



Female Empowerment Maastricht **YEAR REPORT**

December 2023



Foreword and reading guide

The **Female Empowerment Maastricht University** network – otherwise known as **FEM** – is a network of academic and administrative staff representing the faculties and offices of Maastricht University. Our network was established in 2018 through a Diversity and Inclusivity grant, awarded by the UM Diversity and Inclusivity Advisory Council. After a successful pilot year, FEM has since become a key part of UM's Diversity and Inclusivity Office, contributing to the overall efforts of the University to minimise gender disparities and promote a diverse, fair, and equitable work environment for all.

In this report, we provide an overview of our activities and accomplishments from the past year and lay out some of our plans for the future. The report is structured in **three parts**.

First, we provide a short introduction of FEM, who we are, what we do, and how our work benefits the UM community. Then, we present some highlights of our accomplishments and activities from the past year. The third part of this report is dedicated to the future plans of the FEM team and on the ways forward for our network within the UM community.

Lastly, FEM would like to express their gratitude, and **thank the university and faculties** for helping financing these projects.

Kind Regards,
the FEM Executive Board

Aurélie Carlier (Chair)
Alexx Allen-de Rijk
Luana Russo
Teresa Schuhmann
Christina Peristeridou
Chris Pawley
Constance Sommerey
Julie Goodfellow
Katrien Bernaerts
Tara de Koster
Kim Smits
Anna Zseleva



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FEM: About Us

Our Mission

Through our work, we aim to promote equity and equality at Maastricht University, and specifically highlight the important role of women in academia. To achieve this goal, we have set **seven goals** that we actively work towards through a number of activities organised in **five thematic pillars**.

Specifically, **FEM's goals** are to:

- Raise awareness on the problems of gender equality and equity within the UM community;
- Encourage an open discussion and welcome all viewpoints on gender equality in terms of career and work life within UM;
- Identify current issues and problematic areas of gender equality and equity requiring attention and contribute to shape policies that tackle them;
- Facilitate collaborative interaction between junior and senior staff members at UM, staff from different faculties, and staff holding different faculty positions (e.g. administrative and academic);
- Increase the visibility of women in academia;
- Highlight and promote female leaders at UM;
- Cooperate with other platforms within and outside the Netherlands (e.g. Landelijk Netwerk Vrouwelijke Hoogleraren, European Women in Mathematics, Athena's Angels) who share a similar vision.

To realise the goals described above, FEM has delineated five thematic pillars which have been the basis of our activities since 2018:

- **Training**
FEM organises tailored workshops that: (i) build academic skills and leadership qualities; (ii) strengthen communication and promotion (e.g. negotiation skills) and (iii) raise awareness of behaviour-related topics, e.g. implicit bias, bystander intervention techniques.
- **Mentoring**
Having gained expertise through our FEM Mentorship Pilot programme, held in 2018-2019, FEM aims to set up and streamline mentorship programs across UM.
- **Informing**
Through different platforms – the UM and D&I websites, our social media platforms, and the UM-wide newsletters – we maintain a steady stream of communication between FEM and the general UM community and beyond. There, we focus on information transfer, for instance by sharing information on relevant events, grant competitions and other career opportunities, books and other sources relating to gender issues in academia.
- **Networking**
We provide the floor for various networking events: a yearly symposium, keynote events, and lunches on various topics where participants can discuss and reflect on relevant topics of the UM policy or general academic politics on gender issues, e.g. tenure track policy, family friendly work conditions, book clubs.
- **Policy**
FEM has been actively engaged in policy shaping, evidenced by the production of influential policy papers. To formalize and further strengthen this commitment, a fifth policy pillar was added to the FEM agenda in 2021. We are also in close contact with funding agencies at national and international levels, aiming to enhance gender equality and equity within the UM community through our policy recommendations.

The FEM Team

How we organise ourselves

The FEM board is structured in four teams:

- The **Organisation and Management team** which coordinates the external relations of FEM, the FEM budget and is responsible for an active communication and interaction among the teams;
- The **Events team** which advertises, plans and organises FEM activities which can range from lunches to annual events;
- The **Policy and Publications team** which takes policy initiatives where needed and is responsible for FEM policy work, policy statements, and general publications;
- The **Professional Development team** which plans and organises trainings and is involved in streamlining the mentoring programs across UM faculties.

