

Female Empowerment Maastricht

YEAR REPORT

December 2021



 Maastricht University



Foreword and Reading Guide

The **Female Empowerment Maastricht University** network – otherwise known as FEM – is a network of academic and administrative staff representing every discipline and faculty 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 eliminate gender disparities and create a diverse, fair, and equitable work environment for all.

After three very successful years, we look forward to broadening FEM's reach throughout our University. In this report, we provide an overview of our activities and accomplishments from the past years and lay out some of our plans for the future. As it is our first yearly report, we decided to give an overview of all past activities, in the next years we aim to provide a yearly overview. The report is structured in three parts. First, we provide an 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 2019 to the present. The third part of this report is dedicated to the future plans of the FEM team, on the lessons learned since our establishment in 2018, 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 finance these projects.

Kind Regards,
the FEM Executive Board
Dr. Aurélie Carlier (Chair)
Alexx Allen-de Rijk
Danai Petropoulou Ionescu
Dr. Christina Peristeridou
Dr. Constance Sommerey
Dr. Katrien Bernaerts
Dr. Luana Russo
Dr. Teresa Schuhmann
Nicolette Engelen





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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 organized in **five thematic pillars**.

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

- Raise awareness on the problems of 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 shaping 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 realize the goals described above, FEM has delineated five thematic pillars which have been the basis of our activities since 2018:

- **Training:** FEM organizes tailored workshops that: (i) build academic skills and leadership qualities; (ii) strengthen communication and promotion (e.g. negotiation skills) and (iii) raise awareness of behavior-related topics, e.g. implicit bias, bystander intervention techniques.
- **Mentoring:** Having gained expertise through our FEM Mentorship Pilot program, held in 2018-2019, FEM aims to set up and host regular mentorship programs. We organize and support a pop-up mentorship (one-off, or specific per topic e.g. grant writing), but also a continuous mentorship program.
- **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 fora for various networking events: a yearly symposium and bi-monthly lunches on various topics where participants can debate 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:** Since 2020, FEM is aiming to become more involved in policy-shaping. In particular, we are in contact with funding agencies at the national and international levels. Moreover, we aim to write policy texts with recommendations to improve gender equality and equity within the UM community. By 2021, the fifth policy pillar has been added to the FEM agenda.

The FEM Team

FEM was established by a group of female academics working at different faculties of Maastricht University. In 2018, during a training on female empowerment, Christina Peristeridou and Aurélie Carlier decided to set up an initiative at Maastricht University to promote female leadership. They were matched by Constance Sommerey to Alie de Boer and Christel van Gool who had similar ideas. Since then, the FEM team has grown and has accomplished a lot. In the following paragraphs, we provide an overview of our organisation, and the FEM team from 2018 to the present.

How we organize ourselves

The FEM network is directed by an Executive Board, with the assistance of a student assistant as well as a network of Ambassadors that help promote and set-up FEM activities. The FEM Executive Board is comprised of **9 members of academic and administrative staff**, representing each faculty of Maastricht University. The FEM Executive Board meets on a monthly basis to discuss general matters relating to the activities and goals of FEM. In addition to the general board meeting, members of the FEM Executive Board meet bilaterally on an ad-hoc basis for the coordination of events or activities.

As a principle, the work of FEM is organised taking an egalitarian approach, where all members maintain equal say on all matters. Still, the network's overall coordination is taken care of by the Chairperson of FEM – currently, this role is fulfilled by Aurélie Carlier, preceded by Christina Peristeridou.

Importantly, all the FEM Board members consider their role as service work and part of academic citizenship, and as such contribute on a voluntary basis. We are aware that our current FEM Executive board is currently not gendered diverse, despite open calls within the faculties of SBE, FSE, and FPN. We see this as an important action point for the future.

