Nomination
2017 Minerva Informatics Equality Award

Institute of Artificial Intelligence and Cognitive Engineering (ALICE), Universty of Groningen, The Netherlands

Contact information

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Brief summary

At the Institute of Artificial Intelligence and Cognitive Engineering (ALICE), University of Groningen, the current female:male ratio of research staff members is 4:5, which is exceptional in the Netherlands for an informatics oriented research institute. Our efforts for fair hiring procedures and career support consist of three tools. First, the members of our standard search committees are carefully selected, and include at least one female research staff member. Second, we have a mentoring system in place, with specific attention for female staff. Third, our university has a prestigious tenure track fellowship program aimed at high talent female researchers (Rosalind Franklin).

(100 words or less which can be made public)

Description of the initiative

At the Institute of Artificial Intelligence and Cognitive Engineering (ALICE), University of Groningen, the current female:male ratio of research staff members is 4:5, which is exceptional in the Netherlands for an informatics oriented research institute. Currently the institute is in a phase of mild growth, growing from 9 to 12 assistant, associate and full professors. Of our upcoming total of 12 positions, 6 will be women. One of the two new women will be a tenure track assistant professor in the Rosalind Franklin programme; the other one will be the new professor of robotics.

We achieve this by the special care that is given to our human resources policies, aiming for fair hiring procedures and career support.

Specifically, our efforts for fair hiring procedures and career support consist of three tools. First, the members of our standard search committees are carefully selected, and include at least one female research staff member. Second, we have a mentoring system in place, with specific attention for female staff. Third, our university has a prestigious tenure track fellowship programme aimed at high talent female researchers (Rosalind Franklin).

Our fair procedures extend to PhD positions, where in recent years 5 female PhD candidates successfully graduated, one of them *cum laude* (rarely awarded: less than 10%). Recently, a female researcher from a developing country successfully completed a postdoc, after which she attained an assistant professorship in her home country.

We also aim for fair procedures in teaching. Concretely, in some courses, grading is performed anonymously, leading to a significant change in the ranking of female student grades. In one example recently 7 out of 10 of the maximal scores were by female students.

Here is the description of the Rosalind Franklin programme:

> The University of Groningen has initiated the prestigious Rosalind Franklin Fellowship programme to promote the advancement of talented international researchers at the highest levels of the institution. The RFF programme attracts the best researchers from all over the world to perform research in their own field of research. The Rosalind Franklin Fellowship programme aims to attract women, an underrepresented gender in all fields of research. The programme is aimed at women in academia, research institutes or industry who have a PhD and would like a tenure-track position leading to a full professorship in a top European research university.
>
> The Rosalind Franklin programme offers Fellows:
>
> - A tenure-track position leading to a full professorship
> - The opportunity to expand or develop their own research programme
> - A PhD candidate

(max 2 pages)

Evidence of impact of the initiative

Female research staff at the ALICE institute: 4 out of 9 in total
(soon: 6 out of 12) (alphabetical by last name)

1. Dr. Fokie Cnossen
   Assistant professor
   Medical cognition, cognitive engineering
   Winner ALICE teacher of the year award
   Faculty of Science and Engineering best teacher award

2. Dr. Jennifer Spenader
   Assistant professor
   Language and cognition
   Winner ALICE teacher of the year award
   Winner of a prestigious, highly selective NWO VENI research grant

3. Dr. Marieke van Vugt
   Assistant professor
   Neuroscience, computational modelling, behavioural testing
   Member of 'De Jonge Akademie'

4. Prof. dr. Rineke Verbrugge
   Full professor
   Logic and cognition, social cognition
   Winner of a prestigious, highly selective NWO VICI grant
   Winner ALICE teacher of the year award
   Faculty of Science and Engineering best teacher award

One female winner of a Rosalind Franklin fellowship (Prof. dr. Sonja Smets) who was a member of the ALICE institute is now the director of the prestigious research center ILLC (Amsterdam). She also won prestigious, highly selective NWO Vidi and ERC Starting grants.

(max 2 pages)

Reference list

Institute of Artificial Intelligence and Cognitive Engineering (ALICE)
`http://www.rug.nl/research/alice/`

Faculty of Science and Engineering
`http://www.rug.nl/fse/`

University of Groningen
`http://www.rug.nl/`

Rosalind Franklin fellowship program
`http://www.rug.nl/about-us/work-with-us/rff/`