

The MolTag Doctoral Program celebrated the Opening of its 3rd Funding Period with a great event and a students retreat!

The Opening, November 25, 2019:

Located in the beautiful Sky Lounge of the University of Vienna, MolTag welcomed **superbe guest lecturers** and the new students of the 3rd Funding Period (2019 – 2023).

The event was opened with an encouraging overview by the program Speaker **Gerhard Ecker**, followed by a statement of long-term MolTag SAB member **Peter Nussbaumer**, who is managing director of the Lead Discovery Center, a translational drug discovery center in Germany.



Ruth Nussinov from the NIH Center for Cancer Research delivered the key note speech „*Molecular Targeting in the Age of Precision Medicine*“.

Jeffrey Bode from ETHZ is working in the area of synthetic organic chemistry, his talk „*Predictable and Programmable Organic Synthesis*“ was appreciated far beyond the experts in the discipline.



Research Scientist **Jacob Keller** works in the fields of psychoactive pharmacology and transmembrane transporter proteins. He came from Washington to give his lecture „*Rapid, Frigid and Vivid: Transporter Physiology Measured with Biosensors*“.

Finally, Neuroscientist **Paul Slesinger** from the Ican School of Medicine New York, took the audience „*On a Journey with inhibitory potassium channels*“.



All scientific guest lecturer were introduced by **Moltag students or alumni** from the second funding period of the program.

In the afternoon, a mixed panel of MolTag PIs, -students and -SAB, all with a different background and approach, came together to share and discuss their experiences and ideas regarding „*Value and Challenge of a multidisciplinary PhD education*“. The panel was chaired by **Lucas Zinner**, who is Head of Research Services and Career Development at University of Vienna and a widely recognized expert in doctoral education.



Nuno Maulide is not only MolTag Faculty member and Professor for Organic Chemistry, who was announced as Austria's Scientist of the year in 2018, he is also a splendid concert pianist. With his lecture „*When Science becomes an Art. Chemical Stories with a Musical Twist*“ he artistically outlined that creativity is an equally important ingredient in research as in music.

For the MolTag community and the invited speakers, the day ended with a dinner in a typical Viennese restaurant.



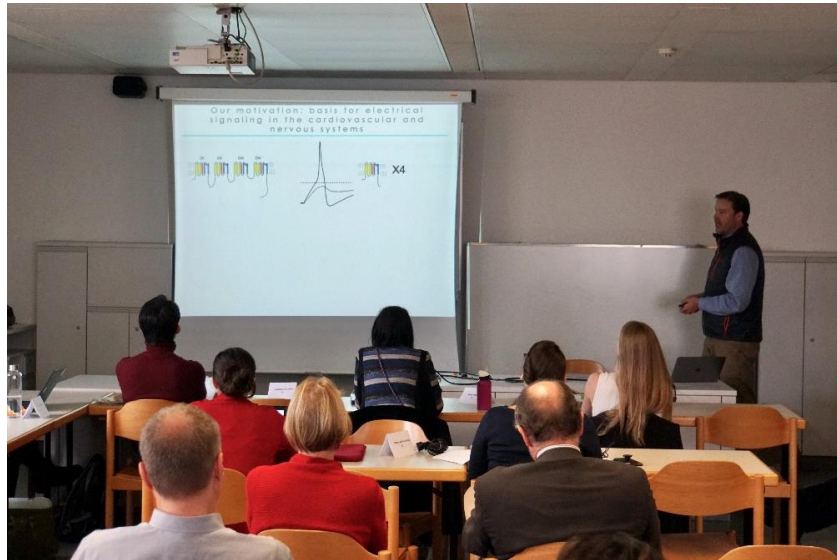
The Retreat, November 26, 2019:

On **day 2**, the program continued with the first retreat of the MolTag3 students at the Pharmacy Center of UZA 2, Althanstrasse.

The students presented their PhD topics both in a **3-minute flash talk** at the podium and additionally in a **project feedback discussion** with selected MolTag PIs and SAB members.



After the lunch break, SAB member **Chris Ahern**, University of Iowa, impressed the audience with the results and possibilities that he presented in his talk *“Teaching tRNA new tricks: promoting repair of disease-causing stop codons”*.



In the afternoon SAB members, PIs and students were mixed on four different tables, to discuss in „**Round Table Sessions**“ dedicated to the topics:

- Science Career in Industry or Academia? How different are Requirements, Perspectives, Opportunities
- Mentoring, Motivation, Mobility: how important is it and how much does it influence your PhD and your career
- How to be successful in research? - Developing a Research Strategy, understanding different Perspectives
- MolTag specific Curriculum: cross disciplinary Teaching, Training, Mutual Learning – collect and filter ideas

Every 30 minutes, the students moved to another topical table, **so that every student could get in touch with** every faculty and SAB member.

The round table discussions brought PhDs students together with PIs and SAB to exchange experience and knowledge and gave room for discussions and questions.



All in all, the students gained a lot from the Opening/First MolTag retreat and were especially happy with the feedback they received:

„I liked the opportunity to get in contact with other Moltag students, PIs and SAB members. Got some very useful feedback and new perspectives for things to do during the PhD training and afterwards.“

„To hear about the different research topics from each student, thereby also actively recognizing all fellow students during their presentation slot.“

„The flash talks were a great opportunity to learn to explain our research to others and good practice.“

„It is great to get feedback from experts before you do something and to see different perspectives.“

The MolTag Doctoral Program looks back with pride to what our previous students have achieved so far. With our newly recruited doctoral students we look forward to some more successful years ahead!

Thanks also to the [FWF](#) for the funding of the program which allows young doctoral students so many opportunities!



The students of the third period of the MolTag Doctoral Program

(foto credit: Michael Bründl! Thanks!)