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Word from our Scientific Director: We would like to hear from the VLAG Community

The past two and a half years, I have been writing these contributions to FLASH, thus hoping to give you some insights in what is happening within our community, and share new initiatives. Until now this has been pretty much a one sided street, which implies that I write, and only very sparingly get a comment back (mostly very nice ones so I am not complaining). What I would like to do is also give you the option to share your news with the whole VLAG community. Would it not be great to also hear what is happening in the VLAG Research themes? Yes I know, you may not have even heard of the term VLAG theme, but VLAG has [4 themes](#) within which the 22 chair groups reside. For example the last external peer review took place at the level of the themes. I would like to suggest that we start a relay column in which people working within the VLAG community share their news through a contribution of let's say half a page, after which they carry the 'baton' over to another VLAG person working in a different theme, and it would be good to ask that person first if they would be willing to contribute. I would like to start by giving the baton to the very first volunteer who lets us know to be interested in writing this first contribution.

The last month has been quite busy with the NPO and NPO+ applications, also known as the covid compensation funds. Unlike last year, the available funds are very scarce, and it was tough to go through all applications knowing that we would not be able to compensate most of what was requested. There were 80 applications for VLAG only, and we noted that some chair groups were rather reluctant to apply for funding while others were surely not very shy in doing so. This added to the complexity, and ultimately decisions were taken at the level of Wageningen Graduate Schools in order to be just to all applicants.

Currently we are gearing up toward the Summer, and I hope that many of you will also be able to have a break and enjoy a holiday. I notice that the covid conditions that we were under for quite a while have impacted people within VLAG greatly. Although we may not be out of the woods given the

current reproduction number being higher than 1 as we speak, I still hope that we will have plenty of sun in the Netherlands for those that stay here, since you never know what a Summer in the Netherlands will look like, and that others will have the option to go to a nice location of their choice.

I strongly feel that all the hard work that was and still is done can only be carried through in a sustainable way when combined with time away from work. Please also keep an eye on each other, so that things remain manageable in spite of delays that many have experienced and the urge to compensate that especially many PhD's seem to feel. It is good for you to know that the rector has indicated that deliverables need to be seen in the light of what was possible in the period. In contrast to popular belief, there is no requirement to have four scientific chapters in a thesis, you are required to show that you are capable of working as an independent researcher. That is all, and that is also more than plenty.

Kind regards, also on behalf of the entire VLAG office team, and stay safe and healthy,
Prof Karin Schroën, Scientific Director VLAG

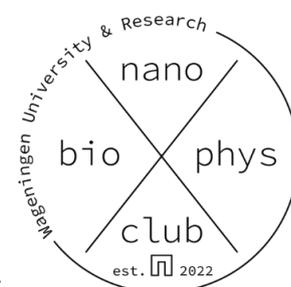
From the VLAG Office

Launch of the NanoBioPhysX Club

We want to invite you to the NanoBioPhysX Club - a monthly seminar series - to strengthen the network among scientists with a fundamental interest at WUR. The NanoBioPhysX Club aspires to bring together all scientists at WUR who work in the broad areas of the Molecular Life Sciences / Biochemistry / Biophysics and adjacent fields like Bioinformatics and more (specifically invited as the 'X'). The first meeting is planned **28 September '22** in Axis room B118, with guest speaker [Prof. Jan Lipfert](#) (UU).

If you have a speaker suggestion, please contact [Sonja Schmid](#) or [Jasper Landmann](#).

In the following the seminars are held every last Wednesday of the month at 4pm, including drinks



TKI Graduate School Green Top Sectors 2022

[The programme](#) allows talented masters students, in collaboration with knowledge institutions and companies, to submit a proposal for PhD research in the area of the top sectors Agri&Food and Horticulture & Starting Materials. Full, associate and assistant professors and other researchers with a comparable appointment can submit an application, written by a masters student, if they are employed by one of the organizations affiliated with one of the WUR graduate schools. The deadline for application is **15 September 2022**.

