

- *Newsletter* -

NIOK PhD-Platform

Dear NIOK PhD Student,

The NPP proudly presents its second newsletter!

In this edition:

- **NIOK Exam Borrel:** *Distressing with your Schiermonnikoog buddies!*
- **NPP announcements 2010:** *Pub Quiz & Company visit!!!!*
- **KNCV Catalysis Prize:** *Interview with winner Dr. Jaap Bergwerff*

NIOK Exam Borrel: *De-stressing with your Schiermonnikoog buddies!*

On February 3rd 2010, 50 PhD students dared to take the notorious NIOK exam! As we all experienced (at least once), the tension at the start of the exam was quite present and many rather pale faces entered the examination room. Luckily, the NPP organized a borrel afterwards. During this social event none talked about the questions just answered and lots of fun was made with what could be called Schiermonnikoog-friends.....



NPP announcements:

1) The NPP organizes a company visit to BASF!!!!!!

Where: BASF De Meern (Utrecht)

When: May 21st 2010

If you are interested to join the company visit e-mail d.mores@uu.nl your:

- *Name,*
- *University, Group and Supervisor*
- *PhD year*
- *Research topic**
- *e-mail address*

* BASF will select two PhD who will give a small presentation on their research.

2) Join with your fellow NIOK PhDs at NCCC XI for a Pub Quiz hosted by a genuine Englishman. Compete with and against your Schiermonnikoog friends in teams for fun and to win cash prizes. You can sign up just before the start of the quiz at the quiz location.

When: March 1st, 10-11pm

Where: NH Leeuwenhorst bar

3) Without you there is no NIOK PhD platform,



THE NPP IS MADE FOR AND FROM PhD STUDENTS THAT WANT TO DEVELOP MORE THAN JUST THEIR SCIENTIFIC SKILLS, THAT WANT TO EXPERIENCE MORE THAN JUST A REGULAR PHD TRACK, THAT WANT TO MEET INTERESTING PEOPLE, IMPROVE NIOK... AND HAVE FUN!

THEREFORE WE ARE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR NEW PEOPLE AND NEW IDEAS

SMALL AMOUNT OF TIME & LOTS OF SATISFACTION Guaranteed!!!!!!!!!!!!

Contact us if interested..... office@niok.nl

During the 10th NCCC-conference in Noordwijkerhout, Dr. Jaap Bergwerff received the KNCV Catalysis Prize. The prize is awarded bi-annually by the KNCV Catalysis Section to the author of the best Dutch PhD thesis on catalysis, of the previous period. Dr. Bergwerff received his PhD in March 2007 in the group of Inorganic Chemistry and Catalysis at the Utrecht University for the thesis entitled “Spatially Resolved Spectroscopy on the Preparation of CoMo/Al₂O₃ Hydrodesulphurisation Catalysts. The NIOK PhD Platform interviewed Dr. Bergwerff .

Dear Jaap,

Looking back to your PhD track, can you tell us a little bit about your overall experience as a PhD student

Looking back on my PhD period, the most important skill I have learned is how to be an independent researcher. During the traineeships I did as a master student, there was always a well-defined task to perform. As a PhD, you are much more responsible for your own planning and you have the freedom to explore your own ideas. Of course, especially in the beginning of the PhD period, the guidance and ideas of my supervisors, Professors Bert Weckhuysen en Krijn de Jong, was essential in this respect. All in all, I really had a great time in Utrecht, met a lot of nice people and actually felt a lump in my throat, when I left the lab for the last time.



Scientifically speaking, what was the most important learning moment?

My thesis is a study into the preparation of hydroprocessing catalyst extrudates using spectroscopic techniques. The first rudimentary Raman measurements on bisected extrudates (without a microscope, aiming the Laser by hand), from which the transport of metal-complexes could be deduced were very exciting. These measurements weren't part of the original research plan, but from then on the topic of my thesis was fixed.

When looking back, what are the things you are most proud of?

Considering that my first presentation at NCCC was anything but flawless, I am proud of the improvements in my presentation skills and winning the prize for the best presentation the next year. Winning the NIOK Soccer Cup was another highlight!

How was the relationship with your supervisors?

The relationship with my supervisors was excellent. Due to the different backgrounds and know-how of my supervisors, they could teach me a lot about the different aspects of heterogeneous catalysis. I am really thankful for that. On a personal level, I must admit that, in hindsight, Bert was often right in his observations of me as a person.

You currently work at Albemarle, what is your function in the company. What are the skills that you developed during your PhD that are useful or even necessary in your current work?

My job title is research scientist and I am working on the development of improved hydroprocessing catalysts for different applications. This means that you are dealing with many different aspects of heterogeneous catalysis research, such as catalyst preparation, characterization and testing. Although I am learning everyday, the experience with these topics obtained during my time as a Ms/PhD-student at Utrecht University certainly helped.

When you applied for a job at Albemarle, did you mention you had the NIOK Certificate? Do you think the certificate has a value for being recruited?

I am afraid, that I never included my NIOK certificate in my CV. If I would apply for a position abroad in the future, I would certainly include it. In general, the broader perspective on catalysis that is offered at the NIOK course is extremely useful for anyone involved in catalysis R&D.

Finally, do you have any suggestions for other PhDs to achieve a nice thesis like the one you have written?

My advice would be to follow your interests. Once you have found the main theme of your thesis, see how you can collaborate with other experts and work on different aspects of catalyst research.