

N/réf : SW/FZ

Procès-Verbal de la 320^{ème} séance de l'Assemblée d'Ecole du mardi 1^{er} juin 2021

Présences Aleksandra Radenovic, Ens
Consuelo Antille, CAT
Fabio Zuliani, CI
Georg Fantner, Ens
Ghali Chraibi, E
Gianluca Paglia, CAT
Jacqueline Morard, CAT
Julien Gamarro, CI
Marco Picasso, Ens
Maxime Brosset, E
Nicolò Ferrari, E
Pauline Franz, CI

Kristin Becker, Déléguée des 2 AE au CEPF
Sabrina Wuilleret, Assistante administrative AE

Natasha Stegmann, Bureau de l'égalité
Helene Fueger, Bureau de l'égalité
Jan Hesthaven, Vice-président Académique

Absences André Fattet, CAT
Francesca Nicoletti, E
Frédéric Courbin, Ens
Silvia Hostettler, CI
Frédéric Rauss, Mediacom

Ordre du jour

Membres AE; la séance débute à 12h15

- Accueil
- Adoption de l'ordre du jour
- Adoption du PV de la 319^{ème} séance
- Discussion avec notre Déléguée au CEPF
- Communications du Bureau de l'AE
- Présentation du Guide de langage inclusif pour l'EPFL
- Consultations
- Divers et propositions du jour

Membres AE et Invités

- Echange avec Prof. Jan Hesthaven, Provost, Vice-président Académique (13.30-14.15)
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1. Accueil

Séance ouverte à 12h15 par Fabio Zuliani, Président de l'AE.

2. Adoption de l'ordre du jour

L'ordre du jour est adopté.

3. Adoption du PV 319^{ème} séance

Le PV est adopté.

4. Discussion avec notre Déléguée au CEPF

ETH Board meeting 19/20 May.

Scientific integrity in the ETH Domain

The Swiss Academies have elaborated a codex for scientific integrity, it is available on their website. The ETH domain puts into place a working group looking at a possible harmonization of the existing codex's in the domain, as well as the proposal of EPFL to have an appeals commission for scientific misconduct. KB asked that the working group also looks at the proposal of the WPF of having a procedural oversight panel, which could be contacted during a grievance procedure (scientific misconduct and inappropriate behavior).

Revision Ordinance for professors

Mainly concerns the creation of a legal basis several "pratiques", such as disclosure of outside activities, private law contracts e.g. in architecture, retirement at the end of a semester, female professors until 65. Also some adaptations to the Ordinance for the personnel. Two new points: 65+ extensions with a private contract in exceptional cases and reimbursement of more costs for new hires (e.g. school fees). The consultation will be launched soon. KB asked for 6 months stop the clock for male PATT as suggested by the two bureaux of the two school assemblies – this has to be brought up during the consultation.

STCC (SwissTech Convention Center)

Several scenarios for an acquisition have been elaborated and discussed, no clear agreement yet, negotiations are still ongoing with the Credit Suisse.

Strategic objectives 2021-2024

The ETH Board approved the strategic objectives of EPFL. However, the Confederation asked for the integration of target values. These have been discussed with the SERI and the department, they will be presented at the Domain meeting in August and approved at the ETH Board meeting in September.

Other

Workshop evolution student numbers

The ETH Domain is asked by the Confederation to elaborate a strategy for the evolution of the student numbers. A 2h workshop took place in Bern, each ETH will elaborate its document, KB insisted on the fact that the students should be involved, Kathryn Hess and Jan Hesthaven agreed.

Ordinance Personnel ETH Domain (PVO ETH)

The deadline is extended until June 14th (July 15th for the answer to the ETH Board).

Conflict of interest

School assemblies will receive a document elaborated by a working group of the ETH domain after it has been sent to the directions.

5. Communications du bureau AE

➤ Operational Commission COVID-19:

- The commission is still following Federal Council regulations – it should be dissolved by the end of Summer if everything goes as well as expected – homework is advised (no more compulsory).

- Preparation of DIALOG 2021 (EPFL Assembly meeting ETH Board + EPFL Direction on June 16, 2021):

Three topics that we want to discuss with the ETH Board:

- Diversity (main topic, talk about diversity in a large sense and what it could bring to EPFL)
- Participation (how we see participation and what is the status)
- Growth (discussion about the large increase in students and staff expected in the years to come)

6. Présentation du Guide de langage inclusif pour l'EPFL, par Natasha Stegmann, Helene Fueger et Kristin Becker, du Bureau de l'égalité

Presentation of the inclusive language by the Equality Office to the School Assembly. This is a pilot phase and the presentations are targeted (VP, AE, GT-Admin, Communication Officers, SOP-Deputy, AGEPoly). The global and official project will be launched at the beginning of September 2021 to the whole community.

7. Consultations

- 04.05.2021 : Consultation sur la "Révision partielle de l'Ordonnance sur le personnel du Domaine des EPF (OPers-EPF)", GT – Julien, Consuelo, others TBD (new deadline 29.06.2021).

8. Echange avec Prof. Jan Hesthaven - Provost, Vice-président Académique

Conseils de Faculté

- How well followed is the rule saying that any proposal for new section or institute director must be approved by Faculty Council? Is it really considered when you receive the proposals? It seems it was not (at least until now), and a large disparity exists among Schools and Colleges.

