

Evaluation of EPFL's Schools and Colleges

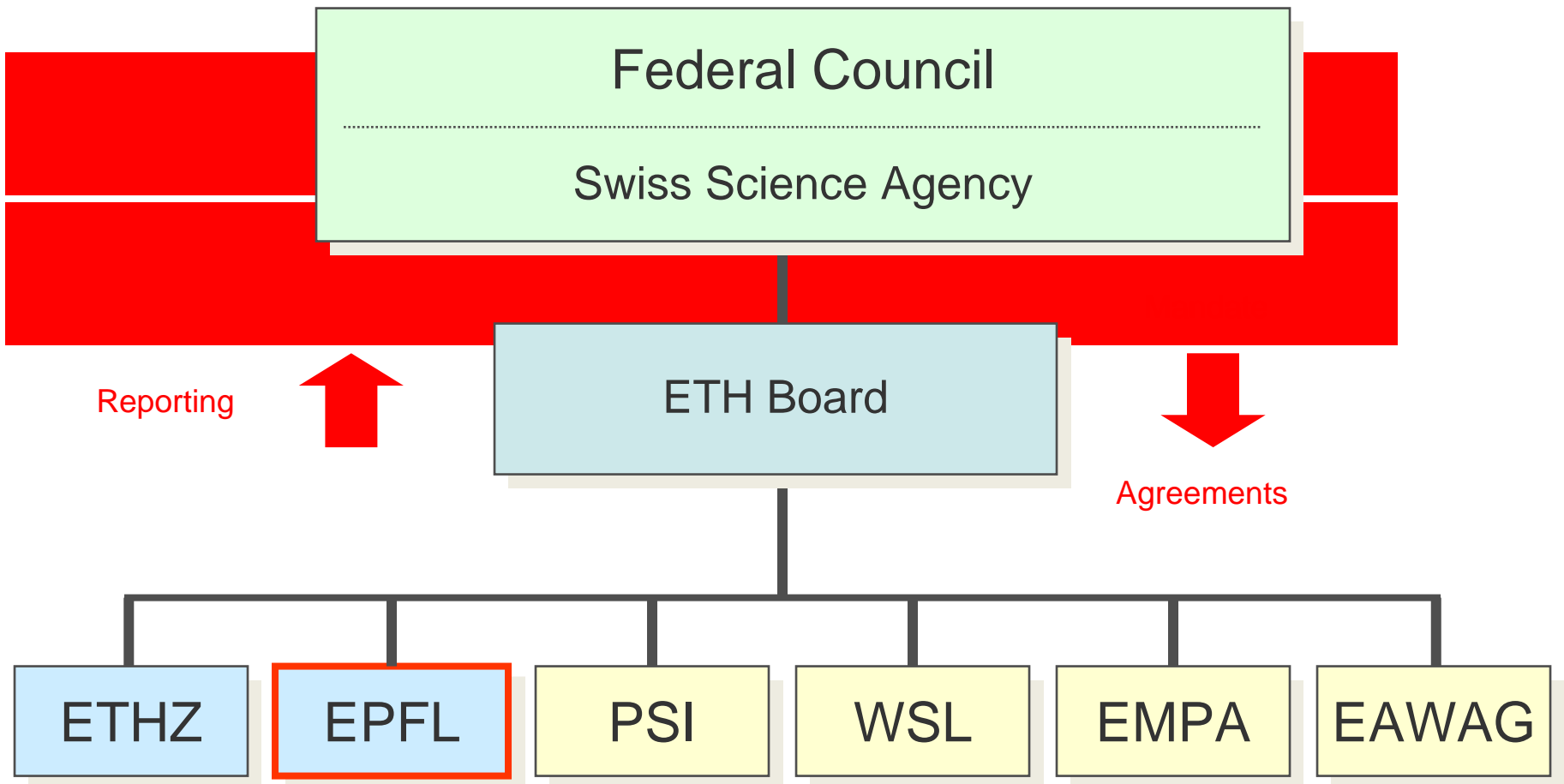
A worthy quest?