The FEM board is composed of 14 members of academic and administrative staff of all UM faculties. On a monthly basis all **FEM board members** come together to discuss the general matters relating to the activities and goals of FEM. The FEM board is further supported by the assistance of a student assistant (Federica Broggi) as well as a body of **volunteer Ambassadors** which help promote and set-up FEM activities.

FEM is an entirely bottom-up community-based institution and all FEM Board members consider their role as service work and part of academic citizenship, and as such contribute on a voluntary basis. Moving forward, we hope that more members of the UM staff community will join our work, regardless of their gender, position, or background. In this way, the aim of FEM is to internally reflect the same values of diversity and inclusivity that the organisation actively promotes. Our activities developed organically based on the needs of women staff in academia, and currently we are focusing on consolidating these activities and professionalising our organisational structure.

The FEM Board

Name	Role	Faculty & unit	Start FEM Board
Alexx Allen-de Rijk	Member Policy and Publications team	SBE PDQA	2020
Katrien Bernaerts	Chair Professional Development team	FSE AMIBM	2021
Aurélie Carlier	Chair Organization and management team	FHML MERLN	2018
Luana Russo	Member Policy and Publications team	FASoS Politics	2018
Christina Peristeridou	Member Policy and Publications team	FdR Criminal Law	2018
Constance Sommerey	Member Organization and management team	BU D&I Office	2018
Teresa Schuhmann	Chair Policy and Publications team	FPN Cognitive Neuroscience	2020
Chris Pawley	Chair Events team	FSE Coordinator Academic Advising	2022
Julie Goodfellow	Chair Events team	SBE MarCom	2022

Kim Smits	Member Professional Development team	FHML Pathology	2022
Tara de Koster	Member Events team	CARIM Management Assistant	2022
Anna Zseleva	Member Professional Development team	SBE Assistant Professor	2023
Federica Broggi	Student Assistant	FdR & D&I Office	2022

The FEM Ambassador Team

Name	Faculty or Unit
Sharon Anyango	FASoS
Lisa Bruggen	SBE
Marlies Gijs	FHML
Berta Cillero Pastor	FHML

Former members of the FEM Executive Board are listed in the Table below.

Name	Faculty or Unit	Start FEM Board	End FEM Board
Jessica Alleva	FPN	2018	2019
Aida Abiad Monge	SBE	2018	2019
Alie de Boer	FSE (UCV)	2018	2019
Christel van Gool	FHML	2018	2019
Sophie Kells	MUO	2019	2019
Rianne Fijten	FHML	2019	2021
Danai Petropoulou Ionescu	FdR	2018	2023
Danai Papathanasiou	FASoS	2023	2023

Highlights of FEM 2023: accomplishments & activities

Since the [launch of FEM in 2018](#), we have worked hard to provide interesting and engaging activities for the UM community. On the basis of the five thematic pillars of FEM, here we present the highlights of our accomplishments and activities of the past year.

Training and mentoring

In response to requests from the UM community to introduce professional trainings focusing on FEM topics, FEM has organised a number of training sessions. Specifically, in collaboration with the UM Staff Career Centre, we currently offer the following trainings to UM staff (both academic as well as admin). To further support the UM community, FEM covers for most of the courses 50% of the participation fees for each participant, while staff career center pays the other 50 %. The Active Bystander Training is organized by FEM, MYA and staff career center. FEM and MYA each pay 25 % of the costs, and staff career center pays the other 50 %.

Negotiation

Negotiation happens every day as soon as two (groups of) individuals have different wishes. At Maastricht University, negotiation is vital to advance in your career, whether it's about authorship, research time, or salary scale. In order to become a good negotiator, you need some theory on the different types of negotiation, each with their own dynamics. Participants practise two types of negotiation, the distributive and the shadow negotiation. We delve into the moves and turns and the persuasion tactics you may be confronted with during a negotiation. Knowing, and dealing with, your sensitivities that may trigger you in ineffective responses is also part of this workshop. This workshop is a mix of theory, negotiation exercises, video fragments and exchanging experiences and strategies.



