Dear Alumni,

As you know, the École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne created a new department for alumni in 2014: The EPFL Alumni. It replaced the A3 association in order to provide more ambitious and useful guidance for our global network of more than 29,000 graduates, and to ensure the strength of this network benefits the reputation our great institution enjoys worldwide. Through the launch of this new magazine and the scheduled introduction of a range of new services in 2015, our EPFL Alumni team, headed by Annelies Garcia, has decided to radically modernise our network.

As announced at the disbandment of the association, an Alumni Council has been created and is made up of around 15 graduates, all winners of an Alumni Award. Its first meeting took place on September 18th, and gave way to many interesting and innovative ideas to professionalise the EPFL Alumni service. Whether through the multilingual development of our communication tools, the introduction of modern virtual tools or our career services for your professional and entrepreneurial development, we have decided to invest in services with precise targets.

As for our 18 branches, elections for representative positions have taken place in India, Hong Kong and Singapore, and a new president has taken over management of the Montreal branch. These are the results of your energy and the liveliness of the EPFL Alumni network.

But, of course, we increasingly need your help in leading local networks, investing your time and even coaching our young graduates in Switzerland and abroad. I am personally committed to helping you in your efforts, and making sure you can interact with the members of our management teams, who travel across Switzerland and the world to negotiate agreements with renowned universities and industrial research centres.

I would like to thank the large number of volunteers from our alumni who are helping us by devoting their time, talent and network contacts, and I hope you enjoy reading the first edition of Alumnist.
Dear Alumni,

As you might have guessed from the new look, new format and enhanced content, the EPFL’s Alumni magazine has been revamped. It is also now published in both French and English to better integrate our increasingly large multilingual community across the world.

As part of our reworked magazine, we are devoting more space to graduates’ testimonies. In each edition, we will meet alumni working in the same company, for example, and learn about their roles and responsibilities. In each edition, we will also choose certain years or programmes and find out where those students are now. What are our Mathematics graduates doing today? Where do the graduates from the class of 1963 work? In this magazine, you can discover their stories and often remarkable journeys!

We will be keeping you up to date with EPFL news with stories from the campus you might not have known about. And, of course, we will keep you informed about the EPFL Alumni, with news, services, and events which may interest you. Each edition will also include a glimpse of the activities at our branches in Switzerland and abroad.

Simply put, the magazine you have in your hands has been created in the image of the EPFL Alumni: full of innovation and more dynamic than ever!

If you would like to suggest a subject, share your story or showcase your programme or class, please contact us at alumnist@epfl.ch.

Annelies Garcia,
head of EPFL Alumni

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**AYMERIC SALLIN’S NETWORK**
The CEO of NanoDimension, who graduated in 2000 with a degree in physics, talks about the people who make up his network.

**CLASS OF 1963: WHERE ARE THEY NOW?**
Alumnist goes back in time to catch up with former students, discovering their memories and their different life journeys.

**THE MAGISTRALE 2014 GRADUATION DAY**
A total of 872 Master’s degrees were awarded at the graduation ceremony in October.

**EPFL GRADUATES AT KUDELSKI**
The expertise of EPFL graduates at the service of Kudelski.

**A CLOSER LOOK AT THE MATHEMATICS DEPARTMENT**
What careers can a degree in Mathematics bring?
Four graduates from this department, including Caroline Ferguson, share their thoughts.

**DOSSIER: A GUIDE TO A SUCCESSFUL CAREER ABROAD**
Four graduates living abroad give advice on enjoying the expat life.
Alumnist News

**IN A CITY NEAR YOU...**

**PARIS**

- **June 4**
  EPFL alumni were invited to a dinner-conference with Stéphane Nègre, CEO of Intel France.

- **June 23**
  A second dinner-conference was organised with Henri Lachmann, former CEO of Schneider Electric.

**LONDON**

- **June 24**
  An informal dinner with Annelies Garcia, head of the EPFL Alumni, who travelled from Switzerland to meet graduates based in London.

**SHANGHAI**

- **July 11 & 12**

**BOSTON**

- **July 11 & 12**

- **July 11 & 12**

**NEW YORK**

- **October 24**
  EPFL graduates attended the first event gathering the alumni of major Swiss universities in the prestigious Hotel Plaza Athénée in New York.

**THE CHAMPION**

The Magistrale 2014 graduation day rewarded students with the best scores in their studies. Orhan Öçal, a young Communications Systems graduate, finished his course at the EPFL with an average (tied) score of 5.96 out of 6! He is currently continuing his studies at the university of Berkeley in California, where he has started a PhD.

