

Lausanne, October 22nd 2020**111th Teaching Council
Chemistry and Chemical engineering Section****Meeting Minutes – October 15th 2020, 12h15, ZOOM****Presents**

J. Zhu (Section Director)
M. Drabbels (Vice Director)
J.-L. Marendaz (Deputy Director)
J. Luterbacher
K. Severin
R. Buonsanti (Sion)

PhD Representatives

L. Castilla i Amoròs (Sion)
C. Borman (Lausanne)

Class Representatives

BA1-2 : M. Landrieux, L. Bardel
BA3-4 : O. Dressler, Y. Ly
BA5-6 : N. Bui Doan-Trang
Master Chimie : A. Debabeche, S. Van Gele
Master Génie Chimique : T. Matha, B. Goldman, P. Gilbert
CAPE : S. Isaac

Excused

J. Vanicek
R. Hovius
L. Foltzer-De Cian
E. Majerus
C. Plaice
E. Bouffard

The minutes of the meeting are sent with the ppt slides that are not repeated below.

1. Members introduction

J. Zhu introduces the present members of the commission, student representatives of each class, professor representatives of teaching domains and direction of the section.

1st year recruitment. It is asked if the section has the repartition between students coming from Vaud, Switzerland and France. J.-L. Marendaz replies that this information is not yet available but will be shared during the next Section's council.

J. Zhu presents the last and weak 1st year success rate for incoming students with only 33 out of 72 getting an average of 3.5 or above after the 1st semester and amongst them only 20 pass the 1st year. This number doesn't include students repeating the year.

2. Section :**a. TA's :****i. Hiring: minimum criteria definition to ensure teaching quality**

J. Zhu explains a concern regarding the quality process to hire MA students as teaching assistant (TA). Currently we don't have any official criteria i.e. quality requirement to enroll or not a student as TA.

M. Drabbels asks the student what is their feeling on this topic and if the section should have some rules regarding the performance at least in the field of the planned course and with which threshold?

S. Van Gele shares that courses in maths and physics for 1st year students in chemistry, both sections have a requirement of a mark over 5 in these domains for joining the TA team. Being supporting this quality assessment, he recommends that professors should verify the performance of the candidates before enrolment.

O. Dressler agrees with S. Van Gele. He adds that professors could give more insights on the subjects because he had experienced that some assistants are sometime not fully prepared.

N. Bui thinks that student assistants with a 1st failure then pass could also lead to a better understanding of the subject especially if the 2nd attempt gave a good result.

It is also indicated that student assistants are not only MSc, but also BSc students.

T. Matha shared that she had good experience with BSc students because they are closer to the topic than others, especially PhD assistants. They can give useful tips because they have recently taken this course. She also regrets that some questions are considered as trivial subjects for PhD assistants, while this is not the case for younger TA.

J. Luterbacher, K. Severin and J. Zhu indicate that for their TPs only PhD assistants have sufficient background to guarantee the quality.

Y. Li indicates that depending on the course, TA are presents or not during the course leading to a significant difference between TA being present during the course or only coming only for exercises. Sometime she has the feeling that they come because they have to do the job but they don't want.

L. Barel experienced that for Chimie Générale avancée I, part C. Corminboeuf and J. Waser some TAs had clear difficulties to answer simple general questions not specific to the exercises. They didn't have clear insights of the course content.

S. Isaac suggests that teachers should receive feedback from the students on the assistant capabilities.

ii. Teaching in UNIL/ faculty of medicine: English-speaking TAs are now accepted

J. Zhu informs that all UNIL sections are fine with a mix of French and English speaking assistants for exercise sessions.

3. Students:

a. 3rd week feedback summary and outcome

S. Van Gele comments the feedbacks from students regarding the incoming semester (see slide show): he emphasizes that 30% of advance students are struggling especially in internship/lab because remote requirements can be hard for concentration at home work. He shares some simple but helpful recommendations for teachers.

M. Drabbels reminds that many courses with small number of students are given 100% online is a consequence of the VPE decision to have one third of the students coming on campus.

BA1 :S. Van Gele observes a low response rate and notices that only a few students are overwhelmed. This is worrisome because we know that EPFL requirements are high and students being overconfident might lead to failure. Socially they don't feel fully EPFL students, due to the remote teaching.

To avoid a feeling of easiness, it is recommended to provide to 1st year students, several former exams.

S. Van Gele indicates that the results will be shared to all professors.

b. Master name change review: From "Master of Science in Molecular & Biological Chemistry" to "Master of Chemical Sciences"

S. van Gele shared that upper year students looking for jobs faced sometimes misunderstanding of companies regarding their diplomas. A MSc in Molecular and Biological Chemistry can be understood as education in biochemistry. From this statement, it is proposed to replace the current title to MSc in Chemical Sciences.

K. Severin, R. Buonsanti and J. Luterbacher are in favour of a name change and prefer a change to MSc in Chemistry.

J.-L. Marendaz reminds that these changes were done when at EPFL it was important to show that the education encompassed life in the beginning of the 20th. Education in chemical engineering was very closed

to be dropped and the term biotechnology was clearly a way ensure this education. He also explains that the title of degrees is listed in a federal ordinance and a such modification takes time: approval from de section's council, from the dean, from the direction of EPFL, form CEPF to finally reach the federal department of education.

In reply to the question of M. Drabbels regarding the title MSc in Chemical Engineering and Biotechnology, J. Luterbacher is in favour to come back to MSc in Chemical Engineering.

Y. Ly asks if the requirements for the forthcoming exams are supposed to be at a normal level or below due to COVID measures. M. Drabbels explains that the usual requirements will be applied for the exams. Furthermore, he explains that past experience has shown that a decrease of the 1st year requirements will lead to increase the number of students leaving the section with a definitive failure after 4 to 6 years. M. Drabbels points out that since the introduction of the polytechnic program our section didn't have any such cases.

4. Miscellaneous

1st year timetable:

S Van Gele asks the section to avoid in the future to have a course after the end of the TP (Chimie TP1). This is really hard for students to finish their TP at 16h and to join a last course of physics at 16h15.

Journées de visites (journées des gymnasien).

S. Van Gele explains that the information is provided in two manners, talks and exhibition stand where demonstrations coming from ISIC labs would be well appreciate.

The CE is over at 13h35