

Physical Chemistry Division Newsletter

From the Chair

Dear RACI Physical Chemistry Division Members,

Welcome to the mid 2020 RACI Physical Chemistry Division newsletter. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a certain level of hardship on many of us. One of the disappointments is that we had to postpone our student conference to sometime early next year. Having said that, the current situation has also prompted us to think creatively to keep our Division activities going. On this front, I want to acknowledge the Division Committee, especially Laura McKemish, for working tirelessly to organise the webinars many of us have attended in the past few weeks.

On the topic of webinars, I would like to thank our wonderful speakers. Thank you very much for taking the time to share with us your fascinating research. We have learned much about topics ranging from the SARS-CoV-2 virus to singlet fission. I also want to acknowledge you - the Physical Chemistry community of Australia and New Zealand. Thanks for participating in the webinars to learn about the cutting-edge Physical Chemistry research in the region. With the high level of enthusiasm we have received, the Committee will continue the webinar program into the future. We look forward to seeing you in our future webinars.

Please let me, Laura or David know if you would like to give a webinar. Please also contact us if you would like to nominate a speaker.

It is my pleasure to congratulate Amir Karton, who is one of the 2020 recipients of The Journal of Physical Chemistry – American Chemical Society PHYS Division Lectureship Awards. Please read about Amir's award below. Well done, Amir!

In closing, the Division Committee thank you for your continuing support. We look forward to catching up with you in our webinars. In the meantime, stay safe and continue to make progress in Physical Chemistry research.

Tak W. Kee
RACI Physical Chemistry Division Chair

From the Treasurer

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in reduced 'physical' activity for the Physical Chemistry Division, with the biggest impact being the unfortunate cancellation of the Student Conference that was due to take place this year. Refunds have been given to those that had registered for the student conference.

The RACI Physical Chemistry Division remains in a sound financial position despite the challenging environment. The Division budget for 2020-21 has been approved by the RACI head office, which includes support of a Division Lectureship and Division meeting in 2021.

The Division will look to support a virtual lectureship tour if travel remains restricted, and is supporting the current webinar series that has stimulated our thriving community. We are exploring the potential for a virtual Division and Student meeting in 2021, with a key

factor being a suitable price point to maximise involvement of all Division members to make it a dynamic and memorable event.

David Wilson
RACI Physical Chemistry Division Treasurer
August 2020

Webinars

Overview

Australian (and New Zealand) PhysChem has gone virtual! Every Wednesday fortnight since July 1st, we have had the pleasure of listening to two talks from our experimental and theoretical colleagues on diverse topics from using molecular mechanics to rationally design drugs to treat COVID19 to learning how to photocatalytically split water without adding water. Our attendance has consistently been more than 50 people per webinar and we have had an absolute deluge of fantastic questions for every speaker!

PhysChem student/ECR focus sessions

As part of the RACI PhysChem webinar series, we are preparing for two student-focused sessions in 2020.

- 1) Broad audience as part of the main seminar series: Two-minute thesis/research talk for PhysChem (not general scientific) audience, most suitable for PhD students and post-doctoral researchers.
- 2) Smaller audience as part of special Honours day: Practice honours talk, with significant question time and peer feedback. Note that students who present are expected to provide feedback for others.

Register your interest at: <https://forms.gle/GFJvqSCeohxSZM3C7>

Looking forward

We are getting more experimental with our formats, with the introduction of post-session break-out rooms and a new interview style talk session. We have some more innovation in the works, including a dedicated DFT and #compchem session where you can learn just what DFT functional and basis set you meant to use for your problem.

Innovative session ideas and speaker suggestions will be warmly received; just email me at l.mckemmish@unsw.edu.au.

Student attendance and engagement is increasing, but we want to go even further making these webinars accessible and desirable for students. If you have suggestions and/or feedback on how to achieve this or on any aspect of these webinars, please don't hesitate to email or anonymously fill out our feedback form here: <https://forms.gle/n9oShrYmhSqx23G8A>.

We look forward to more virtual engagement with our community year-long; perhaps this can be one of the COVID silver linings that we can continue on in the years to come.

Laura McKemmish
RACI Physical Chemistry Division Secretary
August 2020

Division News

Award

Congratulations to Amir Karton.
Amir Karton, University of Western Australia
[The Journal of Physical Chemistry – PHYS Division Lectureship Award](#)

2021 Division Lectureship and Medal

Announcements for the next Division (2021) Lectureship and Medal are expected to be made in September 2020.

2021 PCCP Emerging Investigator Lectureship

Nominations are now being accepted for the 2021 PCCP Emerging Investigator Lectureship and Themed Issue. The PCCP Emerging Investigator Award aims to recognise and support emerging scientists working in physical chemistry, chemical physics or biophysical chemistry.

The Lectureship recipient will receive £1000 to cover travel and accommodation costs to attend and present at a leading international meeting in 2021. The recipient will also be invited to contribute a Perspective article to PCCP. In addition, selected nominees will be invited to submit to an Emerging Investigator Themed Issue.

Nominations must be made to the Editorial Office by 14th September 2020 via the Emerging Investigator nomination form, with an accompanying letter of recommendation.

Nominations are made by the Division Committee. If you are interested in applying for this lectureship, please contact a Division Committee member. Further information, including eligibility and selection criteria can also be found at the website <https://rsc.li/pccp-lectureship-2021>.

If you have any questions or queries about the lectureship, please contact pccp-rsc@rsc.org.

Future Events

RACI PhysChem student conference

The RACI physical chemistry student conference has been postponed due to COVID-19. We hope to run this event just before the Division Meeting in 2021. For any updates on this event, please visit <https://physchemstudentconf.com/>

RACI PhysChem Division Meeting 2021

The Division plans to hold the next division meeting, which will commence on Monday 8th February with an evening mixer and conclude with a banquet on Thursday 11th February. An associated one-day symposium will be held on Friday 12th February in honour of Professor Noel Hush. The meeting will be held in Sydney's cultured inner west with lectures at the University of Sydney. Facilities to support participants with small children will be provided. The conference will also include a mentoring and networking session for early-career researchers.

Please contact Meredith Jordan (meredith.jordan@usyd.edu.au) and Tim Schmidt (timothy.schmidt@unsw.edu.au) for details.

RACI National Congress 2022

The next RACI National Congress will be held in Brisbane from 3-8th July 2022 at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre.

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