*Orhan, what is the best memory you have of the EPFL?*

*Orhan Öçal*

*When I was accepted into the research programme at the Audio-visual Communications Laboratory, led by Professor Martin Vetterli.*

*I feel it is important to add to your studies by carrying out research.*

*When were things the most difficult?*

*All the stressful times, and there were a lot of them! But student solidarity is very strong and helps you get through the difficult moments.*

*What was your favourite place during your studies?*

*At the cafeteria to take a break, and by the lake where there is an extraordinary view of the mountains! The area is so beautiful, especially the vineyards in the Lavaux region. When I wasn’t in class, I enjoyed going to cultural and musical events.*
La Faculté des sciences et techniques de l’ingénieur met actuellement au concours le poste suivant:

**Faculty Position in Biomaterials**
Contact: Prof. Herm-Anton Kitak
herm-search@epfl.ch

De plus amples informations sont disponibles sous:
http://professeurs.epfl.ch/page-113068-f.html

La Faculté des sciences et techniques de l’ingénieur met actuellement au concours le poste suivant:

**Faculty Position in Renewable Energy in Buildings**
Contact: Prof. Martina Andersen
martina.andersen@epfl.ch

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La Faculté des sciences et techniques de l’ingénieur met actuellement au concours le poste suivant:

**Faculty Position in Ultra High Precision Robotics & Manufacturing**
Contact: Prof. Christian Enz
christian.enz-search@epfl.ch

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**Faculty Position in Theoretical Physics**
Contact: Prof. Riccardo Rebuffi
riccardo.rebuffi@epfl.ch

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Contact: Prof. Hans-Amin Kik
hans-search@epfl.ch

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marnyne.andersen@epfl.ch

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**Faculty Position in Computer Science**
Contact: Prof. Willy Zwaenepoel
willy-search@epfl.ch

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**Faculty Position in Electrical Engineering**
Contact: Prof. Pierre Vanderghem
pierre-search@epfl.ch

De plus amples informations sont disponibles sous:
http://professeurs.epfl.ch/page-113165-f.html

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From left to right: Jacques Baur (PH’81), Marie-Thérèse Ivorra (MT’89), Aymeric Sallin (MT’91), Marc Châtelard (MT’87), Nicolas Musy (PH’86)

The Alumni Council met for the first time on September 18, 2014 to represent graduates and give an external opinion to the school’s administration. We asked Jacques Bauer (PH’81), a witness and a member of the meeting, a few questions.

What can EPFL graduates expect from this Council? The Council plays an important role for all graduates, as it enables their voices to be heard by the presidency of the EPFL. The former association did not promote this as prominently. The Council represents graduates, defending their interests in their future relations with the EPFL.

What issues were discussed? We think that EPFL Alumni should provide its graduates with professional assistance, which is to say guidance throughout their career. We will see to it that more services are offered in this field. EPFL must also keep graduates informed of the EPFL’s activities, so as to create a real community built around the University.

Did the Council make any concrete decisions? One of the Alumni Council’s main tasks is to provide the EPFL Board with an external opinion. The Council does not make decisions alone. We did, however, highlight practical aspects such as seeking out sponsors, better integration of the graduate directory with online platforms like LinkedIn, and developing a mobile app just for EPFL graduates.

Have other meetings been planned? We saw again each other on November 27 and we will be meeting twice a year. We will ensure that the close relationship between the EPFL and its graduates is benefiting all parties involved, and that this initiative is functioning coherently.

Jacques Bauer, why did you join the Alumni Council? I accepted because it is important for the EPFL to be more closely connected to its graduates, and that is precisely what this Council is striving to accomplish. This is a very exciting initiative, and I am delighted to be a part of it.

Jacques Bauer (PH’81) - Interview by: Alexandra Blot (AB’03)
Ayméric Sallin is the head of an investment company in the nanotechnology sector. Sallin graduated from EPFL with a physics degree in 2002. He shows you don’t create a network by compromising your values, but by surrounding yourself with people who share them.

The network of
Ayméric Sallin

Ayméric Sallin is the head of an investment company in the nanotechnology sector. Sallin graduated from EPFL with a physics degree in 2002. He shows you don’t create a network by compromising your values, but by surrounding yourself with people who share them.

Looking at Ayméric Sallin’s circle of close friends, one can notice a particular pattern, two common genes: a pioneering spirit and perseverance. Entrepreneurs at heart, they are all self-made. His network counts the likes of scientists, CEOs from various countries and professions. “I think that one’s life and network are built on values that are our own, he says. We surround ourselves with people who share similar values, people we respect and enjoy.”

The entrepreneurs he is funding through NanoDimension, his venture capital firm, have similar profiles. Based in Silicon Valley and Switzerland, the firm focuses solely on the nanotechnology sector. A pioneer in his domain, Sallin founded the firm in 2002, when commercial applications for these technologies were still in their infancy. Twelve years and several hundreds of millions of invested dollars later, companies are growing and becoming global leaders. “When science is transformed into technology, it opens up huge commercial opportunities.”

The CEOs of nanotechnology

Dr. Peter Van Vossel, CEO of View, one of the companies in the NanoDimension portfolio, producing electrochemical, or “smart,” glass. “This glass can save more than 20% of a building’s energy and increase the users’ comfort levels dramatically.”

Daan Jovis, former CEO of the Havas Group, an international leader in publicity and communications. “David combines creativity, energy, brilliance, fun and responsibility.” His book, Who Cares Wins, truly evokes the changes companies must make to social behaviour in order to be victorious.

