

Meeting of the ETH Board on 5/6 July 2017

11 professors appointed at ETH Zurich and EPFL

Geneva, 6 July 2017 – In response to the proposals received from the President of ETH Zurich, Professor Lino Guzzella, and the President of EPFL, Professor Martin Vetterli, the ETH Board resolved at its meeting of 5/6 July 2017 to appoint a total of 11 professors and award the title of professor to 3 individuals; it also acknowledged the resignation of 3 professors and thanked them for their services.

Appointments at ETH Zurich

Professor Stelian Coros (*1982), currently Assistant Professor at Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, USA, as Tenure Track Assistant Professor of Computational Robotics. Stelian Coros is an innovative young scientist who demonstrates great potential in the area of finding novel methods and algorithms for digital design, and in the computational fabrication of robots. He works with 3D printers in particular, and uses a wide range of different materials and approaches – including “soft robots” – for the construction of prototypes and when physically building his systems. Stelian Coros ideally complements the Department of Computer Science in the field of Computational Robotics and Cyberphysical Systems.

Dr Stefan Feuerriegel (*1989), currently Research Group Leader at the University of Freiburg, Germany, as Tenure Track Assistant Professor of Management Information Systems. Stefan Feuerriegel conducts research into the digitalisation of specific industries, paying particular attention to the impact of new information and communication technologies. He utilises available data from the real world and also builds his own information systems, which he uses for experiments. Stefan Feuerriegel makes use of an extensive set of quantitative methods in order to identify new patterns and draw conclusions that are relevant to management. Through the appointment of Stefan Feuerriegel, the Department of Management, Technology and Economics is strengthening its links with computer science as well as with the areas of health and energy.

Daniel M. Hall (*1985), currently a doctoral student at Stanford University, California, USA, as Assistant Professor of Innovative and Industrial Construction. Daniel Hall, who is currently completing his doctorate, has already received a number of awards and grants for his research. He is particularly interested in the question of how systemic innovations can make the construction industry more productive. To this end, he develops new forms of project management for complex projects, as well as new process structures and organisational models. By appointing Daniel Hall, the Department of Civil, Environmental and Geomatic Engineering is reinforcing its position as a link between civil engineering and the construction industry.

Professor Steven Lee Johnson (*1975), currently Tenure Track Assistant Professor at ETH Zurich, as Associate Professor of Physics. Steven Johnson’s research focuses on ultrafast processes in materials whose properties derive from strongly correlated electrons. His work in this area includes developing time-resolved measurement methods which use X-rays, and investigating phase transitions of properties of matter in disequilibrium, both in solid state physics and in selected chemical systems. By appointing Steven Johnson as an Associate Professor, ETH Zurich is strengthening the links between the Department of Physics and the PSI, which is funding 50% of the professorship.

Anne Lacaton (*1955), currently a partner in the architecture firm Lacaton&Vassal, Paris, France, as Associate Professor of Architecture and Design. Anne Lacaton is an internationally acclaimed architect. Her designs and constructions make a clear statement in support of the human rather than the iconic. She shows great consideration for the concerns of the people involved, such as residents in areas undergoing redevelopment. Her design concepts aim to facilitate user participation. This applies to residential buildings just as much as to schools or museums. Through the appointment of Anne Lacaton,

the Department of Architecture at ETH Zurich is gaining an academically outstanding teacher with socio-political integrity and a visionary approach to architecture.

Professor Paola Picotti (*1977), currently Assistant Professor at ETH Zurich, as Associate Professor of Molecular Systems Biology. Paola Picotti is a very promising young scientist who has gained international recognition in the field of quantitative biology. Her work has already been awarded a Latsis Prize by ETH Zurich and an ERC Starting Grant. Paola Picotti's achievements include developing promising new technologies in the field of targeted proteomics to allow the rapid identification and quantification of specific proteins in complex mixtures. By using innovative approaches in the field of quantitative mass spectroscopy, Paola Picotti has not only earned an excellent reputation for developing new methods, but has also applied them to medically-related processes such as protein aggregation diseases.

Professor David Steurer (*1984), currently Assistant Professor at Cornell University, Ithaca, USA, as Tenure Track Assistant Professor of Theoretical Computer Science. David Steurer is an internationally recognised expert on fundamental questions of efficient computation in relation to optimisation and data analysis. This subject area seeks to determine the optimum algorithm in terms of efficiency and solution quality for the problem under consideration. David Steurer has been able to demonstrate that the optimum algorithm can be determined in realistic computation models using the “sum of squares” method. By appointing him, the Department of Computer Science is strengthening the research area of theoretical computer science, particularly complexity theory.

