

YOUNG ACADEMY LEIDEN (YAL) – ANNUAL REPORT 2020



Picture 1: All Young Academy Leiden members in September 2020.

Young Academy Leiden (YAL) is a group of early-career scholars at Leiden University. Founded in early 2019, it serves as a platform to bring 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 2020, YAL strengthened the mission it formulated in its first year, namely to work *with* early-career scholars and *for* early-career scholars at Leiden University. The COVID-19 pandemic has made this a challenging year for all, including early-career researchers (ECRs). YAL has shown resilience by quickly adapting to the new circumstances, by moving its meetings online and organizing online activities for other ECRs – including (inter)faculty lunch meetings and a networking event. Moreover, in April YAL conducted a survey on the impact of the pandemic and lockdown on ECRs at Leiden University and organized a lunch discussion that resulted in a position paper on this issue (see below). Within YAL, we have seen remarkable collegiality, as members who had been relatively less affected took over tasks from those heavily burdened by the switch to online teaching and by caregiving tasks. The YAL spirit has moreover been kept up through online pub quizzes and weekly digital coffee breaks.

The discussion on diversity and inclusion in academia that followed the global anti-racism protests of spring 2020 inspired YAL to make diversity and inclusion the first theme of our new blog series “Voices

of Young Academics” (voicesofyoungacademics.nl). A diversity training by the Leiden University Diversity Officer Dr. Aya Ezawa in November has further motivated YAL to contribute to the diversity work in the university over the coming years.

Membership and Organisation

In 2020 YAL welcomed six new members, while two members accepted positions outside of Leiden University and left YAL (see appendix A).

YAL has decided on a simple governance structure with a chair and vice chair. To foster institutional continuity, the chair and vice-chair retire in alternating years, where one person is replaced during summer and the other person continues. As of 1 September 2020, Helen Pluut took over from Tom Louwerse as YAL chair and Annemarie Samuels became vice-chair.¹ Cathelijn Waaijer remains project manager and has taken over the position of treasurer from Stéphanie van der Pas. Ivo Kostons has been appointed as student assistant to support with administrative tasks.

The six new members were officially inaugurated on 10 September 2020. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the inauguration could not take place as an in-person event but instead proceeded as a celebratory and very personal meet-and-greet event with vice-rector Hester Bijl.

Film maker Marit Geluk has made new personal introduction videos of the new YAL members and updated the general YAL introduction video with input from the videos of the new members. All are available on the YAL website.



Picture 2: Screenshot of the YAL ‘team away day’ on the 22nd of October 2020 with a selection of participating members visible on the screen.

YAL away day

On the 22nd of October, YAL had an entirely online ‘team away day’ on the Microsoft Teams platform. This day helped greatly in fully integrating the new members in YAL and the respective workgroups (see Appendix B for an overview of workgroups and their affiliated members). Making use of breakout rooms as well as plenary

¹ <https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/en/news/2020/10/interview-new-yal-chair>

sessions, three other main goals were met: (1) further defining the purpose of YAL as a guide to new activities and further defining the role of the workgroups, (2) brainstorming about YAL activities for the coming year, and (3) collaborating on activities in an intensive work session.

Media and Communication

Visibility has been a central topic for YAL in 2020. We further updated our website and we have frequently posted on Twitter. In the second semester, we have created a communications committee that will be responsible for communicating YAL activities within and outside the university. Early-career scholars from across the university have now signed up for our mailing list to be kept up to date about activities and other news.

In 2020, YAL has regularly met with the rector and vice-rector, first in person in January and later online in May and June. In several faculties YAL members have met with their respective Deans and Faculty Boards or Faculty Bureau members. YAL has also increased communication with other partners within the university, such as Strategic Academic Affairs, Leiden University Fund and the university council parties FNV Overheid and PhDoc, as well as beyond our university through regular meetings with other local Young Academies and the national De Jonge Akademie.

Activities

Most YAL activities are coordinated by our three workgroups: science and education policy, outreach, and interdisciplinarity. All workgroups have had regular meetings throughout the year.

One of the main YAL activities that has been set up as an overarching project in 2020 has been the creation of the weblog [Voices of Young Academics](#), with five inspiring blogposts published already (that together received almost 4,300 views) and more in the pipeline. Below, we will describe the other activities under their respective workgroup headings.

Outreach

In the summer of 2020, the outreach workgroup completed the large project of creating a mobile **Escape Box** with scientific questions and puzzles related to Leiden University. Due to the cancellation of in-person events, the Escape Box has not yet been in use, but this is something we look forward to for the future. We thank Gloeidraad for building the Escape Box.

