

Yearly report APNet – 2021-09/2023

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1. Preface from the president

Initial conversations about a national organization for Assistant Professors already started in 2020, when Eveline Snelders and myself both became Assistant Professors in the Dutch academic system (in 2020 and 2021 respectively). With a core group of assistant professors from across the country, including Sonja Billerbeck, Carmen van den Bergh, Anne Pluymakers, Ciska Veen and Rifka Vlijm, we set the first concrete steps towards 'APNet'.

On the 10th of June 2021, Eveline Snelders and myself officially registered the organization 'APNet' (Assistant Professors Netherlands Network) to the Chamber of Commerce in the Netherlands. The mission of APNet is to be 'a lobby and networking organization to empower Assistant Professors in the Netherlands'. These were exciting times, because now we became an official legal entity with rights and duties that still needed to take shape. Together with Ioana Ilie, Kaitai Liang, Athina Vidake and Rifka Vlijm we build our governance structure in six months, launching a website, setting up a financial infrastructure and preparing our organization to accept members. By the end of 2022, most of these structural, largely invisible tasks were completed and we were excited to start accepting members.

For 2023, our aim is to attract 600 members to our organization, which would make up ca. 10% of the total population of Assistant Professors according to the Rathenau Institute. We also aim to become a recognized organization within the Dutch political landscape with solid connections with the local and national Young Academies, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW), the Dutch Scientific Organization (NWO), the overarching organization for Universities (UNL) and all universities. But our ambitions reach further. Apart from connecting people and becoming a recognized and valued organization, we will also continue with the professionalization of our organization in terms of financial stability, public visibility and internal governance structure.

Lastly, we hope that APNet will foster interdisciplinary projects between institutes and organizations in the Netherlands and that our members find in APNet the space and energy to develop and share their opinions about subjects that matter to them. We hope to provide a platform where people can inform themselves about the Dutch academic landscape, and where they can provide input to these changes in policy and feel heard and valued.

Our ambitions with APNet are high and we are looking forward to seeing our organization develop and mature in the years to come.

Anouk Beniest – President APNet – 2022/2024

2. Governance

Definition of our mission/Vision/Statement:

APNet is a network and lobby organisation to empower Assistant Professors in the Netherlands

Board members:

No voting took place as the first year is the same as the preparational year

Proposed election procedure

Following the discussion on transparency and a diverse board during and after the meeting, we distilled a strategy and envision the process as follows. Diversity will be ranked in order of decreasing importance:

1. Institute
2. Discipline
3. Nationality
4. Gender

In other words, we try to create a board that is diverse over institutes first, then over disciplines, then over nationalities, then gender.

If more than 10 candidates apply, the current group of initiators will select 10 people, following the above listed diversity criteria. We will distribute the motivation of max. 10 potential board members, and create an anonymous voting form on Google Forms. There is a minimum of 5 votes to become a board member, where the above listed diversity criteria will be used to come to a diverse board.

Example: we assume 2 vacancies. Person A and B are from the same institute and are ranked 1st (A) and 2nd (B). Person C is from another institute and discipline, and is 3rd in the ranking with 5+ votes. Person B will then not become a board member, instead person C will enter the board. We hope this explanation and strategy full-fills both the transparency, and the diversity wishes of our support base, as indicated during the discussion last week. Part of the decisions on this procedure will depend on how many and who will apply for a board position. If it becomes too complex, we will call for another meeting to consult the support base, using this newsletter for further communications on this (and other) topic(s).

4. Activities 2022

Events per month:

The board met bi-weekly in 2022 via Zoom and Teams.

Jan 2022

Start of the new board APNet:

- Anouk Beniest – President
- Ioana Ilie – Vice President
- Eveline Snelders – Treasurer
- Rifka Vlijm – Secretary
- Athina Vidaki – Head of Committees
- Kaitait Lang – IT-PR lead
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June 2023

- 10 June: foundation of APNet and official registration at Chamber of Commerce

August 2022

- 19 Aug: Strategic meeting APNet board

First in-person meeting of the board to discuss the top priorities in order to officially launch our organization.

September 2022

- 12 Sept: APNet PR committee meeting on social media strategy

Discussion between Athina/Katai/Anne on how to use Twitter for APNet posts, announcements, etc.

December 2022

- Bank account at TRIODOS accepted

5. Activities 2023

Events per month:

The board met every week in 2023 via Zoom and Teams.