Bridging the communication gap

Within Maastricht University you are expected to work with people from all over the globe. In collaboration cultural differences play a considerable role, as does gendered communication. Oftentimes we're hardly aware of our and other people's perspective. This 1 day workshop highlights the dynamics of cultural and gendered differences in communication and offers tools to bridge gaps in your interactions. The training offers an introduction to theory about effective and inclusive communications and invites participants to exchange experiences and practise your specific situation.

Active Bystander Training (together with Maastricht Young Academy)

The active bystander training was organised 2 times in 2023 by the Staff Career Centre, FEM and MYA. Imagine witnessing unacceptable behaviours. Think of for example bullying, (sexual) harassment, belittling, discrimination etc. It's pretty hard to be the one to speak up. You might be afraid or you don't want to be the first to speak up, or maybe others may say you are overreacting ... Yet, you know that matters like this can very well contribute to a toxic culture in the workplace and lead to socially unsafe work circumstances. How to challenge inappropriate behaviours? How to become an active bystander? In this training people learn how to challenge inappropriate behaviours. Based on the feedback of the participants, an extension of this training was introduced at the end of 2022 in order to be able to cover more personal cases.



Female Empowerment

SUMMER WORKSHOPS

FOR STAFF MEMBERS

Personal Branding & Presentation

7 JUNE | 9:30-16:30

What drives you to do the work you do? Finding your story, your words and inner motivation is one thing. Presenting these in front of a group requires different skills.

Influence & Impact

26 JUNE | 9:30-16:30

When you wish to advance in your career, who do you need to contact?

Networking requires visibility and the guts to step up and reach out. How do you make that first positive impression? How do you use your voice?

CHECK THE LINK

 Maastricht University

Personal Branding & Presentation

Two new trainings were introduced in 2023, namely Personal Branding & Presentation and Influence & Impact.

This in class workshop helps you to find, express and present your uniqueness in the work that you do, whether that be research, education or facilitation.

Every individual has a unique set of experiences, viewpoints, skills and talents which they bring into their workspace. In this workshop we connect these to your WHY: What drives you to do the work you do? Finding your story, your words and inner motivation is one thing. Presenting these in front of a group requires different skills. Dealing with

discomfort, taking the stage, physical awareness and practice makes up half of the in class workshop. Your presentations will be recorded on video and sent to you afterwards.

Influence & impact

Maastricht University is a vast and complex organisation, which makes it challenging to find out how to get things done. When you wish to advance in your career or propose improvements, who do you need to contact? The hierarchical structure suggests clear procedures. However, influence is often achieved by networking. Networking is done informally and has its own dynamics. In this workshop you will learn more about these dynamics and map out your network. Networking requires visibility and the guts to step up and reach out. How do you make that first positive impression? How do you take up space and use your voice? You get the chance to practice this in a safe surrounding.

Mentoring

Within Maastricht University, over the years, several initiatives have been started to provide mentorship programs to staff. However, the availability and content of these programs are highly dependent on the faculty a staff member is appointed to, as well as on career level (postdoc, assistant professor, associate professor). Because of this, not all staff members have access to such a program. In 2019/2020, FEM organized a mentoring pilot program including 10 mentees and mentors from 8 faculties/service centers (FASoS, FLaw, SBE, FHML, FPN, SSC, UM Sports and MUO) and in different roles (postdoc, UD1/2, UHD2, administrative staff. Mentees and mentors were matched by FEM, but they were free to plan meetings and discuss issues how they wanted. Afterwards, both mentees and mentors were asked to fill in a questionnaire for evaluation of the program. Most mentors (>75%) felt their role as a mentor was rewarding, and they indicated that they liked using their skills and knowledge to help colleagues. Similarly, the majority of the mentees (75%) appreciated the mentoring, indicating that reflecting on their career path and getting a different perspective was helpful to them. However, matching of the mentor-mentee and mutual expectations were mentioned as points of improvement.

