

YOUNG ACADEMY LEIDEN (YAL) – ANNUAL REPORT 2019

Young Academy Leiden (YAL) is a group of young academics at Leiden University. Founded in early 2019, it serves as a platform to bring young, enthusiastic and driven early career (post-PhD) academics together. YAL members represent a variety of scientific and scholarly disciplines and come from all faculties of Leiden University. YAL's mission centers around three pillars: science and education policy, interdisciplinarity, and outreach.

In this first annual report of Young Academy Leiden (YAL), we report on the initial steps that we as Young Academy Leiden have taken to structure our organisation and develop activities in line with our overall mission.

In our first year, we learned that a distinctive feature of YAL is our emphasis on activities that are “by young academics for young academics”. For instance, we organize *young faculty lunches* to bring young academics together, and our *YAL lecture series* in collaboration with Studium Generale is open to any young academic at Leiden University who would like to speak about his/her research. This helps us achieve our goal of building an interdisciplinary platform of early-career academics. It also provides us with an opportunity to learn how other young academics experience their work and gain important input for our work on science and education policy.

Organisation and Development

In 2019, Young Academy Leiden started with 13 members (see Appendix A). Tom Louwerse and Helen Pluut have been selected by the founding committee as chair and vice-chair, respectively. Cathelijnn Waaijer is project manager of YAL.

YAL had its kick-off meeting on January 23rd where members met for the first time. All members were officially inaugurated on March 20, 2019 at our inaugural meeting, in which rector magnificus Carel Stolker and vice-rector magnificus Hester Bijl participated.

Purposing YAL

Early in the year, the board of our organisation (chair, vice-chair and project manager) met with a moderator, Doris Gottlieb. She helped YAL in the early stages to provide a strong basis for any further activities. Our board worked together with Doris Gottlieb in preparation of a day-long meeting on May 20th. This meeting was called “Purposing YAL” as the main aim was to let members discover together what they wanted to achieve as YAL. During this day, the group worked on a mission statement and set goals for the short and longer term.

We also created an organisational structure with workgroups that represent the **three pillars of YAL**: science and education policy, interdisciplinarity, and outreach. Although this exercise took a great deal of time and effort, we were all pleased with the end result and would like to acknowledge Doris Gottlieb for her contribution.

All YAL members meet on a monthly basis to discuss ongoing projects and pressing issues. These general meetings are often combined with social activities to strengthen bonds between YAL members. The workgroups have (bi)monthly meetings apart from the general meetings (see Appendix B for workgroup membership).

Media and communication

We have created a [website](#) for YAL. Initially this website was part of the Leiden University website, but it has been moved to a free domain (accessible via 'academic staff') to allow for frequent and regular updates. Here we must give our sincere thanks to Lisanne van de Mortel (flexpool employee) who worked on the content of the website at the end of 2019.

Our website features short videos in which the YAL members introduce themselves as well as a general video introducing Young Academy Leiden (the latter was shown during our inauguration). We thank film maker Marit Geluk for the videos. Moreover, we thank Ben van Wijk for his help in developing YAL's logo.

To further increase the visibility and impact of our activities, we have a twitter account (@YALeiden), the management of which alternates among a subset of our members.

Activities

YAL's activities span three pillars. Here we describe the activities developed and organised by each of the accompanying workgroups. Moreover, we report on our contribution to the 444 celebrations.

General activities

The founding committee of YAL proposed as a first-year assignment to develop an activity for the 444 celebration of Leiden University. This is our Next444 project. In line with our slogan "Shaping the future of academia", we looked ahead and identified three major themes that will likely define the future of interdisciplinary research at Leiden University: (1) Data & Technology, (2) Sustainability, and (3) Equality, Fairness & Justice. During 2019, we had activities and initiatives related to our Next444 project, such as our stand during Night of Discoveries as well as our Next444 Interdisciplinary Activity Grants. This project will be wrapped up through a Next444 roundtable discussion in the final week of the 444 celebrations.

We participated in the two Dutch Young Academies meetings that took place this year (May and October). This is where (vice-)chairs, members and support staff of the various young academies in the Netherlands meet to share their ongoing projects and discuss matters relevant to all (e.g., Van Rijn report). A number of members of De Jonge Akademie also generally attend these meetings. The Dutch Young Academies meetings are a first step in promoting collaborations between the national young academies and with members of De Jonge Akademie. Attending these meetings has been fruitful for us to gain insights into how other young academies are organised and what they focus on.

We had orientation meetings with several partners within the university and the city, including Leiden University Fund, Citizen Science Lab, City Deal Kennis Maken and Leiden Research Support. Some of these are likely to lead to concrete joint initiatives over the next years.

Science and education policy

Our science and education policy workgroup has focused on developing YAL policy stances on a range of issues as well as on addressing pressing academic affairs. We discussed the Van Rijn report at length, both internally and with several stakeholders in Leiden. In response to the Van Rijn report and related debates, we published the statement '[Young Academy Leiden concerned by proposed budget cuts](#)' in August 2019. Moreover, members of Young Academy Leiden attended (wearing YAL t-shirts) the 'True' Opening of the academic year organized by WOinActie at Het Gerech in Leiden.

We produced another statement in November 2019 in which we [reject a 'Dutch first' approach](#). This statement was in response to plans of Minister Ingrid Van Engelshoven to restrict English as a language of instruction in higher education settings.