Moreover, FEM is an entirely bottom-up community-based institution. It came into life purely because of the initiative, drive, and dedication of its board members. Our activities developed organically based on the needs of female staff in academia. From its infancy until now, FEM has been a school for us: we have broadened our horizons on topics outside our expertise, relating to policy, academic citizenship but also the mundane administrative life of UM. As such, in our view, is a valuable example of self-regulation of UM staff and proof that there is room and chances for spontaneous growth within the UM administration.

The FEM Executive Board

Name	Role	Faculty & unit	Start FEM Board
Alexx Allen-de Rijk	Coordinator administrative staff activities	SBE SBEAO	2020
Katrien Bernaerts	Coordinator FEM monitor and trainings	FSE AMIBM	2021
Aurélie Carlier	Chairperson	FHML MERLN	2018
Nicolette Engelen	Coordinator administrative staff activities	MUO Academic Affairs	2020
Christina Peristeridou	Coordinator annual events	FdR Criminal Law	2018
Luana Russo	Coordinator mentoring	FASoS Politics	2018
Teresa Schuhmann	External Relations	FPN Cognitive Neuroscience	2020
Constance Sommerey	Treasurer	BU D&I Office	2018

Danai Petropoulou Ionescu	Coordinator of the FEM lunches	FASoS Politics	2018
Pauline El Khoury	Student Assistant	FdR & D&I Office	2021

The FEM Ambassador Team

Name	Faculty or Unit
Sharon Anyango	FASoS
Fèlix Ruiz Cabré	Campus Brussels
Julia Sewall	FSE
Katherine Bassil	FPN
Gili Yaron	FHML
Lisa Bruggen	SBE
Carla Haelermans	SBE
Marlies Gijs	FHML
Klara Scupakova	FHML
Berta Cillero Pastor	FHML
Saskia Ludwig	MERLN
Esra Güben Kaçmaz	MERLN

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

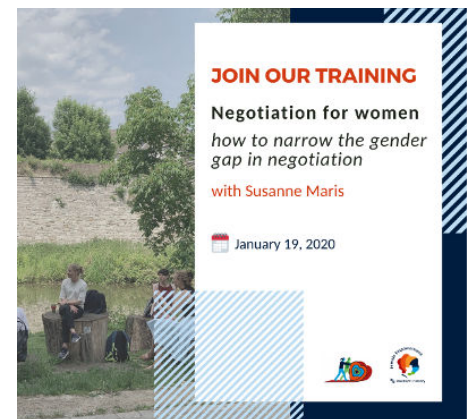
Highlights of FEM 2019-2021: Accomplishments and Activities

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 through the past three years.

Training

In response to requests from the UM community to introduce professional training tailored to women, FEM has organized a number of training sessions focusing on areas where women face documented disadvantages. Specifically, in June and October, 2019 FEM ran **two training sessions** on “Negotiation skills for women in academia”. This course was tailor-made for FEM by Susanne Maris, an experienced trainer, and coach, and was very well received by all participants. During the sessions the participants focused on how to negotiate more effectively, being a woman, without facing the social backlash that is often reported when women start to negotiate more assertively. The workshop offered a practical introduction to different types of negotiation and created awareness of the participant’s preferred way of communicating and negotiating.

Due to the success of the training program, in 2021 FEM held three more sessions of the training “Negotiation skills for women in academia” in collaboration with the UM Staff Career Centre. These online sessions were sold out within a day, highlighting their success and the high demand. From January 2021 forward, the FEM negotiation training has become part of the regular offer of the Staff Career Centre available to all women staff of the University. To further support the UM community, FEM covers 25% of the cost per participant.



In fall 2021, FEM, in collaboration with MYA, successfully organized an online workshop with the well-known Thesis Whisperer. This unique session on time management was attended by more than 100 UM staff members and was very well received. Among other comments given by the end of the workshop, participants stated that “the resources given have the potential to considerably improve the way they organize their day”, relieve “a big amount of stress on their shoulders”, and are better prepared for unexpected shifts in their schedules.

