

Commission Mixte Minutes – October 16th 2023

Present: Dr Erzsi Kukorelly, Pr. Simon Swift, Eliis Maria Peters, Alexandra Pinto Brites, Christina Zholdokova, Caique Cardoso

Minutes taken by Caique Cardoso

1. Election of a new CM president

EK proposes to elect CC, since he was elected last semester as co-president; the transition will be easier this way. CC is unanimously elected.

2. Anonymization of exam papers for BA4 and BA6

CZ suggests that new ways to provide feedback that are in accordance with the new anonymization principle should be sought. Because of the current system, several people came to the Writing Lab to consult their exams and were unable to talk with the teachers about more detailed feedback since it would mean entailing their anonymity. The issue is that students cannot have access to direct feedback that can help them prepare for a new attempt.

Everyone is in accordance that the current system is not ideal. A solution could be to print out a separate sheet with feedback, and to join it to the exam paper bundle.

This issue will be discussed at the next Staff Meeting, at the beginning of November.

3. Budget cut

The state of Geneva has asked the UNIGE to make a 1% cut every year for 4 consecutive years in every department because of risen energy costs. This will not be a freeze of assets, but absolute and permanent cuts.

Most of the cuts will be made through retirements. The *décanat* has specified that hiring assistant professors instead of associate professors will not make the economy and will not count as a legitimate cut. Currently, teachers are promoted less often than before, but this fact does not alter the situation.

In the next 4 years, two professors will retire: Genoveva Puskas (whose replacement by Tabea Ihsane has been approved by the *rectorat*) and Deborah Madsen, whose post will probably be targeted.

SS needs to send a report by the end of October specifying which economies the department is willing to make. The department feels that it is unjust to make a big cut, or to reprofile full professor positions for MERs.

The English Department has a lot of students; some other departments are less crowded and better funded, and real workload disparities exist. Cutting the teaching staff will impede the department's pedagogy. Furthermore, the English Department is the only one to have actually made a cut in 2018. The staff-student ratio is unproportionally high as it is, and many seminars are overcrowded.

The department wishes not to be forced to transform the American Literature professorship into an MER, though it might be ordered by the faculty. MERs are not necessarily entitled to assistants; this could seriously impede the quality of the teachings. EK states that the BA6 professorial post has already been regressed to an MER several years ago.

Cutting assistantships might be a solution, since many doctors cannot find a job after their mandate runs out.

EMP states that statistics should be produced to ensure equal treatment between the departments. SS raises a concern: without statistics, the cuts are random, since departments with incoming retirements are more vulnerable than others. This issue will be raised in a report soon to be sent to the *décanat*.

A solution to avoid losing much-needed teaching staff for BA6 could be for EK to teach on the module; this will provide advantage in terms of variety of seminars. The objective would be to fashion a post enduring in time (with a CDI), while providing EK with a suitable position within the department.

EK raises the point that the university's quality would be raised if teachers had more teaching hours, instead of prioritizing research and publication.

The CM agrees on the fact that the department should be more vocal on the matter of the budget cuts; this is also an opportunity to share its needs. The vote for the budget decisions is unanimous, as well as for the attempt to keep American (BA7) professorship, and to grant EK teaching hours in BA, thus creating an intermediary staff position in literature that pays a sufficient wage for living in Geneva.