

Response to the Evaluation Report for the Research Review of Amsterdam Neuroscience

With the greatest pleasure the board took note of the recommendations made in the *Strategy Evaluation Report for the institutional review of Amsterdam Neuroscience*.

The board would like to thank all members of the expert committee sincerely for their contribution to this assessment. The committee consisted of Prof. dr. Gitte Moos Knudsen (chair, University of Copenhagen, Denmark), Prof. dr. Elisabeth Binder (Max Planck Institute of Psychiatry, Germany), Prof. dr. Berry Kremer (University Medical Center Groningen, the Netherlands), Prof. dr. Patrik Verstreken (VIB-KU Leuven, Belgium), dr. Aldo Jongejan (Amsterdam University Medical Center, the Netherlands), drs. Merel Heimens Visser, MBA (Director Brain Foundation, the Netherlands) and Lianne Hulshof, MSc (University Medical Center Utrecht, the Netherlands). Dr. Meg van Bogaert was independent secretary to the committee. Of special importance was the committee's open-mindedness and curiosity, leading to open conversation and constructive dialogue during the visitation process.

As board of the research institute, we would like to inform you about our position regarding the recommendations made by the expert committee. We are honored with the many compliments and positive notes on the developments and improvements made over the last years and the strength and face value of the Institute. In particular, the board concludes that the wide range of activities in Amsterdam Neuroscience (ANS) was fully acknowledged and that the committee recognized ANS as a top-tier role-model institute with a prestigious fundamental science and clinical research agenda.

For the upcoming 6 years and further, the board looks forward to consolidate and expand the success of Amsterdam Neuroscience and facilitate the research programs and its highly talented neuroscience researchers wherever possible. In doing so, we are delighted with the recommendations made and will use this highly constructive guidance when defining the (near-)future Amsterdam Neuroscience strategy aiming to spearhead the Amsterdam Neuroscience community in the best possible way.

In short, we would like to highlight some specific recommendations made:

Both the practice of seed funding and the strategy of installing an Industry Alliance Office were acknowledged as our strengths and recommended to move forward.

Business development office (IAO)

Being fully aware of the success of our Industry Alliance Office, the board aims to stimulate interaction between business developers and Amsterdam Neuroscience researchers wherever possible/desired, and internally showcase the benefits of IAO more clearly, e.g. by sharing best practices. This should benefit those that have not yet been supported fully in developing an industry project portfolio.

Funding

With great pleasure we saw the fruitfulness of institutional funding and the internal round of Seed Funding confirmed by the committee. The board looks forward to consolidate this practice and issue another round of Seed Funding, thereby facilitating both the direct and indirect successes of research projects and the researchers involved. The board will engage with the Deans to secure this funding in 2023.

Governance

With regard to the lack of transparency in our overhead structure, we recognize the problems mentioned by the program leaders to the committee. New models on overhead costs at the side of the universities are currently limiting our potential to secure international research funding, to execute projects at fair competitive pricing and be at least cost neutral. It is our aim to come to a constructive solution with the deans. Moreover, leveling the overhead policy in Amsterdam UMC with other University Medical Centers is important to create a balance in NWO/ZonMW provided grants for national consortia. Besides the importance of leveling overhead policy, the board will endeavor to reinforce interactions between the various institutes harboring Amsterdam Neuroscience researchers.

Facilities

Regarding the importance and availability of joint facilities for all scientists, and the issues related to sustainability of animal research, the board intends to incorporate these in a concise strategic plan covering our actions on these topics and to improve and secure them in the long run.

Legal issues

The board is aware of these issues and the consequences to researchers. This requires our attention and where possible, tailor-made solutions.

Strategy

The board will develop an infographic to visualize the contributions of all research programs to the bench-to-bed strategy of Amsterdam Neuroscience.

Communication

In our quest to optimally represent all researchers within our network, we acknowledge the need to improve and neutralize our means of communication. Given the importance of accessible information for all researchers within our network organization, and the desire to exchange information more easily, improvement of the functionalities embedded in a website is of special importance and will deserve our and professional attention.

Young Amsterdam Neuroscience

Underscoring the importance and potential of the Young Amsterdam Neuroscience network, the board aims to develop a plan in consultation with its members to optimise the function of this network, to maximally enable exchange and mutual benefit within this group of researchers.

Diversity

As per direct, all meetings will be held in English. In the near future, the board will publish its view on diversity and raise awareness of the importance of diversity.

Societal relevance

The board will work on formulating a definition of societal relevance for the institute to which the programs can relate.

In summary, the board is delighted with the recommendations made and think they will be highly instrumental in further developing the (near-)future Amsterdam Neuroscience strategy. The board intends to incorporate the recommendations in formulating a concise strategic plan covering our mission, vision and strategic aims for the upcoming 6 years. Depending on the nature of the recommendations, some will require further consultation internally, while others might need fine tuning on a higher level with the deans of all institutes involved.

On behalf of the board of Amsterdam Neuroscience,



Prof. dr. A.B. Smit