Applicant should send their [application](#) to [Ingrid Vleghels](#).

Schmidt Science Fellow NEWS



On June 9th, the 2022 cohort of [Schmidt Science Fellows](#) was announced. The 29 new Fellows are a group of exceptional early-career scientists from around the world, each committed to transcending disciplines to advance discovery and driving innovation that improves the quality of life for all. One of them is **Naomi Arita Merino**, former VLAG PhD candidate at Food Physics and Food Quality and Design. She was one of the WUR nominees for the fellowship.

Congratulations Naomi!

Naomi explains that the 'Schmidt Science Fellows is a high-risk/high-reward program and the same applies to their selection process. It was hard to simultaneously prepare my application, publications, and a PhD thesis, but I could not stop thinking about this amazing opportunity. The support from postdocs, professors, and entrepreneurs in Wageningen was really encouraging and helpful'.



Call for INREF seed money projects 2022

The INREF board is providing the opportunity to get a small compensation for the investment in network and research ideas through seed money projects. Up to a maximum of € 25,000 grants can be provided for activities that are oriented towards development of research ideas, research networks or research proposals. The activities could contribute to a new INREF full proposal (although no new calls are planned for the current phase of INREF) but also to proposals for other funding programmes like Horizon Europe, NWO etc. The deadline is **15 September 2022** (full call details were sent by email to VLAG supervisors 16 May) .

More information on the objectives of INREF and expected outputs of the INREF programme can be found at the [INREF webpages](#). For questions, please contact [Jelle Maas](#)

VLAG on LinkedIn

Would you like to be updated on courses (in and outside WUR), conferences, vacancies etc. you may want to follow VLAG on [LinkedIn](#). Also if you would like to share news or events with the VLAG community, you can [send](#) your input to us.

Reading suggestion

Prof. Arthur Mol came across this article on the often frustrating experiences of peer review (from all sides) and what can be done about it; [‘Towards codes of practice for navigating the academic peer review process’](#)

From the VLAG PhD Advisor

As you may recall, I have advertised books, podcasts and videos in this newsletter before that deal with life as a PhD candidate. I think it's important to highlight such resources every now and again, because they might provide just the right trigger or diversion for several of you reading this. This time, I'd like to point out the recently starting podcast PhD unplugged. It's made by two PhD candidates that wanted to create an easily accessible support tool for other PhD candidates that specifically focuses on PhD well-being.

Each session, they invite a coach and a PhD candidate to discuss about a well-being topic relevant to that PhD. By listening to the [podcast](#), you get to hear the types of questions and situations other PhDs are facing, and get to benefit from the advice the coach is giving to them. Topics that were covered so far are Insecurity, Self-compassion, and Stereotypes in Academia.

Recommending a new initiatives has a certain risk, you never know how they will develop. I like the idea however that this is something created by and created for PhD candidates. Perhaps the VLAG PhD community can even help this initiative grow by suggesting relevant topics to cover and providing useful feedback...Enjoy the summer months everyone!

Regards,
[Jochem Jonkman](#)



VLAG courses

Highlighted courses

[Summer School: Novel Developments in Food Allergy](#) (31 August – 1 September '22)

Hypersensitivity reactions to food components can affect susceptible individuals and such reactions are increasing. Do you want to understand, control and diminish the allergenicity of food products? In this course you gather in-depth understanding on the basics and causes of allergic reactions and the influence of food processing and you will be able to translate novel insights to your daily practice.

[Life Sciences Data Integration Challenge](#) (24 – 28 October '22)

Data science is revolutionizing our understanding of biology in biotechnology and systems health... What can you do in one week? Join us in this Challenge!

Current and future scientific problems require multi-disciplinary solutions and research teams composed of members from broad domain backgrounds. In this 5 day course, participants will form

multi-disciplinary teams to analyse a research problem using statistical and mathematical modelling pipelines, with the aim of uncovering new insights and observations.

