university of groningen

YoungRUG

Year report

2023

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Mission

YoungRUG is a community for young professionals employed at the UG. Our goal is to facilitate personal and professional development, networking, and knowledge-sharing. We foster an open and dynamic environment to encourage active participation and create a strong community.



Bart Talens
Active member

“The fact that YoungRUG also acts as an advisory and sparring partner for UG policymakers, regarding topics such as attracting and retaining young professionals, is a valuable asset for the UG as an organization.”

Vision

By 2029, YoungRUG will be a more established network within the UG and a knowledge platform for young professionals. We act as an advisory and sparring partner to upper management in attracting and retaining young professionals. YoungRUG provides insight into possibilities and career paths that young professionals can take within the UG. Through our dynamic events, we provide a stimulating environment for networking and personal and professional development.

YoungRUG is a community where young professionals come together and learn from each other.

Introduction

2023 was a busy year for YoungRUG. We did a lot of work in different areas. Therefore, I would first like to thank the active members and board members for the commitment they have shown over the past year. They spent a lot of hours on YoungRUG-related topics in addition to their daily work.

Some of the busyness came from the fact that people know how to find YoungRUG better and better. For example, we have been asked to provide feedback on the RUG-wide employee survey. We are also making tremendous efforts to be more visible and accessible. The new website and monthly social drinks certainly contribute to getting young professionals involved in the YoungRUG community, see also page 5. In addition, we are actively pushing for the recognition of professional staff, as can be read on page 8. This also makes us more visible in the managerial layers of the organization.

We have also been busy establishing goals that YoungRUG wants to achieve in the next 5 years. We will continue to focus on opportunities for professional development in addition to onboarding, recognition and rewards for professional staff, YoungRUG as a sparring partner and dedicated time for active members and board members.

The Board of the University reacted positively to our ideas, as can be seen on page 7.

The year 2024 promises to be a great one. Our annual calendar is packed with interesting and fun events. Besides that, there are a lot of ideas to be worked out and I notice that the active members are eager to dedicate their time and energy to YoungRUG.

Personally, I find this very inspiring and I am looking forward to another busy year together!



Frederiek van Rij

Chair of YoungRUG

What’s new in 2023?

We launched a new website

Our website got a thorough redesign at the start of March 2023. Transitioning from a simple flat webpage, we now feature a dynamic subhomepage. This upgrade makes it possible to share news items, manage calendar events, and showcase a dynamic slideshow on our home page.

Beyond the enhancements to our home page, we've introduced new sections, including a page detailing the benefits of active YoungRUG membership and another page highlighting our various projects and working groups. The entire layout has been reorganized for improved logic and coherence.

Explore the changes yourself!



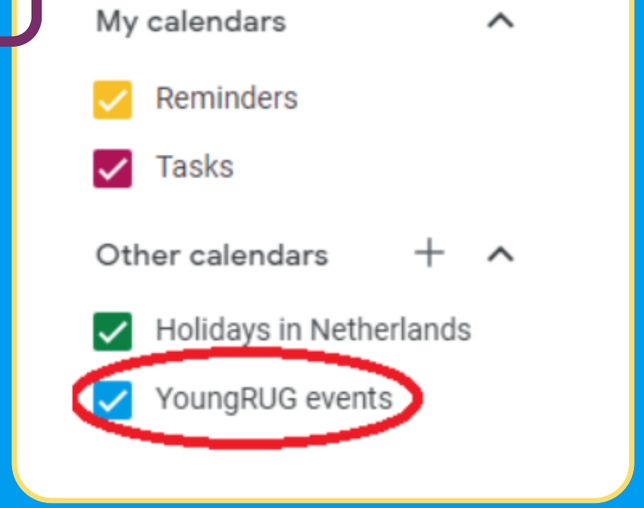
Introduction meeting for new employees

In September 2023, we held our first introduction meeting for new employees. In this meeting, we provided insights into YoungRUG's mission, our activities, the opportunities available for young professionals at the UG and explainedYoungRUG's role in fostering employee engagement. Subsequent to the session, we joined the participants of the mentor programme speed date event for a social gathering with drinks at the Energy Academy. This provided a chance for everyone to mingle, establish connections, and deepen their familiarity with YoungRUG.