Seval annual meeting, Bern, 11th September 2009

Dr Michel Jaccard

EPFL International Affairs Management and Accreditation

The ETH system



1803 Napoleon Bonaparte "*Acte de médiation*"

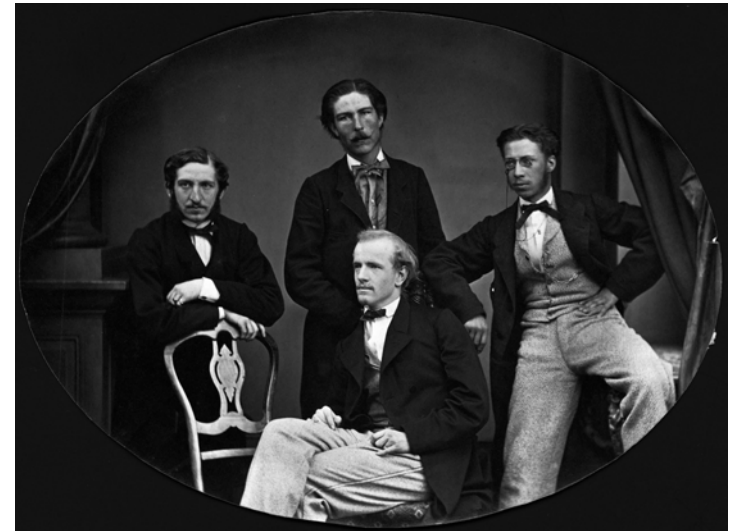
Canton de Vaud



1853 Ecole Spéciale de la Suisse Française, based on the *Ecole Centrale Paris* model

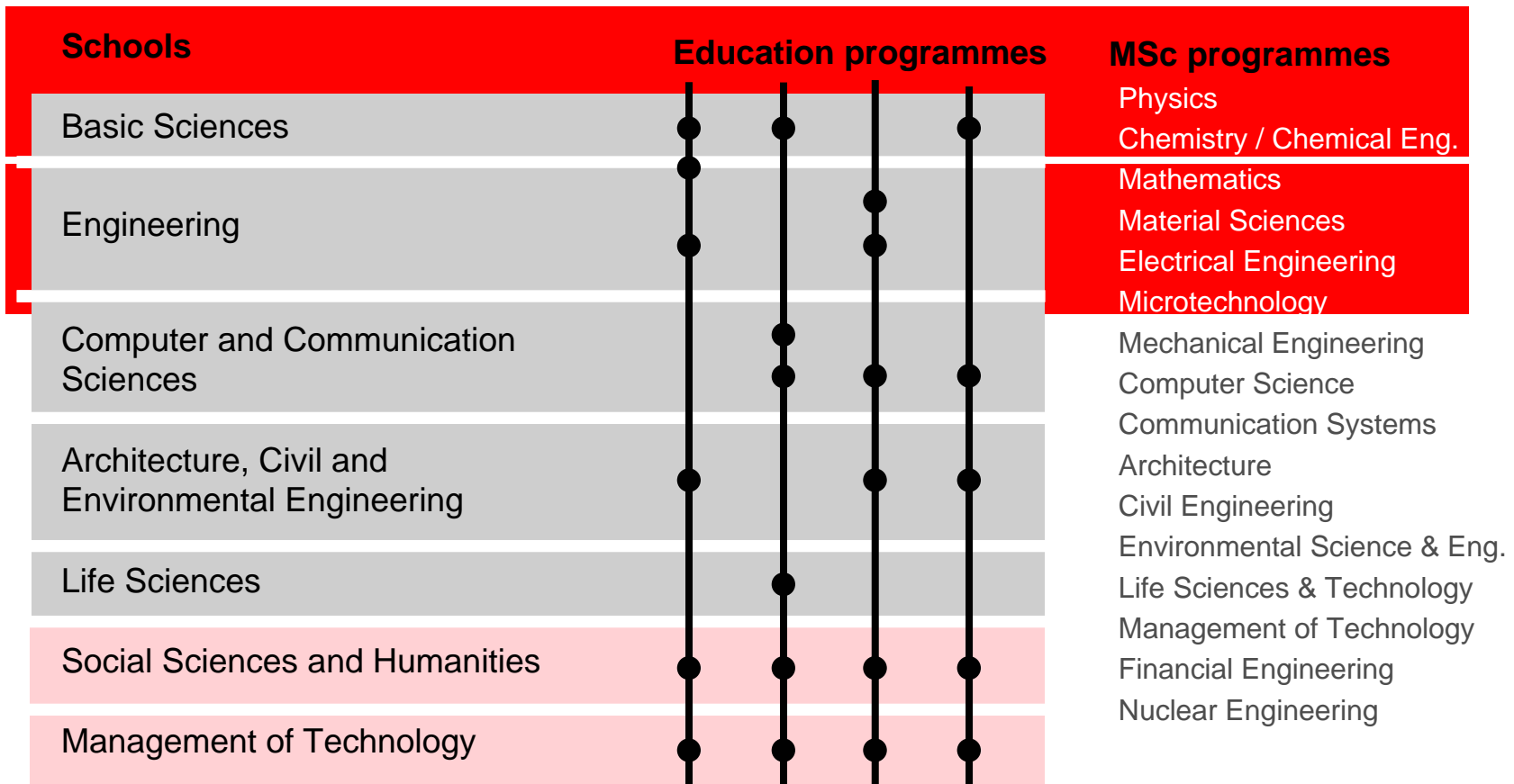
Founding members:

- Prof. Jean GAY
Academy of Lausanne, first President
- Prof. Henry BISCHOF
Academy of Lausanne
- Prof. Luis RIVIER
Ecole Centrale Paris
- Prof. Jules MARGUET
Ecole Centrale Paris
- Prof. Pierre-Joseph MARGUET
Ecole Polytechnique Paris



1969 The Ecole Polytechnique **Universitaire** de Lausanne becomes the
Ecole Polytechnique **Fédérale** de Lausanne


Anchor education in cutting-edge research




A double system

- ***Double Accreditation in 2006***

- of the Bachelor and Master programmes by OAQ (based on the ENQA standard).
- of the Master programmes (engineering only) by CTI with the European EUR-ACE label (more or less a Total Quality standard).

