



Annual Report 2014/15

June, 2015

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In this document we report on PsAiKo, the PhD committee. We report on the organization of the committee (1), our activities and finances of the past year (2, 3), and we look forward on what's ahead (4).

1. The committee

The past year we have more formally organized ourselves. We have organized ourselves in a dynamic and egalitarian way: each member of the committee may contribute to any of our duties and activities. However, in order to remain decisive and enable our activities to evolve, four delegates oversee the four areas that coincide with our four central aims (see section 2). A chair heads the committee, as has always been the case, but now shares a joint responsibility with the four delegates to fulfill the central aims of the committee. The finances are now included in the position of the secretary. The committee meets on a monthly basis.

There are two main reasons for the reorganization. First, it turned out to be difficult to find a successor to the former chair. An obscure division of responsibilities meant that the chair had to carry a major load and had the sole responsibility to keep the committee going. Dividing those responsibilities more evenly across the committee members intends to reduce the load on the chair and to enable more active engagement by the other members. Second, an obscure division of responsibilities seemed to prevent the committee to evolve in fulfilling its aims. Dividing the responsibilities for those aims among committed members intends to solve that.

The committee is now organized as follows:

Chair	The chair oversees the process and progress of the PhD committee.
Secretary	The secretary oversees the committee's administration, such as our finances and minutes.
Public relations	One delegate oversees the committee's public communication, such as our newsletter, website, and Facebook community.
Social activities	One delegate oversees all the social activities we organise for PhD students, such as PhDrinks, the end-of-the-year BBQ, and sports events.
Educational activities	One delegate oversees all the academic activities we organise for PhD students, such as the workshops we organize and speakers we invite.
Policies	One delegate oversees the policies that concern PhD students, such as housing, PhD monitoring, and the scientific advisory board (WAR).

2. Our activities

Here we shortly report on what we did with respect to our four central aims.

- Aim to inform
- We updated the **mailing list**.
 - We introduced a **redesigned and enriched newsletter**. We now use MailChimp, which enables us to (1) create professional newsletters, (2) retrieve statistics on newsletter use, and (3) easily manage subscriptions and unsubscriptions. (<http://us8.campaign-archive1.com/home/?u=3be879487ecca5ac99e675d18&id=aba6983ec2>)
 - We introduced a **brand new website** within the UvA domain and added an **A-Z for PhD students**. (<http://psyres.uva.nl/phd-committee>)
 - We reclaimed and reanimated the **Facebook group** for PhD students. (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/130880826988719/>)
 - We **reported on the PhD poll**.
 - We introduced permanent **promotional posters** to alert PhD students of PsAiKo, and a recognizable poster format for our activities.
- Aim to connect
- We organized the yearly **start-of-the-year borrel**. New PhD students received a small present and information on PhD monitoring.
 - We piloted a **friday PhD lunch** with mixed success. We'll yet have to decide whether to formalize it.
 - We organized a **PhDrinks** in June.
 - We organized the popular yearly **end-of-the-year bbq**.
 - We started to send **introductions of new PhD students** in the newsletter.
 - We started monthly **PhDiscussions** on Facebook.
- Aim to educate
- We organized a **workshop on valorization**, recently named the third pillar of scientific practice.
 - We organized a **symposium on the new Data Storage Protocol**.
 - We organized a **concept and data visualization workshop**.
- Aim to advocate
- We attended the meetings of the **WAR** (scientific advisory board).
 - We attended the meetings on the **future accommodation** of UvA Psychology (former building G).
 - We attended the **KNAW roundtable meeting** on the influence of science policies on PhDs.
 - We started a yearly **Periodical PhD Poll** in order to (1) understand which difficulties PhD students encounter and (2) what PhD students desire from the PhD committee.

3. Our finances

Here we justify our finances.

Activity	Date	Costs (€)	Additional costs covered by
Valorisation workshop	October 2014	115,83	Psy. Research Institute & Bureau Kennistransfer
Data Storage Symposium	December 2014	43,11	Psy. Research Institute
Visualization workshop	June 2015	304,50	-
PhDrinks	June 2015	110,00	-
End-of-the-year BBQ	June 2015	<i>est. 200,00</i>	Research Master Psy.
Other		22,50	-
		<i>est. 795,94</i>	

4. Looking forward

The committee

With respect to the committee, we have two main priorities. The first is **maintaining continuity of the committee (i.e., making sure the committee does not disappear)**. By formalizing the organization of the committee and its activities, we have tried to meet this priority. Additionally, in the future we might consider thinking about how PhD students are selected for the committee, or how they can otherwise contribute to its activities. Also, we might consider thinking about how positions within the committee are (re-)assigned, to retain motivation among members. Finally we might consider (half-)yearly evaluations, and importantly, doing a little more team building (that is, having more frequent borrels and dinners with the committee).

The second is **building on the shoulders of previous committees (i.e., making sure our activities evolve)**. Again, by formalizing the organization of the committee and its activities, we have tried to meet this priority. Moreover we have taken effort in documenting our efforts for future committees and decided to make sure to keep our focus on activities that have already proven to be successful (such as the end-of-the-year BBQ and monthly newsletter). Furthermore, we might consider having each delegate write a short plan at the start of the academic year.

Our activities

With respect to our activities we have another two main priorities. The first is **knowing who the PhD students are and making sure we can reach them**. Keeping our mailing list up to date with the latest PhD students remains effortful. We receive few and infrequent updates that are not always complete (some PhD students are not classified as such), and committee members are not always aware of PhD students entering their own programme group. Finding a solution that requires little effort remains a priority in the near future.

The second is **getting to know what those PhD students want from the committee**. We initiated the yearly 'Periodical PhD Poll' to see which other ideas are needed or may become successful. Besides repeating the activities that have already proven to be successful, we might consider some ideas that originate from both the poll and our own wishes, such as: initiating weekly lunch meetings for PhD students, decreasing the uncertainty about for instance organizational aspects of PhD life in both formal (e.g., welcoming information) and informal (e.g., intervision) ways, organizing a workshop on theory building, and introducing a blog for PhD students to read about each other's work.