Connecting Worlds of Knowledge at German House New York

Feb 16, 2009

On Friday, February 13, Consul General Horst Freitag hosted a meeting for a delegation of scientists from the Max Delbrück Center in Berlin and the New York University (NYU). Horst Freitag introduced the new Research and Academic Relations Initiative of the German Foreign Office which aims at "connecting worlds of knowledge." The scientists explained the current PhD Exchange Program between NYU and the Institute for Medical Systems Biology in Berlin (BIMSB), a research center of the Helmholtz Association.

"With so many top universities in the tri-state area and the high density of nobel prize winners living and working here, the New York Area is a natural home for German education and research institutions," Freitag pointed out. "However, also on the other side of the Atlantic, Germany is increasingly attractive for academics and researchers from abroad as a centre of cutting-edge technology, renewable energy and innovation." The discussion at German House New York was a good opportunity for researchers and representatives from various institutions in Berlin and New York to get in touch with representatives of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the German Research Foundation (DFG) and to intensify their relationship.

In joint collaboration with The Center for Functional Genomics and Systems Biology at NYU, the Institute for Medical Systems Biology in Berlin has recently launched its new International PhD Program. In its pilot phase, 10 students will have the opportunity to participate in a fully integrated global doctoral program designed to meet the needs of 21st century scholarships.

Nikolaus Rajewsky of the Max Delbrück Center and Fabio Piano, Associate Professor of Biology at NYU, introduced the opportunities for cooperation between the Berlin Institute for Medical Systems Biology and the Center for Genomics and Systems Biology at NYU. The current collaboration is based on cutting-edge technologies and high-ranking scientists on both sides. From here on, the partners on both sides of the Atlantic want to expand their efforts towards an exchange of faculty members and undergraduates as well as for complementary funding from other national agencies in Germany and the United States.

Ulrich Baer, Professor for German and Vice Provost for Globalization and Multi Cultural Affairs at NYU, and Fabio Piano expressed their strong support and commitment for the first PhD students arriving in spring/summer. NYU's support for housing and formal integration of these students as research fellows as well as integration into the PhD community of the Department of Biology will greatly facilitate the first steps of the exchange program. There is also a strong interest of NYU to expand students education on the undergraduate level in locations abroad in particular in Berlin, which offers a wide range of opportunities in life sciences.

The "inhabitants" of German House New York (German Consulate General, DAAD, DFG and German university liaison offices) were delighted for this opportunity to significantly contribute to further enhance and foster scientific cooperation. "Connecting knowledge – connecting people: German House New York" this is the common goal that is pursued together.