Response: Generally, the Schools follow these rules well. The Deans uses them in different ways across the Schools and the participation is variable.

Addition to the discussion: VPA is aware that some seats on Faculty Councils remain empty and that one or several Bodies may not be represented properly in some Councils.

- Do all Deans chair the Faculty Council personally?

Response: The deans are supposed and must chair it, according to the LEX.

- How do you see the Faculty Councils being more useful across the Schools? The lack of information the members receive seems to be a huge issue.

Response: A Faculty Council belongs to all of its members, who should set up the agenda and choose what is discussed. A Dean should be here to listen. This way of working does not currently take place in all Councils, where some Deans decide of the agenda.

This brings to a key point already discussed between EPFL Assembly & VPA:

People would not get involved in Councils because they feel that they are not heard, because ideas might not be taken forward or because decisions are already taken. A fact is that EPFL community has very poor tradition for involving herself in governance of the institution. There's a full awareness of VPA & Direction that community governance was left behind but they want to change this.

Reflection on how to change this mindset and get a community involved:

- Schedule global faculty meetings with Direction, discuss as a community.
- Discuss a model where we begin to think about a few key committees (composed by professors and also by members of community that are elected and not appointed) that are very close to the decision maker and therefore would have the opportunity to bring up points that could influence the decisions.
- Social event idea: once per month, Provost is willing to pick 8 to 10 professors for an informal lunch time, to know each other and get to his attention concerned ideas.
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It's a real culture change to work on, it will take time.

Academic

- Are there processes, in general, that you would like to change?

Response: A lot of processes should have a service check, an adjustment. Little issues come to consultations but concerning large scale things, nothing is on the table in that regard. Students require to get more soft skills. Some steps are taking in the direction of having a center for communication to coordinate the development of soft skills. Some of these courses would be a credit for the students.

- We have a platform in place for the assessment of the teaching through the indicative evaluations and the CAPE in depth review. Do you find that this information is sufficient to monitor the quality of the teaching at EPFL?

Answer: no, there is a dialogue at ETH domain about teaching quality and quality in general at the two institutions as the number of students is expected to increase rather substantially over the next six to ten years. How will that impact the quality of the education? Part of the answer is that we more and more look at using a rather different way of teaching as students learn in different ways.

The assessment of teaching is difficult to do. Evaluations are done early in the semester to give the teacher more time to adjust. Number of things are discussed.

EA is invited to express on how can we monitor the quality of the teaching?

- a guidance for teaching (experienced teachers to avoid making common mistakes done by new teachers). One to one monitoring is efficient locally and is certainly a good idea to experiment.
- Many universities have periodic faculty/ (research-) staff surveys where the satisfaction of the faculty/staff with their work atmosphere, workload, professional support, continued education, university culture etc. are being assessed. EPFL does not have such a mechanism so far. Should we introduce such a tool, or do you have other ways to collect this information?

Answer: I don't see why not. What are you going to do with it? Having an annual or bi-annual survey can be explored if useful (need to clarify what is the hope to achieve by doing that). In the past, self-initiated surveys were not useful as they were self-selected. I would assemble a committee of faculty members to discuss what it is their wish to measure. EA: the purpose is to have data. VPA is opened to it.

- During the previous administration there were significant cuts to the budgets of some schools. This was motivated in part because of the threatened cut to the budget provided to EPFL by the federation, and a looming large fine from the EU due to reporting of eligible hours. These cuts have led to lasting reduction of the annual budget that goes to the research units. Now rumors have it that the fine was much less substantial than feared, and the cut of the EPFL budget by the federation has not happened. At the same time there is increased push to decrease the reserves of EPFL at all levels. It therefore would seem that those budget cuts were fortunately not necessary. Will these cuts be reversed, and will we be able to return to the previous levels of funding of the research units?

ETH Board

- EPFL is currently renting the Swiss Tech Convention Center (STCC) based on very unfavorable contract. Yearly spending on STCC is at least 5.7 million CH (4.725 % interest rates 118 million CHF initial investment). 5 expensive exit strategies have been suggested to ETH Board, however none suggested repurposing and immediate acquisition of STCC for teaching auditoriums. Could we use accumulated EPFL reserves in the best interest of the EPFL to repurpose STCC to hybrid model hosting EPFL auditoriums/ conference venues as we are anyhow anticipating 20 % increase of students? Similar hybrid building solution exist: Chalmers <https://chalmerskonferens.se/sv/konferens/chalmers-conference-centre/>

Answer: It's an active dialogue we have. If we would buy by it, all reserves in Schools, Labs, Central would be used for it. There are good and bad reasons which are currently discussed but the bill is too high.

- At EPFL we have apparently not reported on the performance of the faculty to the ETH board as we should have done since 2008. In what form does ETHZ do this reporting? What can we learn from their reporting system as we set up our own?

Answer: VPA will meet tomorrow with the Faculties/Colleges to discuss what information could be reported annually and then concretize the project with IT department. What are we going to do with this data? Should we remain passive and archive as ETHZ does or be active?