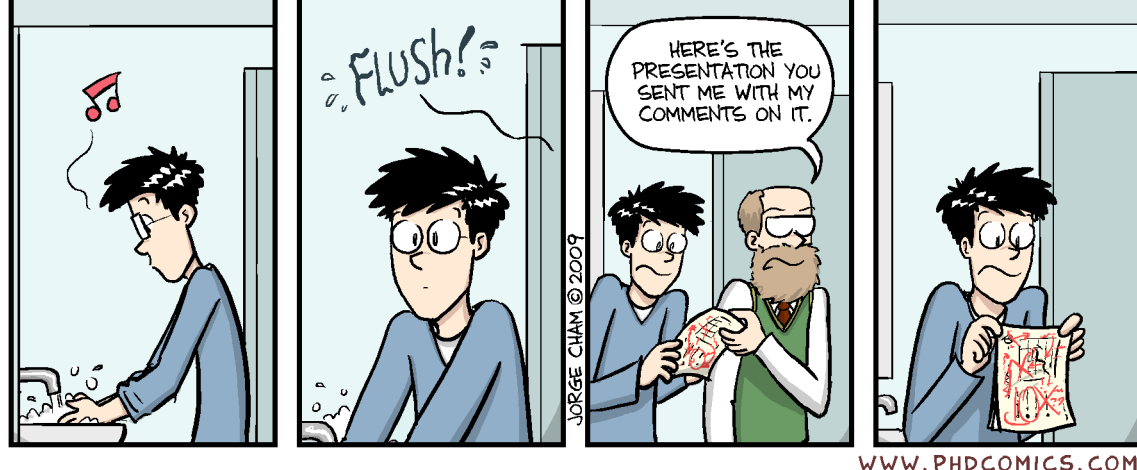


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Dear PhD Candidates,

A new academic year, a new PrOUt board, a new PrOUt newsletter! We've done a lot lately, so we thought it's a good time to get you informed. For this newsletter we made a selection of relevant topics, but check out our website too for more information (www.prout.nl). Enjoy your read. We hope to see you soon at one of our activities!

News

New PrOUt Board

With the start of the new academic year, there are some changes in the board of PrOUt. Rens van de Schoot, chair for the previous academic year, resigned. Lennart de Groot took over this position for the oncoming year. Rens can now once again fully focus on his research in methodology and statistics in social sciences, while Lennart combines the chair of PrOUt with his research on geopotential fields and paleomagnetism, within the faculty of Geosciences. Floor Kroese, our secretary and PhD candidate within the faculty of Social Sciences, has also resigned as PrOUt's secretary. She is succeeded by Hetty Boleij from the faculty of Veterinary Science. Of course, we thank both Rens and Floor for all their time and effort they put into PrOUt over the past academic year!

National Research Schools

As you may know, the Utrecht University board recently decided to stop active participation in National Research Schools and to focus solely on Graduate Schools. In our last newsletter we already informed you about a charter ([read here](#)) on this topic that was written by (now ex-) PrOUt member Martijn Duvoort. In this charter we expressed our worries that specialized theoretical courses for PhD candidates would no longer be offered. Also, we were concerned about (inter-) national networks, seminars or lectures that might cease to exist if no longer organized by National Research Schools.

In order to keep track of ongoing developments, we are very much interested in hearing your experiences (either good or bad!) with the ending of the National Research Schools. So: if you notice that courses or other activities are no longer offered without proper alternatives, or if the transition of PhD courses from National Research Schools to Graduate Schools has gone flawless, we'd like to hear! Please e-mail your experiences to: info@prout.nl

Bursary PhD Students

Another topic we are concerned with is the appointment of PhD-'students' on a scholarship ('bursary students') rather than an employment contract. PrOUt (and PNN as well) is opposed to the bursary system, because, as bursary PhD-students are not seen as employees, they are not eligible for regular terms of employment or pension facilities. The Labor Union, in collaboration with PNN, filed a lawsuit against these practices. The judge has recently decided that PhD candidates are in fact carrying out labor and are not studying. Hence, (Dutch) PhD candidates should be appointed on an employment contract. Whether this will also hold for foreign PhD candidates remains still to be clarified. We'll keep you informed of any new developments!