Other VLAG courses open for registration

[Advanced Proteomics](#) (6-10 February 2023)

Planned courses:

Interdisciplinary fundamental science and outreach (linked to the NanoBioPhysX club, more information will follow soon)

Rheology, the do's and don'ts (1-3 May 2023)

Tip! For an overview of all courses regularly organised by VLAG take a look in [past courses](#) and contact the [VLAG office](#) for the planning.

Wageningen Graduate Schools (WGS) courses

Highlighted course

[Career Development for Postdocs: Science and the Alternatives](#) (6 - 8, 28 September, 6 October '22)

Young academics have to make a decisive career choice: either pursue a career in science or look at alternative options of which there are many. In the early phase after a PhD it is essential to assess one's future career and reflect on professional ambition. It is therefore that WGS offers this programme to postdocs and other young academics who have a PhD.

For a complete overview of all competence, skills and career development training activities by WGS, please click [here](#). Or click [here](#) for the direct links to the webpages of the other graduate schools.

Other courses and events

LIVE webcast Protein Transition (30 June '22)

Register for the [NIZO Webcast](#) (15.00-15.00h) 'How to develop plant-based food products that are tasty, healthy, stable, safe and sustainable?'

ONLINE symposium Novel developments in molecular and clinical allergology (2 September '22)

This one day symposium is organised by the Allergy Centre Rijnstate Hospital Arnhem and WUR. You can find the programme on [intranet](#).

Methods and Statistics Summer School Courses 2022

These [Summer school courses](#) are offered by the Department of Methods & Statistics of Utrecht University in collaboration with Utrecht Summer School 2022.

Food Science PhD Research Leadership and Communication School (3 – 7 October '22)

A 5 day full and immersive [experience](#), learning how to become a leader in your field and an effective communicator. The course will include active simulations and role playing, meetings with pioneers and research and industrial leaders in the field.

Nutritional Science Days (6 & 7 October '22)

The yearly [Nutritional Science Days](#) are 2 days of retreat for junior scientist and PhD candidates to present new, unpublished results of their scientific work. This meeting provides an opportunity for practicing your presentation skills, networking, inspiration and maintaining existing collaborations and friendships between Dutch nutrition science groups.

NWO Biophysics (10 & 11 October '22)

This [conference](#) presents a programme covering a broad range of scientific topics varying from microscopy and cell biology to biomedical engineering. It is the very heart of Dutch research groups in

these fields of expertise, creating a place to explore, push boundaries and celebrate interdisciplinary science together.

ReMaT - research management training ONLINE (10 & 11 October '22)

[This ReMaT workshop](#) is designed for early-stage researchers, particularly PhD candidates from the 2nd year onwards.

Grant Application Course (12 & 13 October '22)

During this [intensive online course](#) participants will be taught by seasoned scientists, grant application experts who have reviewed hundreds of grants, assessors from funding bodies and many more.

Genome Assembly (13 & 14 October '22)

This [two-day workshop](#) is aimed at providing a basic understanding of creating and evaluating de novo assembly using long read technologies. The workshop requires knowledge of working with the Linux operating system and of biological topics such as genetics and DNA. Although the data is from a plant genome, the learned principles can be applied to many other organisms, including bacteria, fungi and mammals.

Other announcements

In Dutch only;

Gratis kennis maken met NAV?

Wil jij jezelf professioneel ontwikkelen en helpen om de kwaliteit van de voedingswetenschap te verbeteren? Als pas afgestudeerde MSc'er **en** als eerstejaars PhD kandidaat kun je 1 jaar gratis kennis maken met de [NAV](#). Je hebt dan toegang tot de bijeenkomsten, workshops en lezingen. Check of je voldoet aan de [registratie-eisen](#) en [stuur](#) je registratie-aanvraag binnen 1 jaar na afstuderen.