Furthermore, FEM members are regularly asked to give trainings and workshop on the topic of gender equity and inclusivity for students and PhD candidates. In this respect, we have collaborated with various groups and faculties as DKE, FHML, FASoS and the Global Citizenship Education Initiative.

Mentoring

From June to December 2019, FEM ran **a pilot mentoring program**. We had 15 pairs of mentor-mentees and used multiple questionnaires at the beginning, halfway, and at the end of the pilot to understand and optimize the mentoring program. While the mentoring program was very well received by all participants, the facilitation of such a personalized mentoring trajectory has proven very time and resource-consuming. We are currently considering set-up group mentoring or topic-based mentoring in order to increase the coverage of the mentoring and offer a more sustainable approach to mentoring. Due to the pandemic, we could unfortunately not continue with a second run of the mentoring program. However, we hope to resume operations as soon as it is possible.

Informing

An important pillar of the FEM activities is **providing and summarizing 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, we have created a very extensive [intranet page](#) where you can find information on:

- 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 currently migrating the intranet page to our website page so that we can more easily bring the information to the UM community and beyond. We are also active on:

[Instagram](#)[Twitter](#)[LinkedIn](#)[Facebook](#)

Female Empowerment

NEW LEAFLET

Grants for **WOMEN IN ACADEMIA**

FEM provides you with a **guide** to grants for women in academia. The goal of the leaflet is to summarise **grants, awards, and fellowships** which are specific to women. Ordered by scientific fields, the leaflet offers an overview of each funding scheme from "all study fields" to discipline-specific grants. Special attention is also paid to extension clauses with regards to maternity leaves, in order to counter gender unequal distribution of funding. **Good luck with all future grant and award applications!**

Maastricht University

Grants for women in academia
A quick guide by FEM

@FEM_MAASTRICHT FEM@MAASTRICHTUNIVERSITY.NL @FEM_MAASTRICHT

Inspired by the latest reports on gender differences of how scientists present the importance of their research, gender inequality in awarded research grants, and the unequal distribution of awards and prizes which are critical for shaping scientific career trajectories, FEM compiled a quick guide to grants for women in academia. The goal of the grant leaflet, which was published and distributed among managers, deans, and grant advisors at UM in Fall 2021, was to summarise grants, awards, and fellowships that are specific to women. We decided to focus in particular on Dutch and EU grants, which are most valid for UM staff and students.

To create more awareness, FEM made **five flyers** with **five tips** to improve gender equity as an individual, as a manager, in the workplace, and in the community. Along with the flyers, we have also created a **poster**, which you can see below, including 10 overarching tips to promote gender equity at UM. The flyers and posters were disseminated at the beginning of the new academic year 2021 throughout university buildings.

Maastricht University

10 tips to promote gender equity at UM
a quick guide by FEM

- Educate yourself about gender disparities
- Request diversity trainings
- Pay attention to implicit bias
- Model the right behaviour
- Mind your language - respect boundaries!
- Promote healthy work-life balance
- Organize inclusive events
- Support and encourage women
- Speak up - talk about it!
- Get involved with FEM

@femumaastricht

Female Empowerment

CAMPAIGN

Support and encourage women

- Be mindful of how you celebrate female achievement - give them credit!
- Unconscious sexism still counts as sexism - check your biases!
- Recognize inequality and offer ways to minimize the burden
- Build awareness of the crisis's impact on women

Networking

Between 2019 and 2021 FEM organized **16 lunches** with 20-50 participants on various topics. Here we present the titles and speakers of the lunches in chronological order.