Events

PrOUt Lecture: a Report

On 20 October 2009, PrOUt organized a lecture by Frits van Oostrom in the University Hall (Academiegebouw), combined with some drinks. Frits van Oostrom is University Professor at Utrecht University, former President of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences and winner of the Spinoza Prize.



[Click for more pictures](#)

During his lecture, he spoke openly about his experiences as a PhD Candidate and as a supervisor, giving tips about how to make a balance between having a private life and your ever present dissertation writing, and also about how to interact best with your supervisor. After the lecture, there was ample room for discussion. The lecture was well attended with some 60 PhDs from various faculties present.

The evening continued in the Faculty Club (also inside the University Hall): a meeting place for the academic community in Utrecht. The chair of the Faculty Club, Hans Bertens, gave us a short introduction to the Club, after which we were offered some free drinks and snacks. Many PhDs signed up for (free) membership of the Club.

Upcoming: Another PrOUt Lecture

After the successful lecture in October, PrOUt will host another lecture on 24 March. This time, University Professor Herman Philipse will talk about what sciences have in common. Titled "Unification in Science: Ontology, Theory, Method" the lecture will address the question whether all sciences are in fact all reducible to one underlying basic science and whether all sciences in essence all use the same method of doing research.

Professor Philipse is a well-known Dutch philosopher. He has also written many commentaries for Dutch newspapers (most frequently as a regular contributor to the NRC Handelsblad) and current events television programs (for example Buitenhof).

Just like last time, the lecture will be held in the University Hall (Academiegebouw). The lecture itself will take place in the Maskeradezaal. After that, we move the Faculty Club (same building) where you can join us for some drinks. The first two drinks are on the house!

We hope to see you there!

Announcements

PNN vacancies

PNN (Promovendi Netwerk Nederland) is looking for new board members! If you are interested in higher education and science policies, and want to be a representative of all Dutch PhD candidates, please take a look at www.hetpnn.nl (under 'Actueel') for a description of the vacancies. Due to the nature of tasks and contacts as a PNN board member, only native Dutch speakers can apply.

Communicating Science to the Public

You're passionate about your work but it's hard for you to explain to your family and friends exactly what you do and why. And when called upon in the lab, when an important visitor arrives unexpectedly, you scramble for words to clearly and briefly explain the relevance and importance of your work.

Well, here's the opportunity to put a stop to that. This academic year two courses (one in English and one in Dutch) will be held about science communication especially for PhD students of the Faculties of Science, Geosciences and Medicine at Utrecht University.

The English language version of the course will be held in January / February 2010; the Dutch version in March / April 2010. For more information please contact Liesbeth de Bakker, science communication lecturer and organizer of the course (e.p.h.m.debakker@uu.nl).

Training and individual coaching for Scientists at the Amstel Academy

The academic World is a fascinating and rewarding environment, but most PhD students also admit that they experience difficulties related to issues like the pressure to publish, troublesome communication with their supervisors, or doubts about what to do after finishing their PhD. How do you cope with these difficulties? The Amstel Academy offers training courses, workshops, and individual coaching that focus on you, 'the person behind the PhD student'. By gaining self-knowledge in combination with helpful practical advice you will find your answers that will improve your personal situation.

More information: the [Amstel Academy](#)

Euraxess: Improving Mobility of PhDs

Euraxess is a European information platform with more than 200 service centres in 33 countries, aimed at improving the mobility of international researchers worldwide. Their website provides international researchers with free information about living and working in the Netherlands. This includes topics such as: rules and regulations, immigration procedures, social security, taxation, health insurance, and more. Moreover, they also offer an extensive jobs database (in cooperation with [Academic Transfer](#)), a helpdesk service (via e-mail or phone) and a two-monthly newsletter. The project was set up by the European Commission, and is currently funded by the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

More information: www.euraxess.nl



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Help us improve!

If you have any remarks, tips or ideas concerning PrOUt, the newsletter, and/or the website, please let us know (e-mail: info@prout.nl)! If you are interested to join PrOUt as a representative of your faculty, please contact our [chair](#).