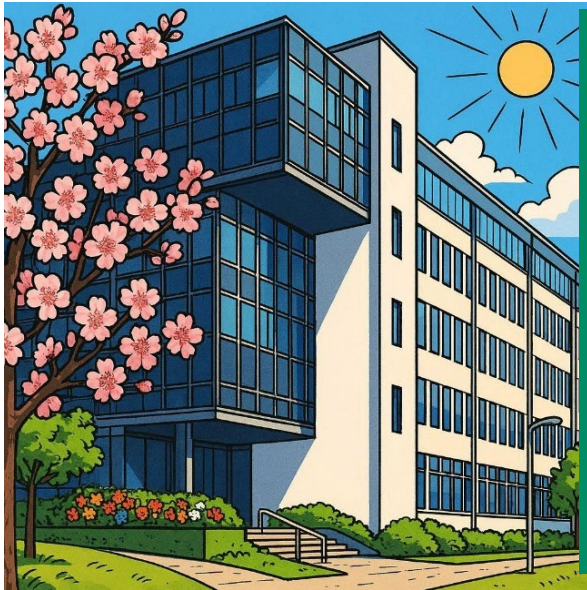


CeBiTec – Quarterly

Spring 2026



- ▶ Volker Wendisch was awarded an honorary professorship in Biotechnology at Amity University
- ▶ Personnel changes in the Scientific Advisory Board of CeBiTec
- ▶ Third-party funded projects of teutolab-biotechnology: BMBF project completed - new EFRE project granted
- ▶ The Kruse group publishes a New Phytologist article on a unicellular green microalga showing plant-like photoprotection, highlighted by a Commentary
- ▶ Spring brewing competition of Molecular Biotechnology students in the CeBiTec building

Volker Wendisch was awarded an honorary professorship in Biotechnology at Amity University

Volker F. Wendisch was awarded an honorary professorship in Biotechnology at [Amity University](#), Noida, Uttar Pradesh, India. The honorary professorship was bestowed on him on February 27, 2026, during the conference



“Sustainable Biotechnology and Bioinnovation SBB-2026”, to which he contributed the keynote lecture “Synthetic biology approaches in microbial strain engineering for sustainable fermentative production of aromatics”.

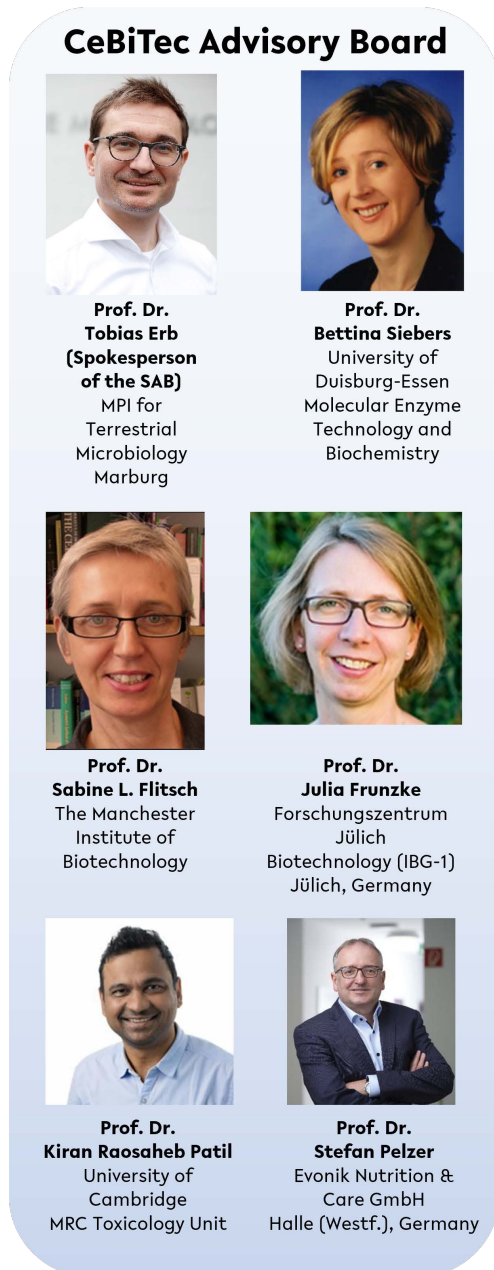
(L. Wobbe)



Photo taken at the award ceremony. ©Vivek Kumar Gaur

Personnel changes in the Scientific Advisory Board of CeBiTec

The Scientific Advisory Board advises the Executive Board and the Scientific Director on the further development and future scientific orientation of CeBiTec.



