



Program of the JungChemikerForum for the GDCh Board 2020-2023

The GDCh brings together the decision-makers of the chemical companies with young students and promotes apprentices and doctoral candidates. It combines the theoretical knowledge of hundreds of professors with application specialists from the production together with young job starters as well as retired experts — and this is where we see great potential, want to make our contribution and set new trends!

General

- **Link members better**

Networking young chemists with each other is a task that the regional spokespersons and their teams (Regionalsprecher/Innen-Teams) and the federal executive (JCF-Bundesvorstand) have been successfully taking on for years. But with the transition to regular full member few of the highly committed JCFlers know where and how they can contribute further. Here, on the one hand, a better transfer of knowledge about the possibilities of engagement within the GDCh has to be established. On the other hand where and in which projects fresh wind and commitment are urgently needed must be highlighted. Communication, networking and a clear path to the GDCh must be expanded to keep young talents within the GDCh.

- **Hold and bind members**

The high increase of the membership fee, a nontransparent portfolio of services and doubts about the benefit of the GDCh after the junior chemist's time are causing many young members to quit instead of switching to full membership. Although systems such as the high school graduate prices bring a large number of new members to the GDCh at short notice, they often leave the GDCh after just one year. We must find better ways to diminish these two main reasons to keep members in the GDCh in the long term. The membership in the GDCh used to be self-evident for every chemist. It is important to regain this position within the discipline! To do this, we must identify what has changed and evolve with the change!

- **Take high-school graduates by the hand**

A concrete solution, how to reduce the withdrawal of high-school graduates from the GDCh after only one year, was already proposed in the Jungchemikerforum: After a certain time after the award ceremony a renewed contact by the GDCh should take place with recommendations for those laureates who start the studies in the field of chemistry in Germany, to get in contact with the Jungchemikerforum on site (website, social media, etc.). This would connect the laureates to the respective regional forum and directly present the GDCh on site with all its advantages. Therefore, we would like to act as connection to the highest decision-making body in order to be able to implement such concepts more quickly.

- **Develop cooperation with the district association chairpersons (OVVs)**

Unused potential is also often found in the cooperation between the regional JungChemikerForen and the GDCh local associations. Some locations show how to jointly organize and plan events and the course of the semester, as a unified appearance in the sense of a unified GDCh! Here, synergies from financial resources, contacts and commitment can and should be exploited. Not all locations present such an image. It is therefore important to maintain and expand networking events (such as the conclave (Klausurtagung)).

- **Strengthen cooperation with specialist groups (FG)**

The easiest transition from regional engagement as a student to transnational engagement as a professional may be the specialist groups (FGs). Rarely does the young members know which specialist groups exist and what they may offer. A closer cooperation between JCF and FGs is mutually beneficial and could be promoted through lectures at universities, shared information material and joint events.

- **Fresh wind in committees and project groups**

The GDCh pursues a wide range of projects and its members hold numerous committees for its prestigious awards. As the voice of the young GDCh members which make up almost a third of the membership, such committees should always be filled with at least one young chemist. Here we want to act as a mediator. Many renowned scientists consider it a special honor if their research meets great interest among the next generation, as shown in the 20-year success story of the JCF Spring Symposium. Furthermore, there are many committed talents among the JCF members who have the time and motivation to contribute nationally, to further develop the GDCh and to advance projects. This commitment should be encouraged and used to bring the GDCh into the future.

- **Increased transparency**

Many processes of the board and the office (Geschäftsstelle), such as the appointment of committees and projects, are difficult to understand for the members. An opening of the activities and a more transparent communication of board and office, as well as the more active involvement of all members in the processes are essential for a charitable association in the today's time.

- **Association policy initiative**

The JungChemikerForum candidates for the GDCh board are assisted by a JCF election and board committee. This team collects ideas, discusses current topics around the GDCh and collects opinions in the JungChemikerForum. As a result, the regional forums and local work move closer to the board. This team also makes it easier for young minds to become more familiar with working on the GDCh Board of Directors in order to build-up lasting skills beyond the term of office.

- **Positioning in public**

The GDCh represents the entirety of chemistry in Germany, but is rarely or not at all used for assessments and scientific statements of the society. This could be due, among other things, to the fact that there are no positions on a variety of topics or no position is taken. As our office and the executive board alone cannot handle such a positioning in a timely manner, the project group public relations should be strongly expanded, also by the support of the respective specialists group experts. A clear, self-reflective voice of the GDCh is the goal that enables an open and scientifically sound

discussion of controversial points of view. In times when populism and volume seem to dominate over facts, we must do our utmost to take responsibility for the knowledge in our discipline.

