

Leading US Catalysis Research Centers as Cooperation Partners:

Heidelberg Catalysis Research Announces Outstanding Collaboration Agreements

The Collaborative Research Center „Molecular Catalysts: Structure and Functional Design“ in Heidelberg (Sonderforschungsbereich SFB 623, generously funded by the German Research Foundation, DFG; <http://www.sfb623.uni-hd.de>), operating since 2002 in the university's Faculty of Chemistry and Earth Sciences in the field of catalysis, with broad research activities ranging from biocatalysis to large-scale industrial processes, has signed cooperation agreements with two leading and worldwide renowned centers of catalysis research in the US. A bilateral “Memorandum of Understanding”, has been signed between the Heidelberg Collaborative Research Center and both the “Catalysis Program of the Chemical Sciences Division” of the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory in Berkeley, California, USA, and the “Center for Catalysis and Surface Science” of Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, USA. The partners have agreed to jointly promote research activities, an intensive scientific communication and exchange of information, reciprocal guest stays of scholars, scientists and students, a joint organisation of scientific events and other adequate measures for a close cooperation in the field of catalysis research.

“Our mutual agreements on intensive collaboration and close scientific contacts with these large and prominent organizations of catalysis research in Berkeley and Evanston will extend existing relations and will put them on a broader basis. In a non-bureaucratic and efficient way they will open new perspectives and create new chances for an international exchange of experience and for personal contacts for all research groups in Heidelberg and in all fields of catalysis research, above all for our young scientists and students”, says the chairman of the Heidelberg Collaborative Research Center, Prof. Peter Hofmann, Institute of Organic Chemistry, who initiated the new agreements of SFB 623 together with colleagues at Berkeley and

Evanston. Already for 2006 a joint symposium Heidelberg / Berkeley / Northwestern is planned to take place in Heidelberg, organized by the Heidelberg SFB.

An expansion of the scientific collaboration activities to the Cluster of Excellence “Catalysis Center Heidelberg (CCH)”, which also comprises intensive research cooperation with industry, above all with BASF AG, and which is planned in the context of the present nation-wide German Elite Contest of universities has already been agreed upon with the US partners, in case of a successful application on the Heidelberg side.

The role of catalysis as a vital key technology of an environmentally benign, sustainable and economically efficient chemistry of the 21st century and thus, the importance of closely connected international collaboration in the field of catalysis has been impressively highlighted by the Nobel Prizes for molecular catalysts (“olefin metathesis”) in 2005.