Current composition of the Scientific Advisory Board of CeBiTec

The Rectorate appoints up to six high-ranking scientists to the Advisory Board upon the Executive Board's recommendation. The persons appointed to the Advisory Board should have

scientific expertise in at least one of the three research fields "Bioinformatics", "Sustainable Bioproduction" or "Microbiome Research". In addition, the advisory board should also cover expertise in industrial biotechnology.

Following the resignations of Dr. Rolf Apweiler (Spokesman of the Advisory Board), Prof. Dr. Thomas Lengauer and Dr. Ralf Kelle, three positions on the Advisory Board had to be filled.

Fortunately, with [Prof. Dr. Julia Frunzke](#) (Forschungszentrum Jülich; Biotechnology (IBG-1), Jülich, Germany), [Prof. Dr. Kiran Raosaheb Patil](#) (University of Cambridge, MRC Toxicology Unit) and [Prof. Dr. Stefan Pelzer](#) (Evonik Nutrition & Care GmbH; Halle (Westf.), Germany), worthy successors were found. The current spokesperson of the advisory board is Prof. Dr. Tobias Erb (Max Planck Institute for Terrestrial Microbiology; Marburg, Germany).

(L. Wobbe)

Third-party funded projects of teutolab-biotechnology: BMBF project completed - new EFRE project granted

The BMBF joint project "Out-of-school student labs as a place for teacher training in the digital world" ([LFB-Labs-digital](#)) was successfully completed at the end of March. Within the project, teutolab-biotechnology delivered a training programme for biology teachers on integrating digital tools in a subject-specific way. At the centre was the use of the MEGA software for genetic and phylogenetic analyses - among other topics, the evolution of coronaviruses - combined with an on-site lab visit (PCR, gel electrophoresis)

and the development of participants' own lesson units.



A pre-post survey showed significant gains in teachers' technological knowledge (TK) related to phylogeny software, as well as in pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) and technological content knowledge (TCK). Overall, the findings highlight student labs as effective venues for hands-on, subject-specific digital professional development.

The EFRE call "zdi MINTplus.NRW" aims to further expand STEM talent development and transfer up-to-date knowledge into STEM education. Starting this summer, teutolab-biotechnology will develop new student programmes that translate current research into hands-on workshops in the student lab. We are excited to launch this next phase and build lasting momentum for STEM education together with research groups at Bielefeld University.



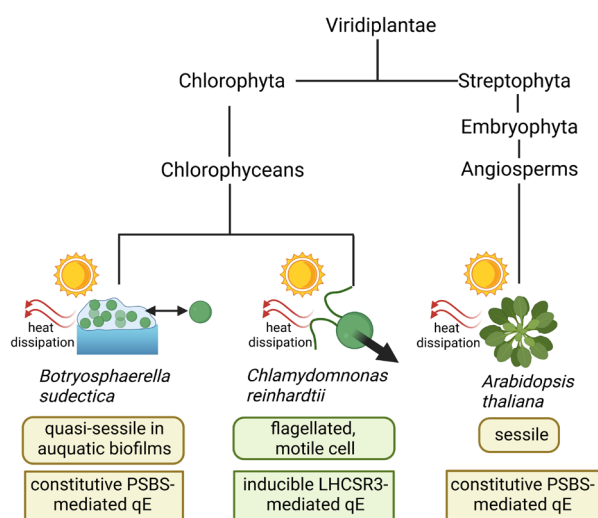
(K. Röllke)

The Kruse group publishes a New Phytologist article on a unicellular green microalga showing plant-like photoprotection, highlighted by a Commentary

Non-photochemical quenching (NPQ) mechanisms fine-tune light utilisation in the photosynthetic antenna, for example, in response to excess light, to prevent photodamage. NPQ comprises distinct mechanisms, all contributing to photoprotection but acting on different time scales. Preferences for individual mechanisms

and NPQ composition are proposed to reflect the organism's lifestyle, especially regarding sessile vs. motile styles, with the latter enabling photophobic responses.