What’s new in 2023?

Integration of our events in Google Calendar

In March, we implemented a feature that allows integration of our events into Google Calendar. With just a single click, all YoungRUG events are effortlessly shown in someone's Google Calendar. This integration simplifies the process of staying updated on YoungRUG events!







Monthly social drinks

This year, we launched our social drinks initiative: every last Thursday of the month, between 5 and 7 p.m., you'll find YoungRUG gathering at café De Bres for an evening of drinks, socializing, and networking. While attendance fluctuated on each occasion, the consistent factors across all events were the warm camaraderie and the opportunity for making new connections!

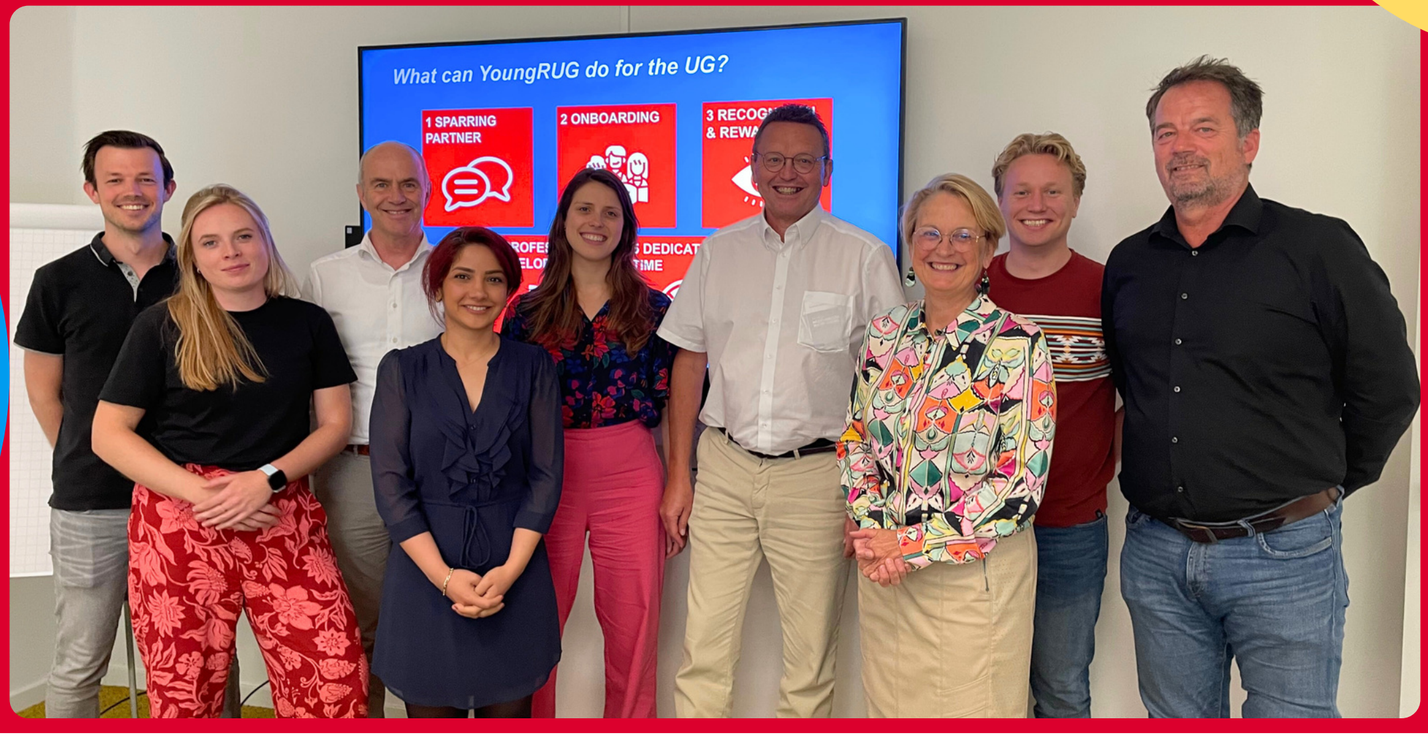
A Year to Remember

On Monday 26 June, we had a lunch meeting with the Board of the University - Jouke de Vries, Hans Biemans and (former Rector Magnificus) Cisca Wijmenga. We discussed YoungRUG's vision and plans for the next five years. The board was enthusiastic about our new plans and the idea of going with a new term for "support staff" was also well-liked.

The Board of YoungRUG meets the Board of the University

YoungRUG Goals for 2024-2029

1. Sparring partner
2. Onboarding
3. Recognition & Rewards
4. Professional development
5. Dedicated time



A Year to Remember

Mentor Programme: Lustrum edition

The mentor programme embodies mutual learning and equality, allowing experienced senior staff to share their knowledge with junior staff. This year's mentor programme event, held on 28 September, marked a significant milestone as it celebrated its fifth edition!

The event comprised three rounds of insightful 10-minute conversations, followed by participants listing their top three choices. Based on these preferences, 18 successful mentor-mentee pairs were formed. These pairs meet regularly, engaging in discussions to support the mentees' professional growth by addressing their specific developmental needs.



”For me, the mentorship programme offers my mentee and myself the opportunity for growth. I can use my expertise to guide her, but at the same time I am learning to become and stay her mentor. Instead of giving (unsolicited) advice, I practise listening, asking questions, and asking for clarifications. Being a mentor forces us to (re)discover the side of us we might have lost as we grew older: the part that can sit, listen, observe, and question without judgement.”