Based on this pilot program, we are currently discussing a possible mentor program standardized over the different faculties and service centers with a group of interested staff members (both academic and

administrative) from several faculties (also MYA). To advance this discussion, we are preparing a policy document explaining our ideas on mentoring, including our thoughts on integration of mentoring within the current UM infrastructure, training for mentors, incentives and the possibilities to create an online mentoring platform where mentors and mentees can meet.

Support of other UM organisations

Inclusivity is a core value for Female Empowerment Maastricht (FEM). We endorse diversity for its capacity to enhance creativity and innovation. For this, in 2023, FEM showed support for the [Elinor Ostrom Fund](#), founded by Professor Lisa Brüggem in 2014. This fund provides grants and organizes workshops to empower early-career female scholars, creating a strong network of support and learning.

Informing

An important pillar of the FEM activities is **providing and summarising information** that can be used by UM community members to educate themselves and their peers about gender disparities in academia and potential solutions to close the gender gap. Thus far, information relating to FEM can be found on our [official website](#) or the new [UMployee page](#). Other places you can find information are:

- Internal and external FEM & [diversity events](#)
- Information on confidential advisors
- Our own [publications and resources](#)
- External links to [websites of women's societies](#)
- Information on rights and procedures, in particular [maternity leave and parental care](#)
- Inspirational blogs, video's, websites and books
- Resources for self-education and inspiration

We are also active on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#) , and [Instagram](#) and [UMEmployee](#). With these social media accounts and communication platforms, we aim to advertise our events but also to bring more attention to topics of gender equity and lastly to connect with other similar organisations in the Netherlands and the world. As such we facilitate the worldwide image of the UM as a university where initiatives such as FEM are welcomed and supported and where issues of gender equity are taken seriously. It is worth mentioning that our accounts are followed by several influential individuals and academic organisations and that this can also increase the visibility and good reputation of the UM.

FEM has additionally promoted women's empowerment through a series of social media campaigns. On the International Day of Women and Girls in Science on February 11th, FEM celebrated the contributions of women in STEM fields. Similarly, on International Women's Day on March 8th, FEM celebrated and advocated for gender equality in our society. During Women's History Month, FEM also collaborated with **Limestone Bookstore** to create a unique space dedicated to literature exploring the intersection of feminism and inclusivity. This curated [collection](#) included thought-provoking works by artists, designers, and activists who are reshaping societal norms around gender empowerment. This collaboration provided a platform for meaningful discussions and a valuable resource for those seeking inspiration and knowledge in the realm of women's empowerment.

In 2022, Sharon Anyango (FEM ambassador) and FEM were awarded a D&I grant entitled "Mitigating gender citation bias in the classroom" with the goal to create a practical toolkit for course coordinators and tutors to start a classroom discussion on (gender) diversity in general and citation practices specifically. Seven different programs at UM tested the toolkit (including programs at FASOS, UCM and FPN). Both pre- and post survey questions were given to the students as well as course coordinators to obtain feedback on the toolkit. The educational toolkit is currently being finalized and will be distributed soon.

Networking

Throughout the academic year, FEM organises frequent thematic events that highlight issues relating to the overall mission of the organisation, and that provide the opportunity for members of the UM community to meet, exchange, and reflect together. While FEM participates (e.g. as guests or co-organisers) in several events, our own events usually follow the following formats: lunches, keynotes, annual events, and the women researchers' festival.

FEM Keynote Series

In 2023 FEM organised three keynote series in which FEM invited high profile speakers to inspire the UM community. These FEM keynote series were very well attended with over 100 (online) participants.

