

SFDN report to ICED 2014

May 28 2014

About the network

The Swiss Faculty Development Network (SFDN) is a small network established in the year 2000 with about 50 members in 2014. All Swiss universities are represented in the network. Some members work at universities of applied sciences or pedagogical universities. The network has a board of four members which meets several times a year while the general assembly takes place annually.

Recent activities (fall 2013 / spring 2014)

- Workshops: As a rule, SFDN organizes a workshop in spring and one in autumn. The recently planned workshop had to be cancelled because of too few registrations (topic: research-led teaching).
- General Assembly (GA): The GA was held on May 9 at the University of Fribourg. It was preceded by a "site visit". Two new board members were elected after the president and the secretary-general had stepped down.
- Special interest groups (SIG): The SIG on Curriculum Development met on April 3rd 2014 (the next meeting is scheduled for August 18). A new SIG on methods and tools in teacher education was established after the GA 2014.
- Information: The board updated members throughout the year on conference dates / job opportunities etc. via E-Mail. The board worked on establishing a new website.
- Research: In fall 2013 the board submitted a sketch to the Swiss National Science Foundation for a new national research programme concerning research into teaching in higher education. In May 2014 SFDN was informed by the responsible federal agency that the proposal could not be considered.
- Cooperation SFDN has teamed up with the «Forum on Scientific Writing» and co-organised a national conference on June 5/6 2014 at the Zurich University for Applied Sciences in Winterthur.
- Politics SFDN has observer status at meetings of the national rectors conference. Since this body will be reformed substantially with effect from 2015, contact has been established with persons involved in the establishment of the new national body called "swissuniversities".

Opportunities and challenges

Our foremost concern to date is to strengthen the network.

SFDN being a small community, members know each other well and exchange of ideas is generally informal and lively. Since Switzerland is a small country with a highly reliable public transport system it is relatively easy to attend meetings / workshops at other institutions.

However, full potential of community building is not yet tapped despite the good basic conditions.

Plans / goals

Communication among network member is hoped be intensified with the help of the new website with social media functions (which is to be operational in Summer 2014).

The new website should also help to better profit from "multi-cultural" opportunities in Switzerland; i.e. bringing together approaches/trends that sometimes differ between the French-, Italian- and German-speaking parts of the country.

SFDN would like to develop and offer a joint online programme in teaching development for faculty.