Another central project of the outreach group has been the development of a collaborative [lecture series with Studium Generale](#). Three YAL members have already presented in this series, which

is scheduled to continue in 2021. Currently, the outreach workgroup is developing an outreach mentoring platform for early-career scholars.

Interdisciplinarity

The Interdisciplinarity workgroup started the year with the public **Next444 Roundtable** in February, which offered a lively discussion on the future challenges of Data, Sustainability, and Inequality & Justice. The full [news article](#) on this roundtable is available on the university website.²

This year, YAL has organized three **online interfaculty lunches** attended by 30 to 40 ECRs each. During the first two lunches, ECRs discussed the impact of COVID-19 and questions of diversity and inclusion, respectively. During the third lunch, YAL hosted Prof. Remco Breuker to discuss his co-authored manifesto “40 propositions about science”. A [news article](#) on this event is available on the university website.³ In several faculties, YAL members organized **young faculty lunches** for ECRs and Q&A sessions with the respective Deans.

Members of this workgroup have set up a “Students as Partners” course with the Honours College. The Interdisciplinarity group ended the year with an online event called **networking from the balcony**, in which ECRs at Leiden University could network with colleagues from across the university.



Picture 3: Image from the Next 444 Roundtable Event on the 10th of February 2020. Photograph by Eelkje Colmjon.



Picture 4: Screenshot of the Networking from the Balcony event, 11th of December 2020.

Science and Education Policy

This year the Science and Education Policy workgroup has devoted a lot of attention to the **impact of the COVID-19 pandemic**. In April, YAL conducted a survey among ECRs to find out what the impact of COVID-19 and the related measures was on this target group. The results (based on 204 responses)

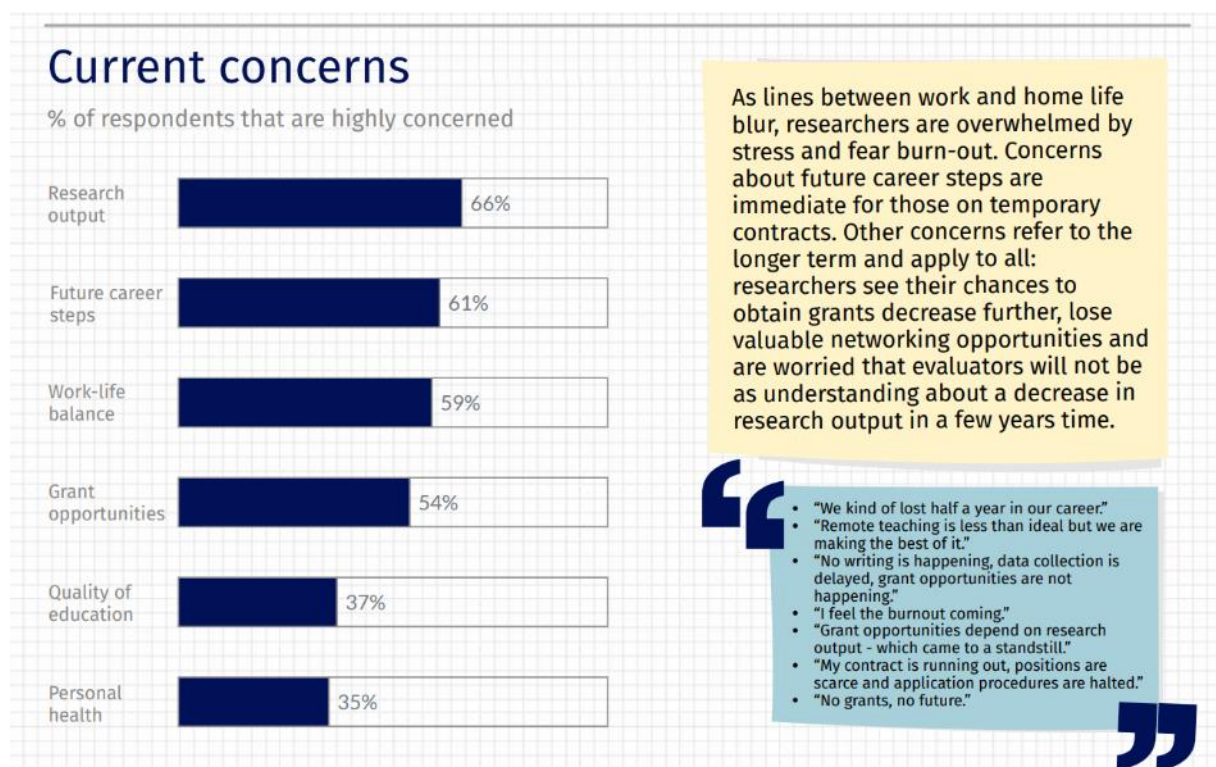
² <https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/en/news/2020/02/next444-challenges-for-the-future>