Theme of the lunch	Speaker
Discussion on UM new tenure track policy	Christoph Rausch
Book club on <i>Everyday Sexism</i>	Fiona Passanha
UM Cares and perspectives on a Family Friendly University	Natasja Reslow
University staff socially unsafe and harassed?	Katerina Stankova
Diversity policies – lessons learned?	Aurélie Carlier
Gender bias in grant applications	Rianne Fijten
What are the consequences of the pandemic for your work?	Christina Peristeridou
Facts & figures about women in mathematics in the Netherlands	Maria Vlasidou (EWM)
Invisible work of women in academia	Alena Sander & Claire Grauer
The daily ‘household battle’	Gili Yaron
UM Cares: Financial support for carers	Natasja Reslow
Holding ourselves accountable: Overcoming bias in citation practices	Sally Wyatt
The Matilda Effect: The erasure of female scientific role models	Berta Cillero Pastor
Peer Reviewing and the Use of Neutral Language	Michael Erard
Lady Mary Wortley Montagu – Why Women’s Voices Matter	Cassy Juhasz
Where do we put Trans Femmes in feminism?	Mathilde Kennis

Moreover, the **2019 FEM Annual Event** focused on the (re)definition of career paths in academia. How do we measure success and how inclusive and diverse is the profile of the ‘successful academic’? Is there a career path for UM administrative staff that fosters mobility? Rianne Letschert discussed the diversity of career paths in the context of the Recognition and Rewards policy framework, Natasja Reslow addressed the new family-friendly policy (UMCares) and parallel panels on academic and administrative staff had vibrant and inspiring discussions on the (re)definition of career paths in academia.

The **2020 FEM Annual Event** consisted out of two webinars. **The first webinar** discussed the impact of the pandemic on women in academia. Alessandra Minello from the University of Padua, the author of the now-famous article about the maternal wall in academia that was published on Nature earlier this year, talked about the pandemic and the female academic and presented the facts and figures of how women in academia were affected by the COVID-19 lockdown. **The second webinar** was dedicated to a discussion about constructing a kinder research culture. Gemma Derrick from the University of Lancaster presented the results from the Pearl Project where she studies the normalization of failure and the development of a creative, inclusive, and honest research culture. During the webinar, the discussion expanded on approaches to research evaluation and the definition of academic success. The two webinars were well-attended and received considerable social media attention.

To celebrate **International Women's Day 2021**, FEM collaborated with the Dutch branch of PINT OF SCIENCE to host the first-ever Women Researchers' Festival of Maastricht University! The online Women Researchers' Festival aims at promoting the innovative spirit of women researchers of all faculties of UM and all ranks, and to foster possible collaborations amongst them. During the event, 16 women researchers at UM, coming from all levels and faculties (incl. students), presented their research in a 5-minute format. After the success of the first edition, with more abstract submissions than speaker slots, FEM will organize a Women Researchers' Festival every year for International Women's Day. Along with the Festival, FEM also aims to create an online Twitter database with UM women researchers who aim to broaden their professional network and engage in science communication on social media.



FEMALE RESEARCHER'S FESTIVAL

Female Empowerment
Maastricht University

#INTERNATIONALWOMENSDAY

Session 1: 10:00 CET

FEM Maastricht | @FemMaastricht | pintofscience.nl | @pintofsciencenl

Policy

When the pandemic hit, it became quickly clear that the academic response to COVID-19 might be discriminatory as child care, elderly care, and housework still typically falls on women. 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. When the NWO did not grant an extension for the submission of proposals under the VIDI 2020 scheme, the executive board of FEM wrote a statement to reconsider their decision after which FEM was invited for a conversation with the NOW. After several talks with FEM, LNVH (Landelijk Netwerk Vrouwelijke Hoogleraren) and Athena's Angels, NWO took **additional corona measures regarding the VIDI rounds**. We were very happy that the NWO reconsidered their previous decisions and continues to ensure a level playing field for all. We are currently negotiating with the ERC council to adapt the eligibility criteria for the ERC StG and ERC CoG.