David Marcus, head of Messenger at Facebook, former CEO of PayPal. “David is a gentleman at all times,” says Sallin. “He is admirably protective of his family. Above all, I love paying homage to our Swiss origins by enjoying a fondu with him at home.” According to David Marcus, people like Ayméric are rare: “Exceptionally intelligent, with real analytical ability and intensely dedicated to his career, together with a big heart.”

His close friends

Wences Cusachs, CEO and founder of TikGames (US). “Ayméric is the epitome of the passionate worker.”

Wences has the solid values of his native Eagotania. He is a remarkable entrepreneur who, at just 28, sold his first company for 750 million dollars. He is the epitome of the passionate worker.

Ayméric Tchaktschoulian, founder and CEO of TikGames. “Ayméric is a force of nature. He is a doctor, professor and entrepreneur. He expresses his opinion and is unwaveringly faithful to his friends and family.”

André Bouchener, EVP Alcohol and Bernhard Picharski, both creators and directors of Solar Impulse. “André and Bertrand have different careers and different personalities, but are true partners. They both devote their lives to demonstrating that renewable energy and clean tech are a reality. We meet up almost everywhere around the world, and each time it seems like we saw each other yesterday.”

“When we first heard about Ayméric, he was presented as one of the two successful Swiss people in Silicon Valley. But we discovered that he is much more than that. He is an open-minded person with high energy and full of creativity. With his hard work and perseverance, he has realized his vision and dream to become an entrepreneur in California, representing as well EPFL as an alumn.”

He is a man with a big heart truly loyal in his relationships and friendship.

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Kudelski has employed EPFL graduates since its creation.

Specialised in IT and electronic solutions for digital television and public access, the company, based in Cheseaux-sur-Lausanne, relies on the expertise of many EPFL graduates for the development of its cutting-edge technology.

Here are a few profiles.

## ABOUT KUDELSKI

Based in Cheseaux-sur-Lausanne, the Kudelski group is specialised in IT and electronic solutions for digital television, public access and cyber security. Founded in 1952 by Stefan Kudelski, the company has been run by his son André Kudelski since the 1990s.

Both father and son studied at EPFL and have remained close with the University over the years. Most employees have completed general IT studies in French-speaking Switzerland. Around half of them have university qualifications and most have studied at EPFL. The Group has a total workforce of more than 3,000 people throughout the world, and generated revenue of 860 million Swiss francs in 2013.
The Kudelski group has grown significantly over the last 20 years. Today it is active in several countries across the world in the fields of digital television, public access and cyber security. These activities demand advanced scientific skills, so it is hardly surprising that many EPFL graduates work at this multinational company which currently employs more than 3,000 people.

Laurent Laffely - one such graduate. Born in Lausanne in 1961, he has worked at Kudelski for 30 years. He was in the same class as André Kudelski for his final year of high school, and they stayed in touch. “At the EPFL, we were both studying physics in the same year, and worked together with another student named Marco Sasselli. All three of us were hired by Kudelski when we graduated, and worked on a new pay-TV project for the Swiss channel Télécinéromandie.”

After having worked in electronic, microelectronic and micro-computing development, he supervised the beginnings and installation of personal computers at the company. “Today I am responsible for the Management department’s computing within the company. Many new technologies are introduced after being brought in by the managers. After all, they are all technicians at heart. I install them personally before they are rolled out on a larger, more organised scale in the other departments.”

Studying physics at EPFL (the University did not have a computing department at the time) taught him not only the “underlying concepts” which make up our world, but also how to form more comprehensive views of events and to put things into perspective. “This also means we can analyse questionable theories that certain old-timers try to assert, using their age as justification, without just saying ‘yes sir’. But it’s not easy when you’ve freshly graduated.” Although he has little use for most physics theorems at work, he sees the discipline as a stepping stone to almost anything. Continuous learning courses and reading extensively on the job over the years made up for his shortcomings in computing, which was still in its early stages in the early 80s.

“The students graduating today are far more prepared for what awaits them, thanks in part to access to information online,” says Laffely. “We had no idea about corporate life, project management, interpersonal problems, or the human dimension and administrative shackles which surround a truly technical company. That said, I was lucky enough to find a company where the quality of work is generally a higher priority than delivery time.”

A METHOD BASED ON CONTINUOUS LEARNING

Christophe Nicolas graduated in computing engineering from EPFL in 1996, and joined the Group following an interview at an EPFL Forum career fair. “At the time Kudelski was on the point of entering the digital television sector. Nagravision (editor’s note: a subsidiary active in the development of access systems for cable TV and mobile, online and satellite television) comprised some thirty people,” he says.

Nicolas is now Vice-President and head of the Group’s cyber security division, which employs more than 120 experts, engineers and consultants. He is also responsible for computing for the entire Group, managing around 100 employees. His studies at EPFL gave him the ability to tackle new problems, thanks to a particular methodology and a solid foundation in understanding underlying technologies. His time at EPFL also opened up continuous learning methods, which led to him adding qualifications in the fields of testing, management, and project management. “This helped him improve on certain shortcomings in personal development, management, finance and marketing, as well as making him aware of legal aspects. When I was studying at EPFL, there was little emphasis on these aspects, although I think things have changed a lot today.”

