

Results of the survey “Work conditions at the UNIL”

Our website allows you to directly contact the CoPers-office via the “idea blue box” in order to receive your feedback in a confidential manner. Do not hesitate to express your opinion regarding the leads for the future that we have identified.

I. FOUR LINES OF THOUGHT AND ACTION FOR THE COPERS

The numerical results and in the form of comments led the CoPers to formulate some leads for the future. Two concerning the assistants and teachers and two for the members of PAT.

In preamble, let us note the general satisfaction expressed in this survey. The work conditions at Lausanne University appear overall very satisfactory, the professional relationships between staff and hierarchy are judged overwhelmingly good and rather good. There is also a strong identification of the staff to the institution. We are and we feel like members of UNIL.

- 1) Several comments mention a faced situation as a problem by the assistants hired at 80% and working at 100% or more. Similar echoes had already reached the CoPers and resulted in a letter being sent by our commission to all the doyens and doyennes. Who answered that this phenomenon was taken under consideration. We know that la Direction of UNIL has already taken some measures to increase the amount of work of the intermediate body. It seems to us that a new clarification is needed, particularly in certain fields where we could think a certain anxiety exists, that of not doing as much as the others, that of being relegated to a purgatory in case of resistance to a state of matter found standard in the profession, even valued. Yet, what must be said: the assistant remains a worker like the others despite a culture of research that commits him/her to give his/her best (the myth of the vocation) within sight of a university career whose precariousness must be remained where the topic of the academic succession is being felt like a national priority in the new FRI message (formation, recherche et innovation) [education, research and innovation] of the federal Council. How to favour this succession if the academic career offers fewer attractions for young people than the private sector (salary, work conditions) does?
- 2) A second number of comments bring us to think that the support for the students who are growing in numbers and the increasing administrative tasks are encroaching on time given for research. Furthermore these tasks do not seem to be valued in the periodic evaluations of the teacher-researchers. Two tracks can be explored: on the one hand creating stabilized positions less focused on research and on the other hand improving conditions to obtain scientific leave.
- 3) Teleworking encouraged in l’Etat de Vaud is a reality very differently apprehended at UNIL. Certain services admit this and others do not, even though the concerned tasks could be accomplished without any problems at home. Could we consider a directive calling to study when possible the opportunity of working at home? Indeed, combined with the comments on the lack of workspace and

sometimes their quality or the noise pollution, the comments show that working at home could be a welcomed alternative ideal especially for concentrating on long-term tasks. This track should be studied in particular for PAT who has taken advantage of this questionnaire to clearly manifest their wish for more flexibility, which would enable them to integrate their work at home everywhere where some part of the tasks would be suited.

- 4) Finally a fourth track inspired by the collected data bring us to reconsider in depth the possibilities of internal promotions, assessments or even simple changes from one service to another within the University and/or from UNIL to l'Etat de Vaud, the CHUV, schools, to favour some sort of horizontal mobility for the members of PAT from a service or a faculty to another and to the numerous services and direction of the "administration cantonale" to define the conditions and to better acknowledge for example training, or a simple wish for change. To follow up on each individual's career advancements would allow to identify his/her desires and support them, perhaps by circulating internally the vacancies in all the services and faculties before putting them to contest externally?

II. NUMBER RESULTS

Nearly 40% of collaborators answered this survey therefore 1707 people, of which 541 PAT members (31% of respondents), 487 assistants (29%), 444 stabilised teachers, non-stabilised and "chargés de cours" (26%).

In other words, on all whole of the collaborators of UNIL, 41% of assistants, 35% of PAT and 35% of teachers felt concerned by the questionnaire. A regret was made by some collaborators who would of liked to have access to an English version. A translation of the questions was given to answer this request but the questionnaire was to be filled in French.

Proportional to their number amongst the UNIL collaborators, SSP staff and "Lettres" [Arts] are relatively overrepresented amongst the respondents; FBM members are on the other hand slightly underrepresented (even if the faculty represents 484 respondents on 1707 the higher number) and the participation of the other faculties is quite similar to their representation within UNIL.

A relative underrepresentation of the "centre's" services with only 11% of respondents while their proportion reached 20% of the total of collaborators at UNIL.

There are 52% female respondents for 45% male respondents. No answer: 3%. We note that women represent 46% of staff; therefore they are here in slight overrepresentation.

Chapter 1: general employment conditions

We note between 70 and 80% of average satisfaction (yes and rather yes) regarding questions on work organisation, the clarity on the work to be done, knowledge of the "cahier de charge" and its adequacy with the work done, the amount of work in general, the amount of practised activity, the possibility to develop one's knowledge. The respondents seem particularly satisfied by the organisation of their work and of its clarity with over 80% of approvals to these questions.

