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Report on the session of the ISIC Steering Committee – Friday, June 02nd 2017

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

Excused: Profs Vassily Hatzimanikatis.

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

1) Preparation of the ISIC Retreat

LE reminds that ISIC MERs and professors received an invitation to participate in the ISIC Retreat which will be held in Chamonix Mont-Blanc on 08-09 June 2017. We are expecting 30 participants.

Several topics will be discussed:

Domains for future faculty hiring

TR reminds that one of the strength of ISIC over the last years was to favor solidarity between the different areas of chemistry. Faculty members have been supportive to all domains of chemistry, independently of their own research area. This allowed to reinforce Organic Chemistry and Chemical Engineering. **JW** mentions that classical engineering and traditional analytical chemistry are no more included in the teaching program but the needs in terms of chemical education are quite well covered by the current ISIC faculty members.

Role of MERs and senior scientists

Following the current policy at SB, senior scientists can be hired with a CDI: i) in platforms; ii) in research units under the following conditions: no more than one senior scientist in a research unit / max. 5 years age difference with the PI. To apply to the title of MER, the collaborator should have spent a minimum of 1 year at EPFL and should submit his application documents according to EPFL & SB rules (<http://sb.epfl.ch/TitresAcademiques>). MERs should not be independent from the research group in which they are hired.

ISIC budget

LE reminds that the current policy is to have equal running budget & dotation among the different categories of faculty members. The level of transparency regarding the distribution of budget at ISIC will be discussed at the ISIC Retreat.

ISIC platforms

Following the survey on ISIC platforms, it appears that the level of satisfaction is very high, MS and NMR platforms being extremely well evaluated. The suggestions to improve the services provided by ISIC will be discussed with the platform leaders and at the ISIC Retreat.

The second day of the ISIC Retreat will be organized in breakout group discussions on four topics: Platforms, Education, Outreach and Competitivity.

2) Update of faculty hiring

PSI/EPFL position in femtochemistry

LE mentions that following the interviews for this position, the hiring committee decided that an offer should be made to Christoph Bostedt at the full professor level. He is currently full professor at Northwestern University and group leader at Argonne National Laboratory.

Chemical Biology

The hiring a faculty member in Chemical Biology could not be achieved from the call launched in 2016. A new call for a junior faculty position in this domain will be opened in fall 2017. More advanced candidates might also be considered.

The first part of the session is closed at 14.00.

The second part of the session is held in room BCH 3118, with participation of the platform leaders.

MS platform: Dr Laure Menin / NMR and IT platforms: Dr Pascal Miéville / XRD platform: Dr Pascal Schouwink / Chemical stores: Jacky Gremaud / Mechanical and electronic workshop: André Fattet

SG gives an overview of the results collected so far from the ISIC Survey 2017, for which 178 participants gave their opinion. There is a good representation of all categories of collaborators. The level of satisfaction is generally very high and the platform's teams are evaluated as very supportive, professional and responsive. It was mentioned in several open comments that the quality of the services improved over the last years and that the situation at ISIC is more comfortable than in other academic institutions. **SG** gives a warm thank to the platform leaders and their team for their great job.

Discussion is opened on a series of propositions which were made to enlarge the range of services provided by ISIC platforms or to improve their organization.

ISIC Direction

The main comments are related to the coordination between Lausanne and Sion sites (communication, guidance, information flow, visioconference). A mobile visioconference system was recently purchased in Lausanne and will be available to ISIC people. This should facilitate the simultaneous transmission of seminars at both sites. The exchange of samples for analytical platforms between Sion and Lausanne will be organized by the chemical stores, with shipment twice a week. It will be announced to ISIC collaborators.

NMR platform

Some very specific needs regarding MAS solid state NMR were expressed. However, it would represent a massive investment for a very limited number of users. The open-access mode for solid state NMR is also discussed. P. Miéville explains the risks of damages when using solid probes and the Steering Committee agrees that this type of experiments should only be performed by the NMR platform team, in particular Emilie Baudat.

MS platform

Several users expressed their needs for ICP-MS and cold-spray ionization. ICP-MS is available at Sion and analyses are performed by Natalia Gasilova. This information will be better highlighted. L. Menin mentions that no commercial solution is available for cold-spray ionization. In-house system was built

and recently improved, so that it will be possible to analyze more samples with this technique in the future

XRD platform

Needs for powder diffraction instrument in Lausanne were expressed by several users. While the delay to receive CIF files for publication recently improved, this is still a concern for several users. P. Schouwink mentions that a request for powder diffractometer will be placed at the Research Office for the 2018 deadline. The service offered by the platform in IPHYS cannot satisfy of the needs of ISIC users. **SG** explains that the procedures for the general running of the platform in Lausanne are currently being revised to allow open-access experiments and improve the throughput of data for publication.

Elemental Analysis

SG mentions that the elemental analysis instrument will be included in the MS platform. In the future, ICP-MS and Elemental Analyses might be taken in charge by a technician at the MS platform.

Cheminformatics

SG mentions that the ISIC Direction is currently evaluating the merging of all informatics activities (Cheminformatics, IT support, data storage, etc.) in a single platform.

Chemical stores

Most comments are related to the opening hours, mentioning extension until 5.00 or 5.30 pm. The need for a larger range of products for Chemical Engineering activities was also mentioned. The consolidation of CH and BCH stores at a single location is discussed as it would offer more flexibility and reduce the pressure on the teams in case of vacation, sickness, etc. It will be further evaluated.

Mechanical workshop

Needs were expressed for access to 3D printing for prototyping and for a laser drilling/cutting equipment. Remarks also concern the delay for processing the jobs and more transparency for establishment of the priorities. The acquisition of a 3D printer for industrial applications will be evaluated in view of a request at the next call from the Research Office.

Electronic workshop

Most comments are related to the delays for processing the job. Needs for a basic soldering service were also expressed. **SG** and **AF** explain that the current space allocated to the electronic service is too small and does not allow for an optimal used of equipment. Several new locations are currently evaluated.

IT platform

Needs were expressed for a data storage service, more support for Mac users, e-labbook. Some comments mention the delay for processing the jobs. In terms of e-labbook, **NC** and **JW** mentions that it is important to rely on a robust commercial solution as long term support is absolutely needed. Only big suppliers of e-labbooks should be considered. LCSO and LCSA are currently using the E-Notebook from CambridgeSoft and are satisfied by this system.

The session is closed at 15.45.