“ON-THE-JOB COACHING”

After earning a master’s degree in 2009 in micro-engineering with a specialisation in robotics and autonomous systems, Éric Félix started her career at a consultancy firm. She carried out her first mission at Kudelski. After 18 months as an external worker, she applied for an in-house position, since she enjoyed it there so much. She now outlines strategies for decoder testing to ensure they comply with norms defined by the Group. “Thanks to my studies, I have a strong general profile in the technical field. I’m a fast learner and can quickly understand a new field of my choosing. As EPFL graduates, our technical background and ability to adapt and learn are certainly what we put into practice most often.”

It’s no secret that women are still underrepresented in the world of engineering. But Pi- chon does not feel set apart in her daily work. “At work, I see myself as an engineer rather than a woman. I get on well with both my male and female colleagues, who consider me as an engineer before anything else.”

Everything was new to her when she arrived at Kudelski. The company gave her training and qualifications in the fields of testing, management, and product development. “The rest was down to self-teaching and on-the-job coaching by my colleagues and supervisor. It may amuse you to know that I also use Google and Wikipedia on a daily basis as a first step to getting to grips with aspects in certain fields.”

ANALYSIS AND PRACTICAL ASSIGNMENTS

Laurent Gillet is originally from a small village just above Evian, and matriculated at EPFL in 1999. He started with a Special Mathematics Course before turning to microengineering. He graduated in 2006 and started working for Kudelski a year later, after perfecting his English abroad and
At the instigation of Benoît Demaurex, graduate of physics in 2009, the EPFL Alumni is providing students with a new service, connecting them with graduates for advice on school and career choices.

A new mentoring programme for students

This programme is supported by Benoît Demaurex (PH’09), an EPFL graduate and analyst at Accenture in Zurich.

Studying at the EPFL provides students with extremely precise technical skills. Despite this strength, at any level of students’ education, many aspects of a career in engineering are not taught at the university. This is why the EPFL Alumni have created a mentoring programme for students who would like to widen their field of study.

What positions are currently available in my branch? How can I direct my studies? Will I need a PhD? Is it a good idea to go abroad? All questions will be answered by graduates who dealt with the same challenges and who knew how to handle them.

Students looking for help from EPFL graduates can visit the EPFL Alumni website and fill out the form provided. They are asked to leave their contact details and the information they are looking for.

The same process applies for graduates looking to join the programme as mentors. After leaving their contact details, they can explain the type of advice they are able to give.

The new programme is very flexible and free of red tape, in order to ensure that students and mentors reach their objectives. An evaluation will be carried out in a few months to identify any possible improvements.

Until then, the EPFL Alumni is encouraging students and graduates to get involved and register on the website!
EPFL Alumni even more supportive of innovation and entrepreneurship

EPFL Alumni took over the A3 Angels Club’s activities of connecting innovative start-ups and Alumni for mentoring or investment opportunities.

By: Alexandre Bisenz (Ar’93)

- A partnership with the Business Angels Switzerland (BAS) will manage financing assistance activities. The goal is to organise several BAS evening events on the campus, giving potential investors a chance to discover the EPFL start-ups in a well-structured setting.
- EPFL Alumni will regularly organise networking events to help young entrepreneurs meet investors. The two biggest annual events – Seed Night and BioMed Up Day – will be held again in 2015.
- Various developments are being considered, such as the creation of a macro-investment programme for people who want to get involved in the world of start-ups. Entrepreneurs looking for mentoring or financing help for their start-up, or who want to grow their network, can now contact EPFL Alumni at innovation.alumni@epfl.ch.

The same goes for people looking to join the programme as investors or mentors.

EPFL Alumni wished to thank the club for its spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship that helped launch these activities. A big thank you to the many volunteer Alumni and students whose participation at the events allowed the project to exist. Thank you especially to Claude Florin (EL’82), founder, and his committee: Marc Gandar (IN’85), Antoine Ghisoni (EL’83), Marc Galleron (CF’84) and Raphael Rollier (MI’89), who continue to contribute their knowledge and energy to EPFL’s activities. Looking for help or information? Just contact innovation.alumni@epfl.ch.

The latest worldwide university rankings reflected positively on the EPFL. The school kept its position among the top 20 technical universities in the world among the top 5 in Europe.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2014 European Ranking – EPFL is in a good position</th>
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<td>Leiden (PP (top-10%) indicator)</td>
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Main criteria:
- The most quoted scientists. Amount of published papers. % of papers published in the top 20 scientific newspapers.
- Amount of citations corrected for the volume and the domain of publications, any confused domains. Top 300 biggest European universities.
2014 Worldwide Ranking – The US excels, and the EPFL is not so far behind

(QS) rankings are mainly based on the idea that specialized institutions teach the branches in which researchers work. Citation indicators, including the number of citations, researchers’ salaries and the number of doctorates per student.