FEM keynote series	Speaker
<p><i>Preventing Sexual Harassment in Academia</i></p> <p>In this workshop, Karen Kelsky delved into the intricate dynamics within academic settings that unfortunately foster the proliferation of sexual harassment. The session focused on the impact of such behaviour on victims, while also providing comprehensive insights into identifying early warning signals. Participants gained a comprehensive toolkit to empower both potential and current victims, and the workshop highlighted effective methods for reporting incidents.</p>	<p><i>Karen Kelsky</i>, founder of The Professor Is In, brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to this critical discussion. With an extensive background encompassing 15 years as an R1 tenured professor, department head, and university advisor, followed by over a decade as an academic career coach, Karen offers insightful perspectives on the realms of grad school and the job market. Her commitment to providing clear, no-nonsense guidance serves as an indispensable resource for navigating the complexities of academia.</p>
<p><i>Managing your Mental Health during your PhD</i></p> <p>This keynote delves into the mental health crisis within the PhD community, and explores the common stressors that PhD students encounter while offering guidance on how to effectively manage them. Additionally, the talk touched upon systemic issues in academia that are often overlooked, providing a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced.</p>	<p><i>Dr. Zoë Ayres</i>, head of Laboratory Facilities at the Open University and bestselling author of "Managing Your Mental Health During Your PhD: A Survival Guide," is a respected academic and mental health advocate. With a background in analytical science and a doctorate in electrochemical sensor development, Dr. Ayres champions mental health in research settings, especially for graduate students. As President-Elect of the Royal Society of Chemistry's Analytical Science Community and a trustee of the Analytical Chemistry Trust Fund, she promotes awareness and support for mental health challenges.</p>
<p><i>Discussing body positivity and social influences</i></p> <p>This keynote focuses on body image - how people think and feel about the physical appearance and functioning of their body. Specifically, it highlights factors that influence body image for the better or worse (e.g., social media, gender norms) and provides techniques to foster a more positive body image within individuals and communities.</p>	<p><i>Dr. Jessica M. Alleva</i> is an Assistant Professor in the Eating Disorders and Obesity Research Group at FPN. Dr. Alleva is also a consultant for EVERYBODY Consulting and for Meta (Facebook, Instagram), with the aim to advise clients on how they can best champion positive body image via their products and services. She is also the Associate Editor of <i>Body Image: An International Journal of Research and a regular contributor to Psychology Today</i>.</p>

FEM Lunches

In addition to the FEM Keynote Series, FEM also organised 2 **lunches** between November 2022 and November 2023 with 20-40 participants on various topics.

Theme of the lunch	Speaker
Introducing the UM Social Safety Team	Esther Goethart, Claire Essers, Marloes Rikhof and Katinka Bastin
Want to avoid a burnout? Take a trampoline!	Angelique de Rijk

Women Researchers' Festival 2023

To celebrate **International Women's Day 2023**, FEM hosted the **Women Researchers' Festival!** This event was hosted in person on Monday 9 March 2023, between 12.00 and 18.00. The festival aimed to highlight the innovative efforts undertaken by women researchers at UM, encompassing both students and staff. It also sought to promote collaboration and support among UM members. Throughout the day, three insightful sessions featured a total of 18 distinguished speakers. Their discussions shed light on the intriguing research unfolding across UM's diverse faculties. The Women Researchers' Festival served as a platform to recognize the noteworthy contributions of women researchers at UM and provided an opportunity for meaningful connections to flourish. It emphasised the importance of nurturing cooperative efforts and celebrating the remarkable work being done by these researchers.



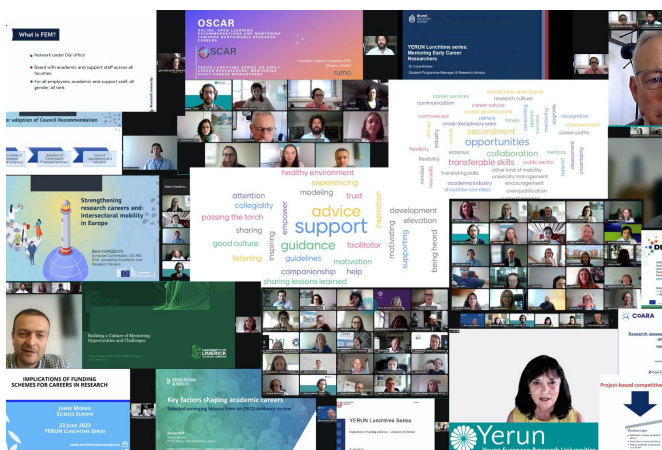
FEM Annual Event 2023



The topic for the **FEM Annual Event 2023** was focused on **“Failure and how to live with it”**. Taking place at the Bonnefanten Museum on June 8th from 13:30 to 18:00, The Failure Festival delved deeply into the concept of failure as a driving force for personal and professional growth. The event featured **Prof. Melanie Stefan**, a distinguished expert, who shared profound insights into the significant role failure plays within the scientific domain, emphasising its value as a source of invaluable learning experiences that foster open dialogue. Additionally, Dr. **Karlijn Massar**, Associate Professor at Maastricht University's Department of Work & Social Psychology, extended the discourse by examining Impostor Syndrome, shedding light on its psychological dimensions and how it shapes personal growth and development, particularly among high-achieving individuals and PhD students.