Professor Martin Vechev (*1977), currently Tenure Track Assistant Professor at ETH Zurich, as Associate Professor of Computer Science. One of Martin Vechev's specialist areas is the development of parallel software. This topic is of great practical relevance because of the growing prevalence of multi-core processors and cloud computing. Martin Vechev received an ERC Starting Grant in 2016. His project exploits huge, open source software databases known as “Big Code”. He uses methods derived from machine learning to filter the information contained in these databases, before subjecting the results to statistical analysis. One of his goals in this respect is to drive forward the development of automated programming.

Appointments at EPFL

Dr Alexandre Alahi (*1981), currently a research scientist at Stanford University, California, USA, as Tenure Track Assistant Professor of Transportation Engineering. Alexandre Alahi has gained international recognition from the scientific community for his findings regarding the behaviour of large crowds of people. His work includes analysing the walking trajectories of over 100 million pedestrians at various railway stations, including in Switzerland. The aim of his research is to use innovative methods from the field of artificial intelligence, robotics and signal processing, as well as findings from the social sciences, to help shape the transport and mobility systems of the future.

Professor Colin N. Jones (*1977), currently Tenure Track Assistant Professor at EPFL, as Associate Professor of Mechanical Engineering. Colin Jones develops methodologies and tools for high-performance optimisation-based control of dynamically linked large and/or fast systems. His contributions that have attracted considerable attention include the design of a dynamic control system for efficient energy usage in commercial buildings and an automated learning approach for the regulation of control systems in high-altitude kites exposed to unpredictable environmental conditions.

Professor Mario Paolone (*1973), currently Associate Professor at EPFL, as Full Professor of Electrical Engineering and Electronics. In recent years Mario Paolone has established himself at the forefront of international research into the generation, distribution and storage of electrical power. He is particularly interested in smart electrical grids, especially the development of solutions for secure, sustainable and economic power supplies. Mario Paolone also devotes particular attention to the real-time monitoring and management of electricity distribution systems in unstable situations.

Award of the title of Professor

Dr Frédéric Courbin (*1971), currently Senior Scientist at EPFL, as Adjunct Professor at EPFL. Frédéric Courbin is an internationally acclaimed astrophysicist specialised in gravitational lensing. He has exceptional scientific expertise and will in particular boost the visibility of EPFL through his analysis and interpretation of data relating to Euclid, the ESA's planned space telescope.

Dr Ivo Furno (*1969), currently Senior Scientist at EPFL, as Adjunct Professor at EPFL. Ivo Furno is regarded as a world expert in the field of plasma physics. He focuses on how this field of physics can be applied in practice, such as in fusion reactors or industry. Ivo Furno contributes significantly to the Swiss Plasma Center and to EPFL by creating synergies within plasma physics as well as with the basic and engineering sciences.

Dr Roland Regös (*1971), currently Research Group Leader and Private Lecturer at ETH Zurich, as Adjunct Professor at ETH Zurich. Through his research in mathematical immunology and virology, Roland Regös has made important contributions to the field of population biology of infectious diseases. He also undertakes substantial teaching commitments, successfully supervising post-doctoral, doctoral and Master's students.

Departures from EPFL

Professor Tamás Hausel (*1972), currently Full Professor of Mathematics, is to leave EPFL at the end of August 2017. Tamás Hausel specialises in pure mathematics. His research covers subjects including algebraic, combinatorial and differential geometry, number theory and mathematical physics. He is leaving EPFL in order to take up an appointment at another university.

Professor Theo Lasser (*1952), currently Full Professor of Biomedical Optics, is to retire at the end of 2017. Theo Lasser was appointed to his present post in 1998, following a successful career in industry. His research focus is on imaging optics, such as microscopy for the investigation of cells and tissue. The resulting findings have led to numerous applications in the life sciences and medicine. These include the investigation of diabetes and Alzheimer's disease, and of events and processes in the human brain. Theo Lasser has been able to expand EPFL's international networks and involve industry in application-oriented research projects. He has also made a significant contribution to teaching.

Professor Jacques Lévy (*1952), currently Full Professor of Geography and Urban Planning, is to retire at the end of October 2017. Jacques Lévy was appointed to EPFL in 2004 following a successful international career in science. The main focus of his work is the social theory of space, particularly in relation to political, urban and urban planning geography. He is interested in epistemology as well as social science methods, such as cartography and modelling. In recent years his work on introducing non-verbal, audiovisual techniques to all areas of research has attracted considerable attention, both within academic circles and beyond.

The ETH Board would like to thank the departing professors for their services to science, teaching and academic administration.

Inquiries

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