QS: The Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) rankings are mainly based on the idea that specialized institutions teach the branches in which researchers work. Citation rates per researcher and the amount of student support are also taken into account.

**Main criteria**

- Reputation.
- Amount of citations.
- Professor to student ratio.
- Research.
- Amount of published papers.
- % of papers published in the top 20% of any domain.
- Number of citations corrected for the volume and the domain of publications, any confused domains.
- 300 biggest European universities.

**QS (2013) (Eng. & Technology)**
1. MIT
2. Stanford University
3. University of California, Berkeley
4. California Institute of Technology
5. Princeton University
6. EPFL
7. University of California, Berkeley
8. University of Cambridge
9. Stanford University
10. MIT

**THE (2013) (Eng. & Technology)**
1. MIT
2. Stanford University
3. University of California, Berkeley
4. California Institute of Technology
5. Princeton University
6. EPFL
7. University of California, Berkeley
8. University of Cambridge
9. Stanford University
10. EPFL

**Shanghai (Eng./Tech. & Computer Science)**
1. MIT
2. Stanford University
3. University of California, Berkeley
4. University of Illinois
5. University of Texas
6. EPFL
7. University of California, Berkeley
8. University of Cambridge
9. Stanford University
10. EPFL

**Leiden (PP (top-10%) indicator)**
1. Rockefeller University
2. MIT
3. Harvard University
4. Uni. of California, Berkeley
5. Stanford University

**Times Higher Education (THE):**
This ranking looks at the three key roles of universities: education, research and the transmission of knowledge. To do this, it weighs 13 different indicators, including the number of citations, researchers’ salaries and the number of doctorates per student.

**Shanghai:**
This ranking favours the quality of research. Its main criteria are the number of Nobel Prizes and Fields Medals won by graduates and researchers. Due to its youth, the EPFL is admittedly at a disadvantage for this ranking, which also considers the number of citations and publications from researchers.

**Leiden:**
Less publicised but well known in the academic world, this ranking is based exclusively on bibliometric indicators. These include the number of publications and the number of citations per publication.

**QS: Leiden University, the EPFL and École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL)**

-Jean Christophe Pitié and Séverine Géroudet

Math

Studying math at the EPFL can lead to some interesting careers. Take a look at the stories of four graduates.

**Alumnist Section**

-Daniel Brélaz
daniel.brelaz@alumni.epfl.ch

-FeRguson Weber
caroline.weber@alumni.epfl.ch

-Learning about math throughout my studies, I found myself to be particularly interested in the field of probability and statistics, which I was delighted to pursue during my Bachelor’s degree in mathematics at the EPFL. As well as the knowledge I acquired during my Bachelor’s degree, the analytical skills, discipline and ability to work in a team have been my most useful assets.

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Luciana Vaccaro is a Doctor of Sciences and former director of the EPFL Grant Office. She is devoted to public funding management for research and, in October 2013, she became the first female rector of the Haute Ecole Spécialisée de la Suisse Occidentale (HES-SO). She agreed to answer the Proust Questionnaire for Alumnist, revealing a little bit about her personality.

“My motto: passion and determination”

The quality I like most in a man

The quality I like most in a woman

What I look for in my friends

My biggest character flaw

My favourite pastime

My dream come true

My worst nightmare

What I would like to be

The country I would like to live in

My favourite colour

My favourite flower

My favourite bird

My favourite writers

My favourite poets

My fictional heroes

My favourite composers

My favourite painters

My real-life heroes

My real-life heroines

What I hate the most

Historical figures I hate

The military event I admire the most

The reform I admire the most

The gift of nature I would like the most

How I would like to die

My current state of mind

Mistakes I forgive the easiest

My motto

A
fter spending five years studying pure mathematics, I was granted a scholarship to start a PhD at Oxford University, following Professor B. Dacorogna’s advice. I have vivid memories of this period. It changed my life! Getting this financial aid was a way of confirming the quality of this demanding programme, and enabled me to attend one of the world’s most prestigious universities.

My work was focused on memory shape materials particularly geared towards the medical field.

I spent 15 years in England, concentrating more on the financial sector. After several years at Moody’s, I worked for Credit Suisse, followed by the Royal Bank of Scotland.

I came back to Switzerland two years ago and started my own private portfolio management company.

I directed my research towards the intersection between semantics and social and behavioral sciences, and used this approach to create algorithms and models for personalised search engines and recommendation systems for the internet and social media.

The EPFL was a lot smaller in the 1980s. The campus was still very lively, but looked a little like a village, and the graduation party could well have been a family gathering! Nothing compared to today’s graduation ‘spectacles’! The main language at the time was French, and you couldn’t write your PhD thesis in English. All of that has obviously changed, and the internationalisation of the EPFL is remarkable.

I have spent almost 20 years living in the USA. University fees here are exorbitant, and have made me realise how lucky I was to have access to the high-quality education of the EPFL.”

Alumnist Proust

Luciana Vaccaro

Alain Forclaz

1998

Christian Brun

1998

Thierry Parel

Christian Posse

christian.posse@alumni.epfl.ch

Programme Manager – Technology – at Google, Mountain View, USA. Alumni Award laureate in 2013.