Our work with the NWO and the ERC put FEM on the map across Europe – beyond the bounds of UM, Limburg, or the Netherlands. Recently, FEM was asked for input on issues relating to Gender Equality by national media outlets. For instance, Constance was [interviewed by the Trouw](#) to give input on the Irène Curie Fellowship scheme of the TU Eindhoven. In December 2020, FEM and the UM Diversity and Inclusivity Office were invited by Elsevier for a FlashSci Talk on diversity and inclusion in science during the COVID-19 pandemic

During this [interview](#), Aurélie and Constance discussed the measures that the UM has taken to address gender inequality prior to the pandemic, how the research productivity of women researchers at UM was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and measures, et cetera. The discussion aided in creating general awareness on the gendered impact of the pandemic and demonstrated the positive reach of FEM at the national level beyond the UM community. In April 2021, Aurélie was interviewed, together with Prof. Sally Wyatt, on establishing a guide on citation practices by ScienceGuide, which received a lot of social media attention on Twitter and LinkedIn.

The unequal effect of the Covid crisis and lockdowns on those with caring responsibilities were addressed by FEM on multiple occasions. Constance discussed these effects and points of concern with dr. Ceren Pekdemir, assistant professor and member of the local consultative body, and dr. Darian Meacham, philosopher with an interest in work in June 2020 in a [video](#) made for UM.

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 by the UM Executive board and some of the suggestions are currently being adopted.

Next to pandemic-related policy advice, FEM and the D&I Office have also been collaborating on doing targeted research into and offering policy advice in relation to gender equality for CARIM. This collaboration has been very fruitful and lead to clear policy recommendations co-developed with CARIM's strategic board. We plan to extend such individualized services to address (gender) equality in the future.

FEM also got involved in highlighting the effect of COVID-19 regulations within UM on its border workers. It did so by publishing [a statement](#), where it argues that the current 25% rule will negatively affect the flexibility and work-life balance of border workers. The statement covers two specific sets of problems that have been overlooked: the guideline of working two days at home considered problematic for border workers, and the proof needed and requested from the countries of residence. Finally, we hope that the university will take action in order to find a solution that does not create disparities among employees.

Lastly, [our latest publication](#) targeted the gender dimensions of Recognition and Rewards within UM. It highlights that with well-thought-through implementation, R&R has the potential to lead to more fairness, diversity, and better academic work culture. Hence, the paper focuses solely on the aspects that have a gendered dimension. The aspect of gender plays an important role in career advancement and promotion, and it is embedded deep within academia. Through this discussion, we would like to consider whether and in so how far the existing R&R vision addresses (and improves) that aspect of academic culture.

Future FEM Plans

What's in store for FEM in the future? With three years of experience, we now are ready to take the next step as an organization and broaden our reach. 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 organized 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 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 five iterations of the tailor-made training "Negotiation for women in academia", created by Susanne Maris, especially for FEM. This training, which became part of the UM Staff Career Centre was offered in collaboration with FEM, where we covered 25% of the participation fees for each participant.

What's coming?

We would like to explore more opportunities and offer more training to members of our community. Specifically, we want to work with more trainers to develop bespoke programs that fit the needs and expectations of UM staff members. For instance, we would like to offer bespoke training on "Kind Leadership" or "Allyship: What can men do to promote gender equality?". We are in contact with the developers of select programs, such as: "I" Lead Women's Development Programmes, Everywoman of Influence in Tech Programme, and Sustainable engagement of your female workforce, to see whether we can collaborate and offer these to the FEM community via the Staff Career Centre. Following our approach with the existing training, FEM aims to cover the costs of the development along with 25% of the participation fee for each participant. In addition, we will help to professionalize 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 program, 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 program, we were not able to continue with the setting up of a mentorship programme due to the pandemic.

What's coming?

With the beginning of the new academic year, we hope to be able to resume the organization of the mentorship program under the coordination of Luana Russo. At present, we are considering setting up the program on both a long-term and short-term basis. Specifically, we aim to set up group-based mentoring and topic-based mentoring in order to increase the coverage of the program and provide this much-requested service to as many UM community members as possible.