³ <https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/en/news/2020/11/debating-3-of-the-40-propositions-about-science>

are available [here](#).⁴ Based on these results and an interfaculty lunch meeting on the same topic, the policy workgroup wrote a [position paper](#) on the topic that has since been discussed with the Rector and the Deans of most faculties.⁵

The workgroup also published two other **position papers**, namely on [the Integration of Research and Teaching](#)⁶ and – in collaboration with the interdisciplinarity workgroup – on [Interdisciplinary Research](#).⁷ The workgroup is preparing several other position papers, including on work pressure and academic excellence as topics. Other policy discussions have focused on recognition and rewards and hiring permanent teaching staff, among other.

Various YAL members have taken part in **university committees**, namely the Commissie Monitoring Wetenschappelijke Excellentie en Talentbeleid, the Commissie Erkennen en Waarderen, and an expert meeting on communication during the pandemic. In various faculties, YAL members have been invited to provide input during the drafting phase of the Faculty Strategic Plan.



Picture 5: One of the infographics showing the results of the YAL survey on the impact of COVID-19 on early career scholars. Source: <https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/binaries/content/assets/customsites/yal/yal-infographics-corona-survey-a4-25-5.pdf>.

⁴ <https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/binaries/content/assets/customsites/yal/yal-infographics-corona-survey-a4-25-5.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/en/yal/workgroups/policy#the-impact-of-covid-19-on-young-academics>

⁶ <https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/en/yal/workgroups/policy#young-academy-leiden-on-integration-of-research-and-teaching>

⁷ <https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/en/yal/workgroups/policy#interdisciplinary-research>

Appendices

A. YAL membership changes

New member	Faculty	Field
Julia Cramer	Faculty of Science	Science Communication to Society
Anna van Duijvenvoorde	Faculty of Social and Behavioral Sciences	Brain Development in Adolescence
Lauren Fonteyn	Faculty of Humanities	Linguistics
Eiko Fried	Faculty of Social and Behavioral Sciences	Measurement, modeling, ontology and nosology in mental health studies
Andrew Gawthorpe	Faculty of Humanities	American History, Politics, and Policy
Cristiana Strava	Faculty of Humanities	Urbanization in the Middle East

Alumni	Faculty	Field
Anouk Goemans	Faculty of Social and Behavioral Sciences	Forensic family and youth care studies
Stéphanie van der Pas	Faculty of Science	Mathematics

B. Workgroups and committees

Science and education policy	Interdisciplinarity	Outreach
Tom Louwerse (coordinator as of September)	Sarah Schrader (coordinator)	Yamila Miguel (co-coordinator as of September)
Lauren Fonteyn	Julia Cramer	Noel de Miranda (co-coordinator as of September)
Joris Larik (former co-coordinator)	Anna van Duijvenvoorde	Julia Cramer
Martin Lipman (former co-coordinator)	Eiko Fried	Anna van Duijvenvoorde
Yamila Miguel	Sarah Giest	Lauren Fonteyn
Noel de Miranda	Helen Pluut	Andrew Gawthorpe
Helen Pluut	Maaïke van Putten	Tom Louwerse
Annemarie Samuels	Annemarie Samuels	Maaïke van Putten
Cristiana Strava	Cristiana Strava	(Anouk Goemans, former coordinator)
Olaf van Vliet	(Stéphanie van der Pas)	

Selection and recruitment committee: Martin Lipman, Helen Pluut, Maaïke van Putten, Sarah Schrader and Cathelijn Waaijer

Communications committee: Sarah Giest (coordinator), Julia Cramer, Anna van Duijvenvoorde, Tom Louwerse and Cathelijn Waaijer

C. Financial overview

YAL received an annual budget of €50.000 for 2020. Stéphanie van der Pas and Cathelijn Waaijer served as 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. YAL also hired a student assistant in 2020. Salary therefore constitutes a large cost item. Other significant expenses relate to projects and promotion materials. Most events have taken place online due to COVID-19 restrictions, which has led to fewer expenses than originally budgeted. Almost €15.000 of the total budget has not been spent.