

DESCRIPTION

The AESOP Young Academics Network is a grouping for younger researchers who see value in coming together to develop their research and disseminate it within the field of academic planning. We define Young Academics with an interest in planning who believe that they can and are willing to both benefit from and contribute to active participation in the Network. Members are typically junior researchers, Ph.D. students and academic staff at the early stage of their career, who can face pressures which undermine their efforts to actively participate in the discipline of planning. The Network aims to provide activities which directly train and indirectly support Members in active participation in mainstream AESOP activities such as the annual conference and publication in scientific journals and association book series. YA Network is also dependent on a wider Network of "friends", more established individuals within the field, who are able and willing to mentor and support YA Members as they move into the discipline; we aim over time that more of these friends will be alumni of our Network.

OBJECTIVES

The AESOP YA Network has two core aims; Firstly, to make AESOP a productive environment for Young Academics; Secondly, to create a point of access to AESOP structures to facilitate the participation of Young Academics. Each of these two core aims are delivered through three main goals for the Network, which form the basis of the YA Co-ordination Team (CT) activities and the YA Action Plan.

Creating a more productive environment

- Form a Network of Young Academics within AESOP;
- Initiate activities for Young Academics;
- Make the AESOP activities more attractive for Young Academics;

Facilitating access to AESOP structures

- Ensure that attention is paid to the particular wishes and needs of Young Academics in the activities of AESOP;
- Stimulate and facilitate Young Academic progression into (more senior) academic positions;
- Use modern web technologies to make the organisation more accessible and interactive;

Within the Network smaller groupings, such as Thematic Groups, may be established temporarily to deal with particular topics and activities.

RELATIONSHIP TO AESOP

The AESOP YA Network is formally constituted as a Working Group within AESOP. It is linked to the structure of AESOP in two ways.

First, the YA send a Representative to the AESOP Executive Committee (ExCo).

Second, The YA Co-ordination Team has a direct line of communications with the AESOP Secretary General.

The AESOP Executive Committee meets three times per annum, whereto the Representative of the YA Network is invited to participate, to ensure that the activities of the AESOP YA Network align effectively with the activities and strategy of AESOP as a whole. These meetings also provide an opportunity for ExCo to communicate specific wishes and concerns which are relevant to the AESOP YA Network.

CO-ORDINATION OF ACTIVITIES

The Young Academics Network is overseen by the YA Co-ordination Team who are elected by the membership and have the responsibility for setting the strategy and delivering the activities of the Network. The CT consists of five Officers, each Officer is elected to a two year term and one Senior Advisor, who covers the role of an Advisor for every YA CT Member, based on his two year experience within the network.

The CT operates through allocating portfolios of responsibilities to its Members. The CT will usually negotiate this process annually, when a meeting is held to introduce newly elected Members to the team. At this meeting, the precise allocation of portfolios will be determined, and subject to the skills and wishes of team Members, responsibilities will be moved around each year.

In deciding the precise allocation of portfolios, the CT will have particular regard to ensure that there is a named individual responsible for each of the following key YA activities:

- a Representative in the AESOP Executive Committee;
- a person responsible for the YA Website;
- a person responsible for the Local Congress;
- a person responsible for the Ph.D. Workshop Organisers;
- a person responsible for Communication (newsletter) and Member Registration.

Decision making principles of the YA Network Coordination Team

The CT is a team based on the principles of democratic participation and decision making. All issues are openly discussed and if necessary voted upon by all CT Members. The Chair is held where necessary by the ExCo representative.

In case of equally split votes or where no decision can be taken then issues can be referred to the Secretary General of AESOP via the ExCo Representative for mediation. The request, as all of the CT communications should be open and accessible to all CT Members.

All changes to the Statutes are discussed and agreed between the CT Members in communication with the Secretary General and the ExCo who are informed of the process and the outcome.

Renewal of Members of the AESOP YA Co-ordination Team

CT Members are elected by the Network Members and are elected to the 'team' rather than to a particular portfolio. Elections take place between the annual AESOP congress and before the first AESOP ExCo meeting in the following year.

Anyone may nominate themselves for election and the CT reserve the right to approach particularly qualified candidates to participate in the election. All candidates will be given equal opportunity to set out their candidature to the membership.

If nominations exceed positions falling vacant, all Network Members including CT Members vote to decide positions.