Swaeske de Vries
Mentor

Memo on name change

YoungRUG wrote a memo in which we explored the possibility of a name change from ‘support staff’ to ‘professional staff’. YoungRUG has been working on improving the position and opportunities of UG professional staff for a while. Recently, we began to explore the idea of the name change and its benefits as a part of a bigger initiative to position the professional staff with the UG.

The current label of ‘support staff’ suggests that these individuals primarily exist to support the core academic activities of teaching and research. This often leads to the misconception that they only assist scientific staff, whereas their focus is on the overall process. The work performed by professional staff should be recognized as an essential pillar in the smooth operation of a large and complex organization like the UG.

The Managing Directors and the HR Director José Weitenberg discussed the memo. Overall, they were positive and asked YoungRUG to look into an alternative to ‘professional staff’. We will continue addressing the recognition of professional staff.

Events of 2023

January

Lecture by a YAG member

February

Social drinks

March

Compliment Day
Social drinks

April

Generation Event
Masterclass 20'ers and 30'ers dilemmas
Social drinks

May

Collaboration workshop trainees and active members
Social drinks

June

Mudflat hiking
Social drinks

Events of 2023

September

Speeddate event mentor programme

Information meeting

Social drinks

October

Social drinks

November

Active Members Day

Leadership Event

December

Workshop From Stress to Success

Game Night



"I'm always looking for opportunities for personal development. The many relevant events organized by YoungRUG are a great opportunity. The events are well-curated. Great thought and care go into them. For example: I enjoyed and took many things from a workshop on stress (great trainers by the way!). Be it at a serious workshop or one of the fun social events, it is always a good opportunity to connect with the wider community at the UG."