We must on the other hand note a downside concerning:

- The perspectives of professional development mentioned at point 3 are satisfactory for 50% of the respondents but more than 40% of the respondents show few or no satisfaction on this point – a dissatisfaction expressed particularly by the members of PAT administrative).
- The possibility to develop his/her skills (yes close to 70% at point 4) but we could think that this possibility does not translate enough to the field (see point 5).
- The valorisation of the development on these skills, mentioned at point 5 (close to 50% of satisfaction and 40% of dissatisfaction without any significant difference depending on the status).
- The actual workload compared to the activity rate (close to 60% of satisfaction; the 40% of unsatisfied people in this field come in majority from the group of stabilised teachers and assistants).

Work from home

The question concerning work from home deserves a particular light. For 53% of respondents it is a chosen reality that corresponds on average to 2,4 half-days per week. This choice concerns three quarters of stabilised teachers having answered the survey, as well as two-thirds of assistants. Only one-third of PAT who have answered the survey state that they do the same (only 15% of the 53% having stated being able to do it).

We noticed that 21% of respondents state not working from home sometimes by convenience: 90% of these people wish to be able to (60% from PAT).

If we concentrate only on PAT: 40% of the total number of respondents members of PAT point out not being able to work partially from home while they would like to and that their “cahier de charge” would allow them to.

Chapter 2: infrastructures and resources

More than 90% of respondents estimate to dispose of the needed material to accomplish their work.

Between 70% and 75% of respondents are also satisfied by the workspace. *We refer to the “comments” section below for further details concerning the workspace.*

Furthermore, close to 50% of respondents estimate themselves little or not informed about the risks and security measures in regards to their professional activity and the use of their workspace and facilities. This transversal problematic to the different statues is more expressed by the SSP staff and seems to affect less the collaborators of the FBM. Same reference to the qualitative section of this questionnaire.

Chapter 3: communication and information

The possibilities to discuss with colleagues and hierarchical superiors are considered satisfactory for about 85% of respondents.

The information on the decisions taken by the Direction of UNIL seems to reach easily about 60% of respondents: among the 30% of respondents considered little aware of the decisions taken, we particularly count the group of assistants; from a transversal point of view (although a bit more assistants represented and fewer stabilised teachers), more than 30% of respondents consider themselves less informed of the different services and resources at their disposal. Finally, the possibility to implicate oneself in the decisional process seems insufficient for more than 30% of respondents (members of PAT in particular).

Chapter 4: work environment

We find here a strong satisfaction expressed regarding the professional relationships with colleagues and hierarchal superiors (90% of respondents). Identical proportion in regards to the sense of belonging to UNIL...

On the other hand the knowledge of the “plan stratégique” of the University subject to approval by the “Grand Conseil vaudois” is less: 58% of respondents have no knowledge of it (an unawareness signalled most strongly in the group of assistants and most poorly by the stabilised teachers, non stabilised and the “chargés de cours” having answered the questionnaire).

Furthermore more than 75% of respondents judge their work valorised at the same level than that of their colleagues by their hierarchal superior.

A downside has to be raised on the issue of the equal treatment; indeed 30% of respondents indicate to feel inequalities in their workplace. How are these inequalities felt? This questionnaire does not permit one to determine them but it shows that this relative dissatisfaction is relevant for all faculties, as well as the “centre”, that concerns more the women and the members of PAT, but not necessarily and essentially the women of PAT. The stabilised teachers seem on the contrary less touched by this concern.

III. COMMENTS

Only chapters 1 and 2 sufficiently inspired the respondents to deliver results showing a tendency. Furthermore, the isolated positive comments do not allow one to emit a tendency.

1) General employment conditions (399 comments)

These comments reveal: a workload exceeding the activity rate, activity peaks with a variable workload, a incoherence between different required tasks and activity rates (overtime, sustained work at home), a lack of opportunity to have a career and of perspectives and information to develop professionally, acquired skills in non-valued

training, a lack of politic for young academics, an increase in the administrative load at the expense of other tasks, the lack of time for certain tasks and finally too little internal mobility.

The 74 comments regarding the workload compared to the activity rate results more from the assistants (36% of comments) and from the stabilised teachers (24%).

The 45 comments on the division of tasks affect more the stabilised teachers (53% of comments) and the 44 comments on the career plan and the succession regroup the administrative PAT (36% of comments) and the assistants (25%).

2) Infrastructures and resources (290 comments)

These comments reveal divers worries regarding the quality of the workspace: bad air circulation, dry air, noise pollution damaging for concentration, lack of space and of light, artificial light, impossibility to open the windows, variable temperatures. Certain comments express a fear of possible health implications. As a whole, these comments come from 37% of assistants and from 19% of PAT.

More than 50 negative comments deal precisely on the Géopolis building. Only some comments on the Anthropole and other buildings.

Let us recall that more than 70% of respondents of the questionnaire declared themselves satisfied by the workplace.