The current rules for voting are outlined in an Appendix to these statutes.

The rules for voting are designed and adopted by the CT to reflect the following principles:

- All Members are notified of their opportunity to vote.
- Each registered Member has one (equal) vote.
- There is a two week window in which votes can be cast.
- No new Members may register during the election period.
- CT Members must not unduly influence the election process.
- The AESOP Secretary General acts as the returning Officer for the election.
- The successful candidates are those with the most votes in rank order, down to the number of CT places falling vacant.
- If places fall vacant mid-term, then candidates are approached in vote rank order to solicit their willingness to join the team for the remainder of the term.

Where there is conflict between the principles and the rules, the rules will be held to have precedence for the purpose of determination of that election. In such circumstances it would be prudent for the CT to amend the rules in the light of the principles at the earliest subsequent opportunity to prevent a recurrence of such a problem.

Appointments to the CT are the responsibility of AESOP, managed through ExCo. The Secretary General makes the appointments to the committee on the basis of the election results. Resignations are likewise communicated to the Secretary General (via the ExCo Representative) who seeks to make appointments from existing candidates or begins a new nomination round.

If no nominations can be found, the Secretary General may appoint a Member pro tem. Members appointed by the Secretary General act in all other ways (in terms of holding portfolios, having a term and voting rights at meetings) as Full CT members.

Co-option of CT members

The Co-ordinating Team may also choose to co-opt individuals with particular expertises to assist with them in the pursuit of particular activities. .

The term of a co-opted member is from the period of co-option until the latest of the following CT election or the activity for which the member has been co-ordinated.

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- Members can be co-opted by
- (i) a unanimous decision of the CT taken electronically (by email consensus)
 - (ii) a simple vote at one of the two annual CT meetings. In the event of a tied vote, the CT ExCo member holds the casting vote.

A co-opted member is invited to be present at all full meetings of the CT and can undertake such activities of the CT as personally delegated by the responsible CT officer, or through agreement at a CT meeting. Co-opted members do not hold voting rights, and the conditions of their attendance at meetings is subject to negotiation with the CT full members.

The kinds of activities for which additional members might be co-opted include, but is not limited to:-

- (i) Local member for a YAN conference
- (ii) Local assistance for the AESOP Ph.D. workshop
- (iii) Supporting YAN CT at the AESOP Congress for YA Drinks and YA Roundtable
- (iv) Providing local YAN representation at an event in which the YAN is a partner.

There is a presumption against co-opted members holding the responsibilities which largely correspond to a single portfolio, Members appointed by the Secretary General are exempt from this requirement.

ROLES OF CT MEMBERS

CT Members have a number of obligations conferred on them by the Statutes. These are detailed below, and each task must have at least one named CT Member appointed to this role. However, each CT is likely to bundle responsibilities together into 'posts' on a yearly basis (at the first CT meeting following the elections) reflecting the skills and experiences of the current CT membership.

The Executive Committee (ExCo) Officer

Represents YA in the AESOP Executive Committee and Council (the YA ExCo Representative), to stimulate the debate in the AESOP Executive Committee and Council around ideas to improve involvement of Young Academics in AESOP and to exchange all relevant information between Executive Committee and Young Academics Network. This includes the following tasks:

- This Officer is the formal link between CT and ExCo and receives all CT reports;
- Preparing the YA contribution to the AESOP yearbook;
- Managing the YA budget including preparing business cases for additional resources; and
- Ensuring the delivery of AESOP-financed activities to the satisfaction of ExCo.

The demanding and political nature of this post means that only CT Members with 1 year experience in CT may take this post unless this would prevent the CT making an appointment. In this situation, the Secretary General must approve the appointment of the individual to the post.

YA Special Session Officer

This person is responsible for the YA Special Session at the annual AESOP Congress.

Ph.D. Workshop/YA Events Officers

The successful planning of both of these events require that the Officer(s) maintain close relations with the coordinator of the congress venue's host university. The planning of these events also requires that the Officer(s) provide oversight of the Ph.D. Workshop webpage on the YA website. Depending on the events calendar, this may be split into two posts.

Outreach/Website Officer

This Officer is responsible for the management and development of the YA website and liaising with AESOP to ensure compatibility of the website with AESOP's own communications and information policies. The Officer should have some technical knowledge to successfully deliver this post.