We also aim to provide funding and support to faculties when organizing 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 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 the future, we aim to maintain the platforms of communication that have been established so far – i.e., our social media platforms. After considering the use of the UM intranet, we have decided to move the content to a more accessible platform for UM staff and students. For this reason, we are currently in the process of updating the FEM section of the UM D&I Office website. There, we will communicate all information about FEM activities, provide resources for further self-education and inspiration, present our policy work, and publish updates on the inner workings of FEM. Additionally, in 2021, FEM worked on a number of information campaigns – e.g. a leaflet for grants targeted to women, a series of flyers with tips on promoting gender equity – which became available to the entire UM community.

What's coming?

Taking in the suggestions of our community, we are currently planning a number of useful resources for the UM community. Specifically, after the publication of our grant leaflet, we are **creating a guide on overcoming biases in citation practices**. This guide will be developed together with Prof. Sally Wyatt, who gave a lunch on this topic in 2021, and a number of volunteers from Maastricht University (more specifically: Sharon Anyango, Hang Nguyen, Lidwien Hollanders, Nicole Basaraba, and Sally Wyatt).

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 organizations, university medical centres and other academic organizations, FEM aims to create a **FEM Monitor** for Maastricht University.

The FEM Monitor will be an annual publication, on 8 March – International Women’s Day, 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.

Networking

What’s already there?

Since its establishment in 2018, FEM has organized multiple events that bring UM community members together and help them build a wider network. For instance, we organize an annual thematic event and bi-monthly 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 organize them on a monthly basis.

What’s coming?

To celebrate International Women’s Day 2021, FEM organized the UM’s first **Women Researchers’ Festival** in collaboration with the Dutch branch of Pint of Science. After the success of the first edition, we aim at creating a yearly festival where researchers at UM – both students and staff – from all levels and faculties can come together to celebrate the intellect and excellence of women at UM. Each year, on International Women’s Day, FEM will organize the Women Researchers’ Festival.

Furthermore, to highlight the research conducted by women at UM, FEM is planning the creation of an online **Twitter database** where women researchers at UM can briefly present themselves and their research in 1 tweet which will be pinned on our Twitter account. The aim of this is to help women researchers to communicate their research in an innovative way, and help them build a basis for interdisciplinary and interinstitutional collaboration and networking.

Lastly, we want to **collaborate with other organizations** that share the same vision as FEM. Specifically, we aim to get in touch with all University organizations whose work is dedicated to promoting gender equality and building healthy and steady communication as Maastricht Young Academy or the Ph.D. Platform. At the national level, this would include organizations such as the LNVH or the Athena’s Angels at the University of Leiden. Also, to include our student community, we want to increase our collaboration with students societies, such as the Feminists of Maastricht, and explore potential points of cooperation.

Policy

What's already there?

In 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, FEM took several steps to make policy changes that would close the gender gap which was widened by the national lockdowns. So far FEM has successfully negotiated with the NWO to introduce changes in the VIDI eligibility criteria so that researchers with caregiving responsibilities – the majority of whom are women – have a fair chance. We have also drafted a white paper on mitigating the negative effects of covid-19 on caregivers at Maastricht University, which gives policy recommendations at the central and faculty levels to deal with the consequences of the pandemic.

Moreover, to highlight our voice on policy matters, FEM published a number of position papers relating to policies at the UM level that have an under-addressed or neglected gender dimension. In line with the University's Recognition and Rewards policy framework, FEM wrote a position paper on education, research, leadership, and impact profiles. Similar to the MYA, we will serve as a sounding board to provide input and feedback on concrete R&R proposals!

In early 2021, FEM decided to introduce a new thematic pillar dedicated to policy work.

What's coming?

Now that the R&R position paper is published, FEM hopes to sit at the table to shape the concrete implementation of the R&R framework.

In the future, we are open to discussing 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 gender equity and equality efforts at the unit level.

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.