Al Ain Forclaz

alain.forclaz@alumni.epfl.ch

Managing Director of Kereon Capital – Portfolio Management, Geneva
Class of 1963
where are they now?

After more than 50 years, the mechanical engineers from the class of 1963 met up at the EPFL in 2013 to tell the story of their old school. During their studies, the EPFL was still called the Ecole Polytechnique de l’Université de Lausanne, or EPUL, and had only 1,100 students. The entire school campus was on avenue de Cour in the centre of Lausanne. The graduates of 1963, all men, remember clearly the first Swiss computers, called Zebra, which took up two floors of their building. Almost contacted a few of the former students to find out what they have done after graduating 51 years ago.

Camille von Kaenel
76 years old
Lausanne, Switzerland

“I decided to study in Lausanne because of acquaintances in Switzerland and my father, who was an engineer. My studies turned out to be quite unique, as there were not many students, which allowed us to form close relationships with the professors. Our lessons were technical, but we were also taught how to make the right decisions.”

Alvaro Castro, 79 years old
Melilla, Spain

“I decided to study in Lausanne because of the Erasmus program. I was sent to Spain for a few months. As a complement to my studies in mechanical engineering, I worked at Nestlé for 40 years, mainly in mechanical engineering.”

Saïda Meredjian, 69 years old
Tel Aviv, Israel

“Seeing as I was on a scholarship from the Swiss government, which enabled me to come and study at EPUL from my home in Israel, I was in charge of all the problems. Upon returning to Israel, I was hired by an Israeli branch of the French company Turbomeca, which produced reactors for aeroplanes and helicopters.”

Blaise Beauverd, 74 years old
Cannes, France

“I decided to study in Lausanne because of the Erasmus program. I was sent to Spain for a few months. As a complement to my studies in mechanical engineering, I worked at Nestlé for 40 years, mainly in mechanical engineering.”

Robert Garazetti, 76 years old
Lyon, France

“I remember a large dance and music concert organized by the EPUL students at Saint-François de lausanne that blocked all of the traffic! I have met up several times with some of my French and Swiss classmates in Bourgogne and Lyon, and I really enjoyed our recent reunion at the EPFL campus.”

Hubert Quenette, 76 years old
Lyon, France

“As a complement to my studies in mechanical engineering, I worked mainly in mechanical engineering and energy, especially in the oil industry and in nuclear and hydraulic power plants. I was always based in Spain, but I travelled all over the world. At the end of my career, I was one of the first people in Europe to create bioethanol from cereals, as CEO of the Spanish company Abengoa.”

Augusto Castro, 76 years old
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After my studies, I worked mainly in mechanical engineering and energy, especially in the oil industry and in nuclear and hydraulic power plants. I was always based in Spain, but I travelled all over the world. At the end of my career, I was one of the first people in Europe to create bioethanol from cereals, as CEO of the Spanish company Abengoa.”

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Optical circuits announce the dawn of a new technological era

The team headed by Romuald Houdré and Vincenzo Savona has just made a major breakthrough in the field of optical circuits, with successful preliminary work on a particularly efficient photonic transistor.

Optical circuits, also known as photonic integrated circuits, use light to function. They are between 10 and 100 times faster than electronic circuits, which use electricity. They also give off minimal heat, have a better signal-to-noise ratio, have a higher resistance to interference and consume less energy. Just like fiber optic cables, these circuits are mainly used in communications, and use minuscule optical cavities as switches to block or allow the flow of light, similarly to transistors in electronics. One step ahead, researchers from the EPFL have produced and conducted experimental tests on a new type of “photonic crystal nanocavity.” Designed on a silicon base, the nanocavity uses only an infinitesimal amount of energy to act as a switch.

This discovery is paving the way for many other developments in the field of optics and the front cover of the Applied Physics Letters journal, which published an article on the subject.

From sunlight to hydrogen: cheap and without rare metals

The prestigious journal Science published an article in September on the latest advances from the Laboratory of Phototonics and Interfaces. The lab is working on producing hydrogen from water and sunlight. Scientists have achieved a 12.3% solar-to-hydrogen conversion rate – a new record!

Researchers are running the race to discover more efficient solar energy on several different tracks. Dye-sensitised solar cells, concentration solar cells, solar thermal power plants and increasingly efficient silicon solar panels all strive for the same goal: producing as many electrons as possible from sunrays.

At the EPFL Laboratory of Phototonics and Interfaces headed by Michael Grätzel, the teams have not settled for simply inventing dye-sensitised solar panels that imitate plant photosynthesis. For several years, the lab has been looking into developing a process which uses electrolysis to extract hydrogen from water. Either by using photoelectrochemical cells, which use light to directly separate water into hydrogen and oxygen, or by combining electricity-producing cells with an electrolyser, which separates the water molecules.

Jingshan Luo, a post-doctoral student at the Laboratory of Phototonics and Interfaces at the EPFL, developed the innovative system for extracting hydrogen through hydro-electrolysis.