Beyond insightful discussions, the festival also offered two captivating workshops. The first workshop, led by professional juggler Guido van Hout, explored embracing failure through the art of juggling, while the second workshop, guided by Roxy Jongewaard, curatorial assistant and junior curator of contemporary art, provided a unique perspective on starting anew after failure through a curated museum tour. Overall, the Failure Festival aimed to reshape attendees' perspective on failure, encouraging them to recognize its potential as a catalyst for growth across personal and professional spheres.

External Events

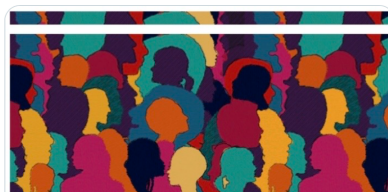


FEM additionally supported the **YERUN** office which organized a series of online events for Early Career Researchers (ECRs) in June 2023. These events, aligned with ERA Action 4 and 3, addressed intersectoral mobility, mentoring, funding impacts, and career policy implementation challenges. With the participation of Aurélie Carlier from FEM, distinguished speakers from the European Commission, stakeholder representatives, and experts engaged in insightful discussions, attracting 300 participants. The discussions contributed to the ongoing efforts in enhancing

research careers.

In 2023, FEM also supported the **Centre for Gender and Diversity (CGD)** at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences of Maastricht University in its intergenerational feminist dialogue held on the 21 and 22

 **FEM - Maastricht University** @FemMaastricht · Jul 12
On the 21st and 22nd of September, the CGD 25th Anniversary Symposium will take place. Find more info here: tr.ee/HhTpHunuYd !!



Intergenerational Feminisms

25th Anniversary Symposium of the Centre for Gender and Diversity
Grote Gracht 90-92, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Maastricht University
21-22 September 2023

 Maastricht University



 Maastricht University

FASoS Maastricht

September on occasion of CGD's **25th Anniversary Symposium**. The CGD officially opened its doors in September 1998 to consolidate the expertise of gender and women's studies scholars, a field explicitly supported by UM since 1987. The jubilee symposium on Intergenerational Feminisms therefore also is a celebration of these many years of intersectional and interdisciplinary scholarship at the UM, conducted in concert with many collaborators in and outside of the university. It offers additionally an opportunity to assess the issues that have fallen off the broader feminist agenda and which need urgent attention.

In May 2023, Berta Cillero Pastor (FEM ambassador) gave an inspiring talk on "Women in Science and Recognition&Rewards" at the annual genetics retreat of the Dutch Association for Human Genetics.

Policy

Within UM, FEM is aiming to become more involved in policy shaping and policy implementation. Through our work, which includes writing policy texts with recommendations and participating in several advisory bodies at UM (e.g. Recognition & Rewards), we work to improve the general gender equality and equity within the UM community.

COVID-19 pandemic related policy work

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit in 2020, it became quickly clear that the academic response to COVID-19 might not immediately take the gendered dimension of the pandemic into account. As both formal and informal care structures such as child care, elderly care and housework seem to fall apart, the work-life balance of scholars and university staff with caring responsibilities suffered. As, typically, care tasks as such still fall on the shoulders of women, the gender dimension of the pandemic measures became very evident. Editors saw a significant drop in submissions from women academics and many young researchers were and are worried how these changes in productivity would affect their careers in the long run. Considering that staff members with care responsibilities have been severely negatively impacted by the measures against the pandemic due to the lack of care facilities in combination with the continuation of administrative, teaching, and research activities within UM, FEM drafted a **white paper on mitigating the negative effects of covid-19** on caregivers at Maastricht University. With this position paper, FEM urges the UM to take an array of concrete **post-covid measures** to counterbalance the negative impact on the output of its **employees** (irrespective of gender or position) **with care responsibilities** (irrespective of the type of responsibility). The suggestions of the FEM white paper have been discussed in a working group (of which two FEM board members, i.e. Dr. Luana Russo and Dr. Aurélie Carlier took part) and a concrete plan was provided to the UM Executive board which is still being discussed.

