

The conference explored ‘biohybrid’ approaches in which biological machineries including proteins, enzymes and whole cells are being integrated with synthetic materials for (solar) energy conversion, from fuel production to power generation. The conference was highly interdisciplinary and showcased advanced techniques to characterise, design and synthesise the bio-material interface, while providing a forum for biologists, material scientists, electrochemists, and spectroscopists, to share ideas for tackling this challenge. Initially we planned for a physical meeting as part of the larger NanoGE Fall meeting, but due to the pandemic we moved towards an online format and separated our symposium from the main event for a more targeted audience and lower entrance cost.

In total we heard invited and contributed talks from 31 speakers, received 27 ePosters, and hosted over 110 registered attendants from all over the world, stretching as far as Japan and the USA. An ePoster session with both chat and virtual face-to-face privately held zoom sessions helped to make up for the missing social interactions. This resulted in stimulated discussions that lasted far past the closing of the poster session. We also experimented with a participation prize via raffle, which was surprisingly effective at stimulating discussion and participation, particularly from early career scientists. There was also never a dull moment or lack of questions during the discussion sessions.

Scientific discussions also extended into happy hour sessions which followed the conference on the first and last day of the program. Lastly, additional online forums were posted where all discussions questions asked by attendees could be answered by the speakers and openly viewed after the scientific program had ended. This provided valuable feedback for both the speakers and attendants.