Academia

- **Studies**

Switching to the bachelor's-master's system lead to new problems at many places. Thereby, indemnification of quality, ensuring diversity and maintaining a good perception of chemical studies is of highest priority. In doing so, students shall be accompanied and supported, e.g. with the August-Wilhelm-von-Hofmann (or other) stipends or assistance for internships and experience abroad. Manifold study options should be presented for interested people.

- **Empowerment and Support for Doctoral Candidates**

The situation of doctoral candidates and their transition to a professional career after their graduation are topics which should be covered by GDCh and are of large interest for young members. They suffer from increasing teaching duties due to the reduction of mid-level faculty and technicians, partly difficult working conditions due to insecure funding and strong dependence on supervising professors. This should be investigated and discussed on a non-biased basis. In order to strengthen the position of doctoral candidates, GDCh shall advocate for a nation-wide comparable system. Already during the master studies, different career paths in both academia and industry can be presented. The GDCh career service yet carries out valuable work. Not only the young chemists should adapt these successful projects. At this point, it is important to communicate the expectations of industry and the possibilities at universities. How important is a PhD title for a career in industry? Why is a MSc not considered to be enough for job entry? Does the high number of doctoral candidates (still) make sense?

- **Establish Universities as Modern Employers**

Choosing an academic career path is desirable for few, only. The increasing fraction of indefinite contracts and the cut of the number of mid-level faculty positions and the increasing number of doctoral candidates cause a decreasing number of available positions. Together with intransparent job openings, this leads to an non-projectable academic career. The first secure position is often the professorship, which many will not or do not want to reach. A job ladder with a number of safe steps in between (as it can be found in industry) is not existent. This leads to a insecure career path, which demands a boundless flexibility in family and life planning. At the same time, indefinite university contracts lead to a high fluctuation of experts. The result is a high drain of knowledge within the research community, and therefore a large loss of both quality and experience in teaching (which should be one of the core purposes of a university). We want the GDCh to advocate publicly for strengthening mid-level faculty and to provide more unlimited contracts. This will help to transform universities into modern employers and to maintain quality in teaching.

- **Publications**

At the moment, scientists are asked to publish as many articles in peer-reviewed journals as possible. A large number of publications and citations increase the reputation and facilitate funding. Therefore, rising publication numbers (this figure doubles every 10 years) represents a problem: publishers and reviewers can barely ensure a desirable quality. Furthermore, researchers are pushed to publish their work faster and in more fragments, resulting in diluted findings and with negative impact to

reproducibility. In order to counter this, the focus has to shift towards less publications, but with higher quality, instead of many publications. Additionally, the distribution of unlimited and open access of publications should be promoted further. Besides the larger visibility of scientific work, the general public can participate in science, which promotes understanding and visibility of research. Crowd-based peer-reviewing and preprint services are concepts which will permanently change the landscape of scientific literature, since they enable an accelerated reviewing and publication process. These ideas are picked up only sporadically. In order to support them, it is important to participate in the formulation of guidelines for modern publications and to advance their implementation.

Industry

- **Industrial Topics**

Being the generation affected by them, the young chemistry network wants to give shape to future trends in industry and society like digitalisation, sustainability, equal opportunities, and new work environment. The young members are highly interested in discussing and developing these current trends and assessing their relevance for the GDCh in order to keep its members informed. For this, the topics should be developed beyond mere buzz words and empty phrases and stimulate a discussion between the various groups within the GDCh. As an organisation with a broad base of young members, the GDCh is in a unique position to gather the opinions and ideas of the generation most strongly influenced by these future trends in order to paint a comprehensive picture.

- **Nurturing cooperative work**

The GDCh is a network of a variety of representatives from industry and science, whose internal communications are capable of conceiving new possibilities, stimulating discussions and innovative ideas. Especially, the interaction between companies and young members has been shown to be beneficial for both sides time and time again. To further encourage this exchange, to harness the GDCh network and to provide our members with outstanding benefits, the GDCh should offer more platforms to do so – e.g. in terms of conferences, career talks and networking events.

- **Moving to industry – supporting young members**

The transition from university into the world of industry is shaped by a variety of impressions, and more often than not, passing those experiences on to the next generation is neglected. The existing GDCh mentoring programme, CheMento, already very successfully encompasses this idea to pass on knowledge yet doesn't nearly exhaust its potential or fulfil the demand for it. More young chemists should be able to have this sort of exchange in order to support themselves in their professional orientation and the job application process. For this, experienced GDCh members should be given incentives to become mentors, and targeted career and networking events should be expanded further. Likewise, companies benefit from getting in touch with motivated and talented young chemists who are at an early stage of their career path and accompanying and advising them on mapping out their career possibilities. As a result, the chemical industry should promote such initiatives and call on their staff to dedicate themselves more to the GDCh. This would allow the companies to not only make use of an inter-industrial exchange and help shape the image of chemistry in society but also have exclusive contact with young talents who already have shown to be motivated and dedicated beyond their studies.