 *International visibility and enhanced attractivity of the programmes, continuous improvement in teaching*

- ***Evaluation of Schools and Colleges on a regular basis***, reporting to the ETH Board according to the rules of the performance agreement.

 *EPFL's performance has generally improved*

4 main aims

- To convince the stakeholders (especially the ETH Board) of the accountability of EPFL.
- To give fair indications of the performance levels of the Schools and Colleges.
- To provide hints for the continual improvement of the services provided (teaching, research, technology transfer).
- To facilitate the formulation and implementation of the Schools' and Colleges' strategies (recommendations).

Several Themes

- Evaluation of Schools and Colleges: frequency
- Aims of the evaluation: questions
- Selection of both the audit committee and the President
- Contents of the self-assessment documents
- Evaluation schedule and duration
- Role of debriefing
- Contents of the experts' report.
- Implementation of the recommendations and their control

Frequency

- Every 4, 5 or 6 years?
- *Criteria:* Faculty will respond in a more relaxed manner, slower implementation of the recommendations, power and motivation of the Deans...

Aims and questions to be addressed

- *Define the aims:* what do we want to learn? Structure's efficiency, research performance, accurate vision and future strategy, efficiency of technology transfer (what does it mean?), best use of resources?
- Generic or specific questions? *Trust the committee?*
- Many questions or just a few?

Quality and “diversity” of the members

- Total number: between 8 and 13? How to ensure coverage of the different research topics?
- Which level to be chosen: “Young Researchers”, Seniors Scientists, Deans, Heads of department?
- How to arrive at a good diversity? Gender, age, nationality, academic culture, members of the private sector, etc.
- Should we invite outstanding scientists or rather scientists at the same level within the Faculty (CRUS’ proposal)?
- Who will provide the list of possible experts? The School, the Vice-Presidency for Academic Affairs, others?
- What are the qualities of a good audit committee president ? What happens if he does not attend the meetings?

A Classic: Documents “A” and “B”

- “A” contains:
 - The role of the School within EPFL
 - The School’s legal, structural aspects and managerial rules
 - The School’s vision, strategy, overall positioning and policies
 - Education programmes: Bachelor, Master, Doctorate as well as continuing education
 - Overall results in research and technology transfer
 - The central services that could be provided

- “B” contains:
 - The structure and mission of the Institutes and Centres
 - The scope of activity and size of each unity (laboratories)
 - The units’ main output (for instance list of publications, participation in congresses, books published, companies created, licenses accepted, etc.)

The general trend is to deliver shorter reports

Duration of the evaluation

- 3 days or 1 week? How to choose? Does this impact on the experts' level of excellence?

Evaluation schedule

- Respective weight of the various activities:
 - *Teaching*
 - *Strategies, policies and management*
 - *Faculty recruitment, appointments and promotion (especially PATT)*
 - *Synergies with other Schools and units of other universities*
 - *International collaboration, etc.*
- Common or parallel sessions (breaking the committee into sub-units)?
- Role and importance of informal contacts with Faculty and Senior Management Teams (Schools and EPFL)

Existence of criteria facilitating an optimum balance of these possibilities?

Debriefing

- Mainly in two separate sessions: (i) for the Schools and all auditees (ii) for EPFL's Senior Management Team
- **Very Important** step to convince the internal stakeholders of the validity of both the analysis and the audit committee's conclusions

Report

- About 20 to 30 pages
- Key recommendations only
- Delivered one month after the evaluation (a somewhat idealistic view)
- Accept minority comments and add-ons (no consensus of experts regarding certain conclusions)

Implementation

- Does the School agree with the report's conclusions?
- What happens if there is strong disagreement?
- Does the School accept the committee's recommendations?
- If not, does the School propose other actions?
- **Should the School provide a planning with regard to implementation?**

Control

- A topic in an annual report?
- Intermediary reporting to EPFL's Senior Management Team within two years?
- Part of the content of the annual meeting of the School's Senior Management with EPFL's President
- An analysis of what was implemented to be included in the next evaluation's self-assessment report?

What will occur if a new Dean is appointed by the Presidency and comes with a new Vision and Strategy?

Conclusion

- Evaluation of Schools and Colleges is a delicate and complex tool.
- The results gained by EPFL to date are rewarding and deliver a good ratio of return on investment.
- Most Faculty members and colleagues were satisfied with the process and the content of the report.
- Improvements would be welcome...

Why not exchange our
good practices?