January 2023

Launch of the APNet website: www.ap-net.nl

- 5 Jan: Meeting with Rector Magnificus VU Amsterdam, Jeroen Geurts, on campus.
- 12 Jan: Strategic meeting APNet board
Second in-person meeting of the board to discuss our main goals for the first year of our organization

February 2023

- 07 Feb: online event 'Labour agreements and what they mean for you'. Donald Pechler from AoB gave a short presentation and answered questions from the audience.

March 2023

- 15 Mar: Kick-off meeting of the Research & Career Policy committee
Introduction meeting of interested members, brainstorm on key priorities and discussion on upcoming interview with the Minister Dijkgraaf's Advisory Committee for Starters and Incentive Grants
- 30 Mar: Kick-off meeting of the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion committee
Introduction meeting of interested members, brainstorm on key priorities and activities

April 2023

- 6 April: Kick-off meeting of the Network Growth & Sustainability committee
Introduction meeting of interested members, brainstorm on key priorities and activities
- 12 April: Monthly meeting of the Research & Career Policy committee

May 2023

- 12 May: Monthly meeting of the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion committee
- 22 May: Meeting with Twente Young Academy (YAT)
Together with YAT, we discussed the plans of APNet for the next period. They warmly welcomed potential collaborations and offered to help with APNet promotion at the University of Twente.
- 23 May: Meeting Universiteiten Nederland
We discussed the plans for rolling grants and the positive impact of the Sectorplan. They were enthusiastic about having a platform as APNet and will try to support us in future endeavors.
- 23 May: Wageningen Young Academy (WYA)
Also very welcoming, WYA suggesting opening APNet chapters at the different Universities. An option we might explore in the coming years. We agreed that big discussion points in the UD landscape are topics as 'Erkennen and waarden' and 'Iedereen professor', which we will try to bring awareness towards.
- 24 May: Monthly meeting of the Research & Career Policy committee

June 2023

- 2 June: Meeting Maastricht Young Academy (MYA)
The MYA supports our initiative and help in spreading the news about the existence of APNet at Maastricht University. Similar topics as with the WYA were discussed.
- 5 June: Meeting Wim van de Donk (Rector of Tilburg University)
Positively surprised about APNet, the Rector of Tilburg University recommended to have close contacts with all the Universities and the College van Rectoren for official acknowledgement.
- 5 June: Young Academies Meeting
We received a warm welcome from all Young Academies and will kick off our collaborations.

8 June: online event 'General member meeting and brainstorm sessions committee'.

During this event we provided an update about APNet and we introduced the committees, looking for people who are willing to engage actively with APNet.

- 10 June: official registration of APNet at the chamber of commerce.
- 14 June: Kick-off meeting of the PR/Communication committee
Introduction meeting of interested members, handover of website and brainstorm on key priorities.
- 16 June: meeting LNVH - online
- 19 June: meeting Minister OCW – Robbert Dijkgraaff in person in The Hague
- The conversation evolved around introducing APNet, why we are there, the starting- and incentive grants and the sentiments in the AP community in the Netherlands.
- 19 June: meeting with NWO (Marcel Levi and Jasper Roodenburg)
APNet was introduced and we explored possible ways to collaborate and receive support from NWO. We agreed that the General Assembly can take place at NWO in Utrecht.
- 29 June: Monthly meeting of the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion committee
- Construction of survey to collect the opinion of our members on D&I topics

July 2023

- 4th of July: PNU (PostDoc association Utrecht), online
- 5 July: Online event 'Promotion criteria'.
Interactive discussion with our members to construct a white paper on the topic, as a tool to kick-off discussion with key players (including the minister)
- 10 July: Strategic meeting APNet board

Third in-person meeting of the board to discuss the organization of our first general assembly and the focus for the second half of 2023
- 13th of July: YA Eindhoven, online
- 13th of July: Rector Magnificus Leiden – Hester Bijl, online
- 26th of July: Postdoc NL, online

August 2023

- 28 Aug: Monthly meeting of the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion committee
- 29 Aug: Monthly meeting of the Research & Career Policy committee

September 2023

- 4 Sep: Participant in the initiative 'Alternative start of the Academic Year' organised by AoB, Young Academies, PostDoc NL, PNN and APNet. The president gave a speech about the role of Assistant Professors in the Netherlands.
- 20 Sep: 1st General Assembly APNet
First hybrid General Assembly in Utrecht.
- 21 Sep: 2nd meeting with the Minister of OCW – Robbert Dijkgraaff, in person in The Hague