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Report on the session of the ISIC Steering Committee – Friday, March 10th 2017

Present: Profs Nicolai Cramer (NC), Lyndon Emsley (LE), Sandrine Gerber (SG), Xile Hu (XH) and Jérôme Waser (JW).

Excused: Profs Vassily Hatzimanikatis and Thomas Rizzo.

The session, chaired by **LE**, is opened at 12.30 at Le Copernic.

1) Update on faculty hiring

Chemical Biology

The discussion with the senior candidate in Chemical Biology is ongoing. He will make a second visit to EPFL in May. At this occasion, he will meet with H. Riezman regarding his potential role in phase III of the NCCR in Chemical Biology for which the financial contribution from the SNSF should be requested in August 2017.

PSI/EPFL position in femtochemistry

LE reminds of the joint PSI/EPFL position which was opened for the hiring of a senior full professor and head of division at PSI (research at PSI / teaching at EPFL). The selection committee will interview 3 candidates on March 21st 2017:

- Jörg Standfuss

Principal investigator at PSI in serial crystallography

- Claudio Masciovecchio

Head of Scientific Programs of FERMI free electron laser at Elettra-Sincrotrone Trieste Laboratory

- Christoph Bostedt

Full professor at Northwestern University and Argonne National Laboratory

A more senior candidate will be interviewed in April. He is currently full professor at UC Berkeley and Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.

2) Infrastructure

SG gives an update on the recent developments regarding ISIC infrastructure.

Renovation in BCH

A first instalment of 1.5 Mio was agreed for the renovation of BCH level 1 / sector 4 which will be refurbished as a synthetic lab space suitable for a broad range of activities. It will then be used to accommodate the research groups during the time of renovation of their space.

Extraction system in I17 (Sion)

On several occasions, the diffusion of chemical smells occurred in I17, which might result from low levels of extraction capacity / too low simultaneity rate. An independent external expert was mandated by the DSPS to evaluate the whole extraction / aeraulics system in I17. His report will be soon delivered to DSPS.

3) NCCR and ETH strategic projects

LE reports that two letters of intent involving ISIC faculty were submitted at the EPFL level for new NCCR projects: i) Catalysis 4.0 (authored by **NC**) with EPFL as leading house and ETHZ as co-leading house. From ISIC, **NC**, **JW**, **J. Luterbacher**, **C. Corminboeuf**, **V. Hatzimanikatis**, **LE**, **XH**, **R. Buonsanti** and **J. Zhu** will be involved; ii) Solar Foundry (authored by **A. Hagfeldt** and **S. Haussener**) with EPFL as leading house and UniZH as co-leading house. From ISIC, **A. Hagfeldt**, **K. Sivula**, **H. Girault**, **R. Buonsanti**, **XH**, **J.E. Moser**, **M. Nazeeruddin** will be involved.

Following the call for ETH strategic planning, four proposal were submitted by ISIC faculty: Synthetic fuels; Energy storage Park; Harmonium-XUV, a national source in the Soft X-ray to Vacuum Ultraviolet range; Catalysis 4.0.

4) Areas for future hiring

A discussion about potential areas for future faculty hiring at ISIC is opened, in particular linked to NCCR projects such as MARVEL. The ISIC Steering Committee agrees that we should avoid any restriction in the domains for future hiring.

5) Miscellaneous

High school teaching. **JW** and **LE** report on the last meeting of the "Commission Romande de Chimie" which took place on 08.03.2017. The issue of the decreasing number of students entering 1st year chemistry was discussed. It might come from the separation which is now in place at high school between Maths and Chemistry-Biology. Efforts should be made to have all sciences taught in a unified topic (as it was the case before). It was also agreed to initiate the visit of high school students at EPFL chemistry labs to perform some experiments that cannot be done in their infrastructure (it could be organized in the practical session labs at Amphipole).

Initiatives from the new Dean of FSB. Following a recent meeting with **J. Hesthaven**, **LE** and **SG** explain that the procedure for PATT promotion and support for PATT (mid-term review, regular feedback from institute directors, mentoring system) will be revised and improved. From ISIC, it is proposed that **XH** will be involved in the discussions.

Chemistry Olympiads. **JW** reminds that **Maurice Cosandey** – retired high school teacher – is organizing since many years the preparation of candidates from the Lemanic region to the Swiss Chemistry Olympiads. For these activities, he was regularly coming in the lab space occupied by **Pierre Vogel** to check and validate some protocols, but without any official affiliation. However, this lab space will be shared by **LCOM** and **Pierre Vogel** from the end of March and the activities of **Maurice Cosandey** will not be accommodated anymore in this area. It is agreed that it would important to identify a successor for **Maurice Cosandey** among high school teachers and to find appropriate lab space to accommodate the activities related to the preparation of Chemistry Olympiads.

As the Spring Meeting of the Swiss Chemical Society will be held at the University of Bern on 21.04.2017, the next Faculty Lunch will be organized on 28.04.2017 at 12.30.

The session is closed at 2.00 pm.