In order to be proactive on policy, our workgroup is working on a series of position papers on key policy matters, such as excellence, research funding, internationalisation and language policy, integration of research and teaching, diversity, career policy, and sustainability.

Two of our members, Annemarie Samuels and Olaf van Vliet, are part of the steering group "Monitoring Scientific Excellence and Talent Policy" on behalf of YAL.

During Open Access Week, two of our members, Helen Pluut and Maaïke van Putten, wrote a [blog](#) for Digital Scholarship @ Leiden on behalf of YAL to express support for the Taverne pilot.

Interdisciplinarity

A major activity started in 2019 was an initiative by members of our interdisciplinarity workgroup, namely the **Young Faculty Lunches**. These lunch gatherings aim to foster social ties and interdisciplinary research connections between young members of the various institutes at a particular faculty. Four lunch gatherings have been organised at the Faculty of Science (in June, August, October and December), one at the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences (in October) and one at the Leiden Law School (in November). YAL members at the Faculty of Science sent out a survey after the first lunches for an evaluation. It appeared that people found most valuable that they get to know colleagues from other departments and in other subject areas that they otherwise would not meet. The big turnout at the lunches (of mostly assistant professors) was evidence of its success. The deans of the various faculties responded enthusiastically and some also financially support this initiative. YAL has discussed with parties such as HR and LUF that the young faculty lunches are a good way for them to get in touch with young academics.

Five members of the interdisciplinarity workgroup submitted a **research proposal** to LUF for the Snouck Hurgronje interfaculty grant. Our project team represented YAL's ambition to engage in and promote interdisciplinary research within the university. The proposal was titled "The Skeleton of Work-Life Balance: Diachronic and Policy Analysis of Vulnerable Groups". Unfortunately, it did not win the grant in the context of a high number of applications (i.e. 26, which means <4% award rate).

To support interdisciplinary research, we made available Interdisciplinary Activity Grants of €444,- to fund the organisation of (or participation in) workshops, seminars, and public lectures that have an interdisciplinary character. As part of our Next444 project, we prioritized activities related to the three themes identified by YAL as particularly pressing for the future. In 2019, seven [applicants](#) have been awarded an Interdisciplinary Activity Grant. The call for proposals remains open until February 2020.

Outreach

YAL contributed to the Night of Discoveries on September 21st 2019. At our stand, visitors could test their knowledge and attitudes in the domain of the three themes of our Next444 project. We aim to be a recurring contributor to the Night of Discoveries.

The outreach workgroup has initiated a collaboration between YAL and Studium Generale. This has led to a Young Academy Leiden lecture series, which will start in February 2020. The first lectures will be given by members of YAL, but we will open a call for interested young academics who would like to communicate their research findings to the general public.

In 2019, we have started the development of a (mobile) escape room as a way to connect citizens with university research. This escape room is developed in conjunction with Gloeidraad and will most likely focus on hidden discoveries of Leiden University.

Looking ahead: 2020

YAL has set up a committee that is responsible for the recruitment and selection of new members in 2020. We currently have 13 members but will grow to about 20 members over the next year (and to 25 to 30 in the long run). We intend to keep a simple governance structure with a chair and vice-chair. If the larger group size fosters the need for an executive committee, the chair and vice-chair can meet with the coordinators of the workgroups. It has been decided amongst ourselves that the positions of chair and vice-chair will rotate among the YAL members and that they retire in alternating years.

Appendices

A. YAL membership in 2019

Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences

- Anouk Goemans (forensic family and youth care studies)
- Tom Louwerse (political science)
- Annemarie Samuels (cultural anthropology)

Faculty of Governance and Global Affairs

- Sarah Giest (public policy)
- Joris Larik (comparative, EU and international law)
- Olaf van Vliet (economics and public administration)

Faculty of Archaeology

- Sarah Schrader (human osteoarchaeology)

Leiden Law School

- Helen Pluut (organisational behaviour)
- Olaf van Vliet (economics and public administration)

Faculty of Humanities

- Martin Lipman (philosophy)

Faculty of Science

- Yamila Miguel (astronomy and astrophysics)
- Stéphanie van der Pas (mathematics)

Leiden University Medical Center

- Noel de Miranda (cancer biology)
- Maaïke van Putten (neuromuscular disorders)

B. Workgroups and committees

PILLARS		
Science and education policy	Interdisciplinarity	Outreach
Joris Larik (co-coordinator)	Sarah Schrader (coordinator)	Anouk Goemans (coordinator)
Martin Lipman (co-coordinator)	Sarah Giest	Yamila Miguel
Yamila Miguel	Helen Pluut	Noel de Miranda
Noel de Miranda	Maaïke van Putten	Tom Louwerse
Tom Louwerse	Stéphanie van der Pas	Maaïke van Putten
Helen Pluut	Annemarie Samuels	
Annemarie Samuels		
Olaf van Vliet		

Next444 project committee: Sarah Giest, Yamila Miguel and Noel de Miranda

Snouck Hurgronje grant application team: Sarah Giest, Helen Pluut, Maaïke van Putten, Annemarie Samuels and Sarah Schrader

C. Financial overview

YAL received an annual budget of €50.000 for 2019. Stéphanie van der Pas is treasurer of YAL.

The chair and vice-chair are compensated for 0.1 fte for their duties, of which 50% is paid from YAL's budget. Salary therefore constitutes a large cost item. Other significant expenses relate to the activities that we organised and promotion materials. The inauguration and "purposing YAL" meeting were the biggest events of 2019. Less than €5000 of the total budget has not been spent.