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Report on the session of the ISIC Steering Committee – Thursday, November 16th 2017

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

Excused: Prof. Vassily Hatzimanikatis.

Absent: Prof. Ursula Roethlisberger.

The session, chaired by LE, is opened at 3.00 pm in room CH B3 391.

1) Update on the budget for 2018

Following the 3% budget cut announced by EPFL presidency, the schools were asked to provide budget prediction including this cut. At SB, the Dean decided on the following cuts for the different institutes: 2% for MATH, 3% for ISIC, 4% for IPHYS. LE explains that the ISIC scenario is thus to hire a faculty member in Chemical Biology (replacement of K. Johnsson) at the level of a PATT instead of a senior hiring. For SCGC, JW mentions that the cut will be operated through a decrease in the budget for paying assistant-students, thus resulting in an increase of the number of students in the exercise sessions.

2) Update on faculty hiring

Chemical Biology

Following the opening of a PATT position in Chemical Biology, 85 applications were received so far. It seems that about 15 applications are interesting. The selection committee will meet on 04.12.2017 to select the candidates for interviews.

PSI / EPFL joint position in Electrochemistry

The Steering Committee decided to move forward for the PSI / EPFL joint position in Electrochemistry. The composition of the hiring committee is discussed and will be proposed to the VPR.

EPFL Valais Wallis – Phase II

In the project of the 2nd phase of EPFL Valais Wallis, there are good indications that 1-2 chairs for ISIC could be part of the plans and thus allow our expansion in Valais. The description of 2 potential chairs in the field of biocatalysis / biochemical engineering will be submitted to the VPR.

3) Update on NCCR and ETH Domain Strategic Initiative

Both projects are related to Catalysis. JW is now leading the NCCR proposal and NC is leading the Strategic Initiative proposal. As commitment from EPFL, JW suggests to ask for an additional PATT position. The Steering Committee agrees to mention that in the next future hiring at ISIC (several faculty members in Physical Chemistry will retire within the next 5 years), the research area could be reoriented toward the broad fields included in the NCCR.

4) Editorial Policy for CHEM-Tweet

A chemistry tweeter account will be created where all ISIC news and seminar announcement will be automatically posted. Organizers of the ISIC seminars as well as representatives of PhD students and SCGC students will be editors for this Tweeter account.

5) Teaching load of ISIC faculty members

JW reminds that efforts are currently directed toward the equilibration of teaching loads between ISIC faculty members. Several actions will be implemented to improve the situation.

The next session of the ISIC Steering Committee will be held on 11.12.2017 at 10.00 am in CH B3 391.

The session is closed at 4.30 pm.