General gender diversity policy work

Together with Mothers in Science, FEM developed a policy toolkit, a global call to action for funding agencies to support mothers in science as well as examples of good practice. Mothers in Science is a global initiative advocating for support and policies to address inequalities faced by mothers in STEM fields. Through a detailed action plan, the aim is to urge research funders to implement strategies for inclusion and bridge the gender gap in funding, while creating a fair and inclusive culture in the STEM sector.

FEM - Maastricht University @FemMaastricht · Jan 25

Funding agencies are key players for systemic change in #STEMM. We're supporting an action plan led by @mothersinsci to create gender equity and promote inclusion of caregivers in #ResearchFunding. Let's unite to create change! tinyurl.com/yc33ubrc #action4STEMMoms

Mothers in Science @mothersinsci · Jan 25

Action plan launched today! We started a global movement to call on our leaders for immediate action to promote inclusion of caregivers & ensure an equitable distribution of research funding resources. Let's unite to demand change! #action4STEMMoms tinyurl.com/yc33ubrc



GLOBAL CALL TO ACTION FOR MOTHERS IN SCIENCE
ACTION PLAN FOR FUNDING AGENCIES

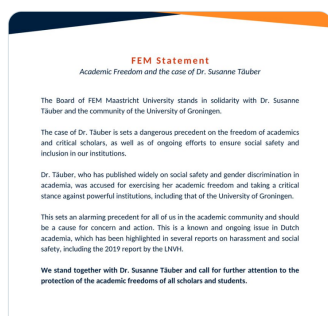
FEM - Maastricht University @FemMaastricht · Mar 14

We stand in solidarity with Dr. Susanne Täuber and the community of @univgroningen!

Protect social safety and academics' freedom!

Read more here: openletter.earth/reinstata-susa...

#academia #socialsafety #FreedomOfSpeech



FEM additionally expressed support for Dr. Susanne Täuber through a policy statement on academic freedom. The University of Groningen's actions raised concerns among both local and global observers. They touched upon issues related to Dr. Täuber's academic expression, including pressures to limit her future publications. FEM stands by Dr. Täuber in her pursuit of academic freedom. Moreover, FEM was pleased to offer feedback on Maastricht University's Diversity & Inclusivity (D&I) self-assessment report. Our input was part of a collective effort to enhance diversity and inclusivity within the university community. We value the opportunity to have contributed to this important initiative, supporting the ongoing efforts towards a more inclusive future at UM.

Future FEM Plans

What's in store for FEM in the future? Reflecting the feedback we have gathered from the UM community, we will continue to expand our existing projects and also make room for more FEM activities that aim to further our overall mission of promoting gender equity and equality in the UM community.

Current Projects and New Ideas

As we saw earlier, the activities of FEM are organised on the basis of five thematic pillars: **training, mentoring, networking, informing** and **policy advising**. Below, we elaborate on the existing activities that we would like to further expand as well as new projects that we believe will benefit the UM community. In addition to activities, at FEM we wish to **establish a closer and more regular communication with all faculty boards**. We strongly believe that both parties can benefit from each other's perspectives, and we are motivated to work together and promote gender equity at UM.

Training

What's already there?

So far, FEM has offered the following trainings: "Negotiation", "Bridging the communication gap", "Active bystander (basis and extension)", "Influence & Impact", "Personal Branding & Presentation". For all trainings we cover 25-50% of the participation fees for each participant.

What's coming?

We want to consolidate the current training offers. FEM aims to cover the costs of the development along with 25%-50 % of the participation fee for each participant. In addition, we will help to professionalise inclusivity competencies in various training settings in cooperation with the D&I Office.

Mentoring

What's already there?

During the first year of the FEM network, we set up a one-to-one mentorship pilot programme, coordinated by Alie de Boer and Christel van Gool. While we received positive feedback from both the mentors and the mentees involved in the pilot programme, we were not able to continue with the setting up of a mentorship programme.