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The Magistrale 2014 celebrates 872 new graduates

On Saturday 4 October, 872 EPFL students received their Master’s degree at the Magistrale graduation day, which took place at the EPFL SwissTech Convention Center.

This year, 872 graduates received their much sought-after and hard-earned Master’s degrees. Almost 3,000 people, including graduates, friends, family, professors and the heads of the EPFL, were at the EPFL SwissTech Convention Center for this remarkable day. Many renowned guests were also in attendance, including State Councillor Anne-Catherine Lyon, the President of the National Research Council of the SNSF, Martin Vetterli, and Fritz Scherer, President of the Board of Swiss Federal Institutes of Technology (ETH).

As usual, the EPFL Alumni granted its Alumni Awards to two graduates: Jacques de Saussure (MA’75), senior partner at Pictet, and Laure de Saint Denis (MA’85), head of marketing at Airbus, both received their awards from Annelies Garcia, head of the EPFL Alumni. The two graduates were rewarded for their remarkable careers.

After this grand ceremony, the graduates divided into their separate programmes to receive their individual Master’s degrees and meet their programme tutor. This role is performed by an EPFL alumnus who has completed studies in the same programme, who answers questions and advises the young graduates.

See you in 2015 for the next Magistrale!!

The SwissTech Convention Center was completely full when the EPFL President, Patrick Aebischer, and the head of EPFL Alumni, Annelies Garcia, presented the Alumni Award to Jacques de Saussure (MA’75).

Between the different highlights of the ceremony, the Ukrainian pianist Dimitri Naiditch, a virtuoso, and his musicians played several Bach pieces with a jazzy twist.

Laure de Saint Denis (MA’85) and Jacques de Saussure (MA’75) both received an Alumni Award at the Magistrale 2014 graduation day.

To see all the profiles of the laureates: [www.epflalumni.ch/the-alumni-awards/](http://www.epflalumni.ch/the-alumni-awards/)

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PFL alumni have a variety of reasons to live abroad. Sometimes, it’s to be able to continue working at the forefront of their field of expertise, or to carry out post-doctoral research, or to enjoy a more flexible working environment, or even to be with their other halves. Or it can just be for a change of scenery.

Out of 30,000 EPFL graduates, almost a third now live abroad. This group includes both Swiss natives living abroad and international graduates who have returned home after their studies. The majority now live in France (2,517), followed by the United States (495), Germany (360) and Italy (241).

Looking for a job outside of Switzerland is, of course, one of the main steps in the process. If a Swiss company sends their employees abroad, it makes things a lot easier. But there are many other solutions, as confirmed by our expat interviewees. Platforms such as LinkedIn, networks such as Swissnex, which are present in San Francisco and Singapore, and employment seminars are all good ways to create opportunities and avoid depending solely on conventional job offers. EPFL graduates are also able to interact with the alumni community in the city in question by contacting the EPFL Alumni or visiting the website www.epflalumni.ch/antennes to find out who to get in touch with.

And EPFL graduates are not the only ones to enjoy opportunities with ever-increasing mobility. Almost a tenth of the Swiss population lives outside of Switzerland. This amounted to 732,183 Swiss citizens in 2013, or the equivalent of the canton of Vaud, up 2.3% since 2012, according to data from the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs.

“We have generally observed that the Swiss are increasingly leaving the country for short amounts of time. They live abroad for a few years and then come back, whereas permanent emigration was more common in the past,” says Célia Francillon of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad.
With its warm welcome, easy integration and ideal working conditions, Singapore won over Nicolas Grasset and his family, originally from the canton of Vaud.

At first, the idea seemed a little far-fetched. “We had a beautiful, cheap apartment in Lausanne with a view across the lake, and the landlord didn’t seem too happy about subletting. As a catcher, my wife was also only allowed to take one sabbatical year, so we thought it was a bit mad.” Nevertheless, “since we had made our decision, we realised that for every problem, there’s always a solution.”

From apartments and schools to leisure activities, “Singapore has everything for expats, as long as you have the means.” Private schooling costs around 20,000 Swiss francs per year, so it is necessary to have a good salary or financial support from an employer.

Grasset’s children learn both English and Chinese at their international school, while his wife has taken the opportunity to study for further qualifications. And he finds his job incredibly fulfilling. “I had no problems integrating, and received a very warm welcome. Our working conditions are excellent, particularly our access to funding for our research.”

“Singapore has everything for expats, as there’s always a solution.” The couple is already considering leaving later on. Whatever happens next, it’s been a great experience. “Even if we had to make a few sacrifices, Singapore gave us a real perspective on the world, and we’ll never regret our time there.” The couple is already considering leaving again one day, maybe to Canada this time.

Nicolas Grasset
(IN’07)
KIM-VÂN HO-DAC
EN’07
nicolas.grasset@alumni.epfl.ch

American at EPFL, EPFL alum has a good chance of making it in the USA. This is illustrated by the large number of Europeans (often from Polytechnics) who work in large companies in the San Francisco area. “Everyone has a chance to succeed in IT, physics, statistics, medical science, environmental science, agricultural engineering and even architecture. No field of study is off limits.” Perisic’s advice to those thinking of emigrating is to “just try it! Have confidence in yourself and be ready to learn. People here will be ready to teach you.”

