

From Kyiv to Quebec and Quebec to Kyiv

OSA student officers cross the ocean to share outreach efforts and research subjects

During the last week of February 2011, an officer from Université Laval's OSA student chapter in Canada flew to Kyiv, in Ukraine. As an invited speaker, he visited the Optics Division in the Physics Faculty of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv. The goal of his stay was to present to Kyiv's OSA student members, as well as to other students in physics, several networking and outreach activities that are planned annually by Université Laval's OSA and SPIE student chapter, also named REPOL. The main focus of the talk, given February 23rd, was to give ideas about activities that may be organized as well as the benefits of their happening for everyone who is involved.

After a brief introduction of the speaker David Hélie, a 2nd year PhD student in physics at Université Laval and treasurer of the REPOL, participants were familiarised with the economic and scientific development of the field of optics and photonics in Canada, and more particularly in the province of Quebec. This was followed by the presentation of a short video about the optics and photonics building at Université Laval, host to the Center for Optics, Photonics and Lasers (COPL), Canada's largest university research center in optics and photonics. This part was very interesting because most of the Ukrainian students had never seen clean-room facilities and high-power laser systems.

The remainder of the talk focused on REPOL's annual and past activities. Emphasis was placed on the Photonics Toolkit networking activity (www.repol.copl.ulaval.ca/toolkit/) and the Photonic Games outreach activity (www.repol.copl.ulaval.ca/outreach.html). These two events were part of the highlights of the talk since they are two original activities from the REPOL student chapter.

The talk was concluded by specifying numerous advantages of taking part in the realization of such activities as well as the benefits of being a member of an OSA student chapter. Questions following the talk concerned not only details of the REPOL's activities, but also possibilities for Ukrainian students to pursue graduate studies at Université Laval. Discussions also focused on possible collaborations between Université Laval and other universities as well as specific research themes. The speaker was invited to give another talk a few days later about his research on laser processing of optical materials using ultrashort pulses.

Another purpose of the visit was to follow up on the recent tour of Kyiv's OSA student chapter president to Université Laval in October 2010. During his stay in Quebec City, OSA student chapter president Valentyn Stadnytskyi had the opportunity to participate in the Photonic Games activity, which is a whole day of competition for 11th grade students where they must solve hands-on challenges about basic optics and photonics principles. His visit encouraged him to seek out help for planning a similar activity in Kyiv.

We think both these visits opened up horizons for students at Université Laval's COPL and Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv Optics Division. Future collaborations may be considered, such as sharing of information for the planning of networking and outreach activities by the student chapters. In academia, researchers and students from both institutions are favourable to collaborations concerning theoretical and experimental research. In addition, professors at the COPL are interested in greeting Ukrainian students, as well as other qualified international students, for graduate studies in the field of optics and photonics.



Invited Speaker David Hélie introduces the topic of his talk



Speaker presenting an overview of the economic and scientific growth of the optics and photonics field in the province of Quebec, Canada.



The audience was composed of graduate and undergraduate OSA student members, as well as the head of the optics division of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv.



David explaining how the REPOL officers planned the Cocktail with the Experts activity, which is based on the speed dating concept.