What's coming?

In 2024 we hope to be able to resume the coordination of the mentorship programme. At present, we are discussing the possibilities to incorporate mentoring within existing UM infrastructure to increase the coverage of the programme, and provide this service to as many UM community members as possible. For this we are discussing with various groups within UM, including the Maastricht Young Academy, interested staff at SBE, etc. and we are creating a policy document elaborating our ideas for discussion within the several faculty boards or meetings. We also aim to provide funding and support to faculties when organising events for high schools with a particular focus on providing scientific role models for students (in STEM).

Informing

What's already there?

As presented earlier on in this report, FEM engages in various activities that aim to share information about gender equality and equity in the workplace with the UM community. In 2023 FEM increased their audience, exemplified by the invitations for the YERUN lunch series. In the future, we aim to maintain the platforms of communication which have been established so far and extend towards new UM platforms (UMployee).

What's coming?

Following the example of the LNVH, who publish a yearly LNVH Monitor to report on the ratio of men to women in academia and an overview of the current percentages of male and female professors and in management positions at Dutch academic organisations, university medical centres and other academic organisations, FEM aims to create a **FEM Monitor** for Maastricht University. The FEM Monitor will be a publication that reports, among others, on the general gender distribution in different UM functions and the pay gap. The FEM Monitor will be created in consultation with the UM Human Resources department and the D&I Office. We believe that the FEM Monitor will be a powerful tool to provide oversight into gender equality at UM. The aim of FEM's policy group - currently working on it - is to improve the transparency of UM within this field.

Networking

What's already there?

Since its establishment in 2018, FEM has organised multiple events that bring UM community members together and help them build a wider network. For instance, we organise an annual thematic event and thematic lunches, where our community members can come together and discuss important topics related to gender equity and equality. With this in mind, in light of the popularity of our lunch events - which gather on average approximately 40 participants - we aim to increase the frequency of the events and organise them on a monthly basis. In addition, FEM has introduced the "FEM keynote series": a series of timely-distributed events where renowned academics, experts or researchers are invited as speakers to give a keynote speech about pre-selected topics. The most recent one, "*Managing your Mental Health during your PhD*" gathered an audience of almost 90 participants to discuss the mental health crisis within the PhD community, namely the common stressors that PhD students encounter and how to effectively manage them.

What's coming?

To consolidate and professionalise our activities, FEM is planning to create a **yearly calendar**, to be released at the beginning of the academic year. The aim of this is to ensure that UM staff can plan attending FEM events well in advance as well as to coordinate with other events organised by UM organisations (e.g. Maastricht Young Academy and Platform Rei). Lastly, we want to **collaborate with other organisations** that share the same vision as FEM. Specifically, we aim to get in touch with all University organisations whose work is dedicated to promoting gender equality and build a healthy and steady communication with for example the Maastricht Young Academy or the PhD Platform. At the national level, this would include organisations such as the LNVH or the Athena's Angels at the University of Leiden.

Policy

What's already there?

Next to pandemic related policy advice with the FEM white paper and FEM taking part of the working group, FEM was consulted and provided input the [UM Gender Equality Plan \(GEP\)](#) which provides a good overview on what the UM has been doing and offers areas of interest by which it can deepen its work. FEM and the D&I Office have also been successfully collaborating on doing targeted research into and offering policy advice in relation to gender equality for CARIM.

What's coming?

In the future, we are open to discuss the possibility of conducting targeted faculty-level or institute-level studies that are meant to take stock of the gender status quo, and provide specific recommendations to promote and support activities that will improve the gender equity and equality efforts at the unit level. In addition, FEM is happy to sit at the table and take part as discussion partner to the dialogue on the concrete implementation of policy, such as for example the R&R framework and the Starters and Incentive Grants. Finally, FEM is happy to contribute to future policy making regarding the social and workplace safety.

Contact

FEM would be happy to discuss any of the issues raised in our report in more detail. Any questions or suggestions for any of our activities should be directed to fem@maastrichtuniversity.nl. For more information regarding our activities please visit the [FEM website](#) and the FEM social media accounts.

Twitter: @FEMMaastricht

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