Once arrived, finding a place to live can be a real challenge. “Fortunately, the salaries here, particularly in IT, mean you can rent easily.” School fees also complicate matters, however. “People here will be ready to teach you.”

Igor Perisic didn’t think he would spend more than a year in San Francisco. Fourteen years later he still can’t see himself leaving this region of the USA where entrepreneurial spirit is king.

Igor Perisic
(MA’91)
igor.perisic@alumni.epfl.ch

San Francisco (Executive Director of Swissnex San Francisco)
Cédric Jolivet chose to settle down in France, which helped him quickly climb the ranks in a large company.


He is often asked why he decided on France, where salaries hardly match those offered in Switzerland. Jolivet’s decision to move abroad and the choice of destination go beyond financial reasons, and were based rather on “a balance between private life, professional life and personal growth.” For example, the French job market is less blocked by people with extensive experience in the business sector. Whereas some of his friends took almost 18 months to find a job in Switzerland, Jolivet found employment five times as fast. Career advancement prospects are also incomparable. At 35, he now manages a team of more than 60 people, and their budgets for projects can reach 15 million euros. Being appointed to a leadership position in less than five years is “almost impossible to achieve as quickly in Switzerland.”

For those looking to find work in London, Chamay’s advice is to focus on the local market, meeting head-hunters and using LinkedIn to directly contact people in charge of recruitment. “I also recommend trying it at the start of your career, as it’s the best time to take risks and look elsewhere.” He also emphasises that London is a truly international city where it is easy to meet people and find particularly exciting career opportunities. “A city this big offers endless possibilities.”

On the salary side of things, London does not disappoint. It is important to remember the high housing costs and, for those looking to bring their family, questions of education. For “high-quality schooling we opted for a private school, which has been a significant investment.”

Another drawback would-be expats need to be aware of is that technical studies, even at the best universities, are not held in the highest esteem in Britain. “The UK has put technology studies against redundancy. “The Swiss are often thought to have an advantage as long as they can speak the language fluently.”
The EPFL Alumni offices

The 27,000 EPFL graduates scattered across the world know they can count on the 18 EPFL Alumni offices in Switzerland and abroad to assist them, bring them together and answer their questions.

Among the 27,000 EPFL graduates, almost 25% currently live outside of Switzerland. To make this group a dynamic community, EPFL Alumni has set up offices in Montreal, Shanghai, Abidjan, Madrid, San Francisco, New York, Paris, Lyon, London, Bangalore, Hong Kong, Tokyo, Lisbon and Singapore. These 14 offices complement the four offices already active in Switzerland, and provide contacts in each city. These offices help graduates meet up through regularly organised events, support them in administrative procedures and offer information and answers to any professional questions they may have. Each office is represented by one or several EPFL alumni charged with leading the region’s graduate community.

These offices are important both for graduates and for EPFL Alumni, ensuring its continued international presence. The EPFL Alumni offices also rely on them to stay in touch with its former students. These volunteer-led offices are the sign of a true, international EPFL community.

You want to create an office of the EPFL Alumni? Contact us at the address: alumni@epfl.ch
ORGAN
The EPFL Alumni BE-FR-NB-JU branch is organising an organ concert for its members at the French Church of Berne on February 3.

CANADA
The Canadian graduates of EPFL are invited to the Swiss-Canada Innovation Day in Montreal, an event on the theme of “Healthy and Active Aging: Social/Economic Impacts and Technology/ Business Opportunities” on February 24, 2015.

MARCH
INNOVATION
A conference will be organised with Debiopharm, a partner of EPFL Alumni, on the theme of innovation. Details on the conference will be available on our website at www.epflalumni.ch

START-UP
On March 18, Business Angels Switzerland (BAS) will organise a grand investment evening for start-ups. This event will take place on the EPFL campus.

MATH
An event for alumni and students in the math programme is scheduled for March 24. Regularly organised by EPFL Alumni, these events are a great opportunity for students to meet graduates from their programme.

CHEMISTRY
A grand evening event will give chemistry graduates and current students a chance to meet each other. Further information on the evening will be available on www.epflalumni.ch

BRAIN FORUM
From March 30 to April 1, 2015, the EPFL Swisstech Convention Center will welcome the biggest specialists of the research on the brain, the neurosciences and the care personalized, to review the scientific discoveries in this domain.

For remercier ses contributeurs, l’EPFL Alumni leur permet de bénéficier d’offres commerciales avantageuses: presse écrite, informatique, assurances, théâtre, transports... de nombreux rabais exclusifs leur sont offerts.

ALUMNIST
It is distributed along with Technologist, the European science magazine published by EuroTech Universities, which includes EPFL.

On March 18, Business Angels Switzerland (BAS) will organise a grand investment evening for start-ups. This event will take place on the EPFL campus.

MOBILITY
The EPFL Alumni BE-FR-NB-JU branch is organising an organ concert for its members at the French Church of Berne on February 3.

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