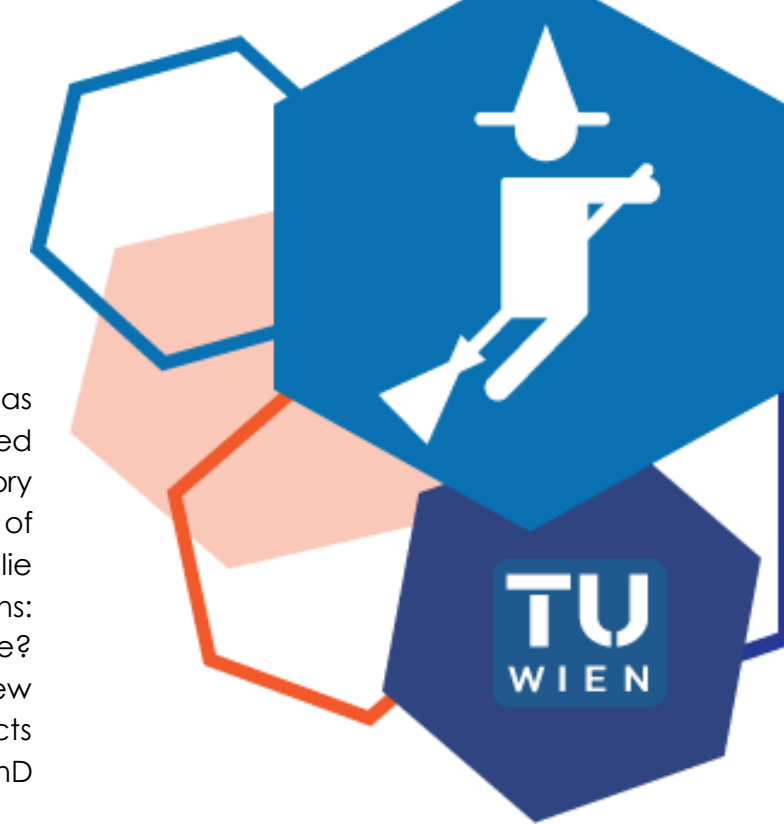
SAVT Career Talk // Beginning of 2020

The association of chemical engineering graduates at TU Wien (in short: SAVT) regularly organizes career talks with successful graduates. Thereby, they explain their career pathway so far, what helped them to obtain their position and give helpful tips to the chemical engineering students. In early spring 2020, SAVT will welcome one of their female graduates for such a talk, who will also talk about if and in what way her career is different because she is a woman. Stay tuned for further information on a prospective date by visiting the SAVT website:

https://www.savt.at/events_overview/

2nd Iteration: Von Frau zu Frau // TBA

After the first successful discussion event in January 2019, "Von Frau zu Frau" will be back in spring 2020. The exact date will be announced soon!



100 years female students at TU Wien: Special exhibition at the library of Technical Chemistry & Mechanical Engineering

On April 17th, 1919, a decree first allowed women to officially study at TU Wien. Following that, the first official female student of TU Wien enrolled in Mechanical Engineering. Already in 1940, the first woman was habilitated at the Faculty of Technical Chemistry. And in 1996, the first female professor was appointed at the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering. These historical events were an inspiration to create a special exhibition at the Library of Technical Chemistry and Mechanical Engineering (Campus Getreidemarkt, Building BA, 1st floor), which can be visited during opening hours until spring 2020:

https://www.ub.tuwien.ac.at/chemab/chemab_oeffnungszeiten.html

