

Successful Careers event leads to annual commitment

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The School of Chemistry recently played host to a very successful Careers event involving speakers from industry, including Kraft, Unilever and the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL). The School hosted the speakers (many of them alumni of the University) and approximately 75 students to a welcome lunch, before Professor Jon Preece, Head of School, gave an opening address. He welcomed the speakers, stressing the importance to the School of maintaining and developing strong links with industry, and the importance to students of developing their career and commercial awareness skills through attendance at such events.



The event was organised by the School's Careers tutor, Dr. John Snaith, and Caroline Egan, Careers Adviser to the School from Careers Network, and co-hosted with student society ChemSoc.

The opportunity to hear first-hand insights from speakers from key companies and the School of Education on how to get into a variety of careers with a Chemistry degree is an important stage in students' career development, and is actively supported by both the School and Careers Network. Further talks focused on what and what not to do when applying for jobs, plus an insight into those organisations and their recruitment processes.

Dr. Katherine Thompson from Unilever was up first to discuss her work history and how she came to occupy her current role running a workstream in genesis encapsulations. She also spoke about the various Unilever products and some of the chemistry behind them, as well as areas of research undertaken by her own and other teams in Unilever, highlighting the scientific challenges they face in their work.

The students then heard from Drs Chris Howle and Marcus Main from DSTL, both alumni of the School, about their career trajectories and the lessons they had learned along the way through their respective research and roles in DSTL, which are related to chemical warfare agents.

They were followed by a most entertaining and inspirational talk on teaching Chemistry from the University's own Dr. Sandy Wilkinson (School of Education), and last but by no means least, a very frank and insightful talk from Dr. Grace Christian from Kraft Foods about her career path, the trials and tribulations to be expected when undertaking a PhD, lessons learned whilst attaining her current position, and the skills necessary for students to develop in order to enter and advance in their chosen careers.

Both students and speakers provided excellent and positive feedback on the event, commenting on the interesting, informative and engaging nature of the accounts heard and the breadth of possible careers available, such that this event will now be an annual event within the School.

The presentations were followed by a networking session which was attended by the speakers and attracted many enthusiastic students, and which ran for much longer than had originally been envisaged. This provided an opportunity for students to mingle with speakers in a relaxed atmosphere, to discuss careers in general and enquire about placements, internships and graduate jobs.

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