Antonio Giuliani
Community member

Career Perspectives

Several active members have dedicated a lot of time to investigating UG young support professionals' needs for career opportunities. This resulted in a report named ‘Career Perspectives’. Based on focus groups with young support professionals, interviews with managers and a representative of the Union, the following recommendations to improve career development can be made:

1. **Establish career development programmes**
2. **Encourage professional development**
3. **Provide feedback and recognition**
4. **Offer flexible work arrangements**
5. **Foster a culture of continuous learning**
6. **Support career advancement opportunities**
7. **Establish a diversity and inclusion program**
8. **Offer tuition reimbursement**
9. **Encourage employee engagement**
10. **Measure and evaluate the success of the career development programmes**



If you would like to receive the full report, please send an email to young@rug.nl.

Statistics

10 events organized

115 followers on LinkedIn

277 Instagram users reached monthly

311 event participants

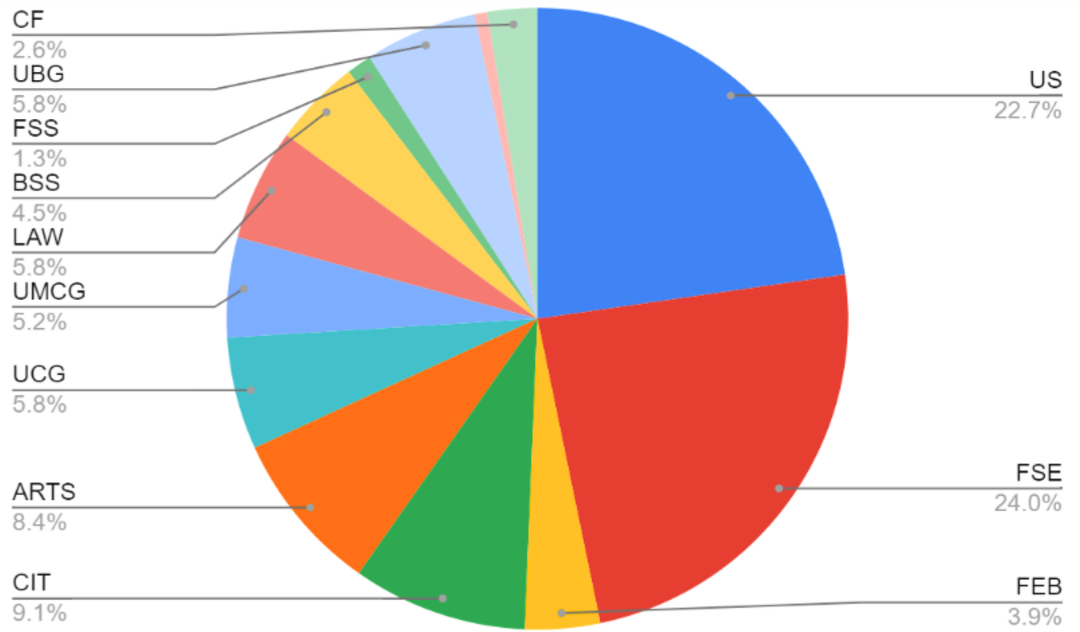
395 colleagues read our newsletter

587 followers on Instagram

246-1100 views per e-mail (to 1100 recipients)

8466 total website views

Engagement per organization



Board and active members

Board



Jasper
until March



Valerie
until June



Shaya
until December



Frederiek



Bas
from June



Susanne



Klaas
from March



Deborah
from December

Active members



Paul



Hendrik



Marjolein



Tim



Roos



Karmen



Sofie



Floor (until August)



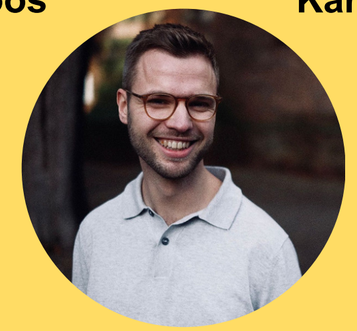
Lucia (from November)



Davida (from December)



Bart (from May)



Peer (from December)



Kasia (from October)