In the New Phytologist publication "[The unicellular green microalga *Botryosphaerella sudetica* links plant-like light protection with an algal lifestyle](#)", the Kruse group demonstrates that the microalga *B. sudetica* is equipped with a constitutive energy-dependent quenching (qE) mechanism based on the constitutive accumulation of protein PSBS, the thylakoid lumen pH-sensor and qE-inducer, found throughout the green plant lineage. While qE is the predominant NPQ mechanism in *B. sudetica*, a species known to form aquatic biofilms, state transitions (qT) largely contribute to NPQ in *C. reinhardtii*, a motile, flagellated species, capable of negative phototaxis.



Although only distantly related from an evolutionary perspective, *B. sudetica* employs a qE strategy previously known only in sessile land plants. Created in <https://BioRender.com>

In a [commentary](#) on this article published by Prof. Dr EonSeon Jin (Hanyang University: Seongdong-gu, Seoul, KR), she writes, "The ecological implications of findings in this study are particularly

noteworthy. Motile algae can mitigate sudden light stress through behavioral avoidance, which may reduce the need for constitutive quenching. By contrast, nonmotile or biofilm-forming organisms lack this flexibility and therefore often maintain continuously available photoprotective mechanisms. This difference is not absolute, and intermediate or mixed photoprotective strategies are frequently observed.”

With a broader perspective, it can be concluded that a core set of NPQ mechanisms conserved across the *Viridiplantae* is shuffled to better meet the habitat's adaptive requirements.

Blifernez-Klassen, O., Berger, H., Klassen, V., Chaudhari, S., Baier, T., Wobbe, L. and Kruse, O. (2026) The unicellular green microalga *Botryosphaerella sudetica* links plant-like light protection with an algal lifestyle. *New Phytol.*

<https://nph.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/nph.70990>

Jin, E. (2026) How ecological lifestyle rewires the architecture of photoprotection across the green lineage. *New Phytol.*

<https://doi.org/10.1111/nph.71106>

(L. Wobbe & O. Kruse)

Spring brewing competition of Molecular Biotechnology students in the CeBiTec building



©D. Cholewa

On 13 March 2026, the spring Brewing Competition returned again to the foyer of CeBiTec, bringing together students, lecturers and scientists with a shared enthusiasm for self-made beer. The event was

generously supported by the Herforder Brewery, who provided taps, glassware, a reference beer,

and a fruity Alster – our sincere thanks for their continued partnership. As in previous years, the student brewing teams impressed with a range of creative and high-quality beers, guided by the expertise of master brewer Moritz Last.

This edition featured four student groups with sophisticatedly brewed beers. A total of 134 votes were cast to determine the winners:

1st place: *Lemon Impossible* – a fruity, refreshing citrus wheat beer



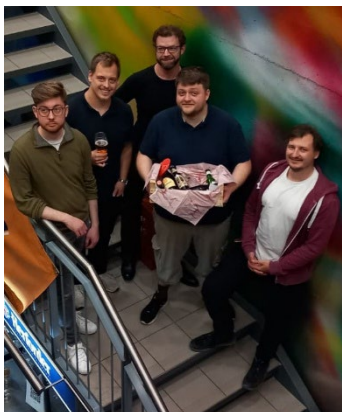
©D. Cholewa

2nd place: *Trappista, Trappista Antifascista* – a rich, malty tripel



©D. Cholewa

3rd place: *Bock auf Honig* – a full-bodied bock with pronounced honey sweetness



©D. Cholewa

4th place: *Stout of Control* – a spiced porter with lactose and juniper notes



©D. Cholewa

The evening unfolded in a lively and convivial atmosphere, with the beers proving so popular that the kegs ran dry earlier than expected. A minor technical issue briefly challenged the team, but it was resolved efficiently behind the scenes. By the time the presentations began, everything was back on track, allowing the competition to proceed seamlessly.



©D. Cholewa

We extend our gratitude to all supporters and especially to CeBiTec. Without this support, such a remarkable event would not be possible—one that has firmly established itself as a cherished tradition. Cheers, and we look forward to the next edition!

See you and “Gut Sud”

(D. Cholewa)

Impressum

CeBiTec / Universität Bielefeld

Dr. Lutz Wobbe

Universitätsstr. 27

33615 Bielefeld, Germany

Concept & Idea:

Dr. Stefan Weidner

