

Short notes from the Annual Board Meeting of the Nutricia Research Foundation

Held at Hotel Karel V, Utrecht, 28 November 2018, 14:00 hrs

Board of Trustees

Prof. J. Ruitenbergh (chairman)
Prof. J. Hautvast (secretary /vice chairman)
Mr. W. Tijnhaar (treasurer)
Prof. P. Soeters
Prof. P. Sauer

Scientific Advisory Committee

Prof F. Kuipers (chairman /apologised)

Project Secretariat

Dr. F Pepping

Scientific Secretariat

Dr. J. Bindels (minutes)

1. Opening & Welcome

The Chairman welcomed the participants. Unfortunately, Prof Kuipers could not attend. The draft agenda was accepted.

2. Minutes Spring Meeting June 19, 2018

The minutes from the spring meeting (19 June 2018) were accepted.

3. Financial Aspects

The treasurer informed the Board that recently all securities have been sold. Current bank accounts add up to approx. 1.8 million euro.

The treasurer proposed several "rules" to prevent the NRF from indefinitely keeping unclaimed budget in reserve. His suggestion that commitments can be reverted after a period of 24 months from the starting date the commitment would be due for claiming was accepted. For new commitments, the Board agreed that maximally 20% of the requested grant also for the first year's budget will held back until a satisfactory progress report is received. For next year's round we should make a template available on our website for the progress report.

4. NRF chairs

Amsterdam (Prof. Ruurd van Elburg): The progress report prepared by Prof van Elburg was well detailed and the progress was highly appreciated. However, the Board was missing in the document the overarching objective and research line of the chair. For this reason, it was decided to invite Prof. van Elburg for one of the 2 board meetings next year to elucidate about this in a short presentation. The Chairman indicated to contact Prof van Elburg on this request.

5. Progress Africa Project Phase 2

Overall, the progress is good although contents of the 2nd progress report was fairly brief. The Board took notice of the Malawi visit by our South African partners and was very happy with the information provided by Dr. Pepping about the preparations of the PhD support program. Participant selection will be done by our SA partners and Dr. Pepping will support them with advice to make sure the intentions of the Board will be taken into consideration as much as possible.

Dr. Pepping informed the Board on its upcoming trip to Ghana and Sierra Leone. Prof. Soeters asked on whether there is already a final report by Prof Renee Blaauw on her Chair in Clinical Nutrition. Prof Hautvast responded that he will make a formal request. He also proposed to write on behalf of the Board to Prof Marius Smuts that we are all very happy with the great work Dr. Robin Dolman has done for the Project. The next update/reporting meeting with Danone Senior Management (Ms. Florence Jeantet) is planned for February 2019.

6. Report from the Sci Adv Committee meeting 7 Nov 2018

This year the Sci Adv Comm meeting was scheduled separate from the annual Board meeting to allow for a better focus during both meetings. Prof. Ruitenber joined the meeting at the end and obtained a summary of the accepted applications from Prof Kuipers. The recommendations on new applications and extension given by the Sci Adv Committee were accepted by the Chairman of the Board. Moreover, an interesting discussion took place within the Sci Adv Comm on the future of the NRF and its Research grants and ITF activities. All members felt that the NRF is doing important work for which they felt honored to act as members of the Sci Adv Comm. It would be a pity if this good work were to terminate by 2020-2021 when finances will become deprived. As a practical action, the Sci Adv Comm proposed to make an evaluation on the performance of the NRF and suggested to focus both on nutrition and economic aspects. For this, 2 student projects could be proposed: Nutrition by a Wageningen student (to be initiated via Dr. Inge Brouwers) and Economics by a Groningen student (to be initiated via Prof. Folkert Kuipers).

The Board was happy with this proposal, but we should manage our expectations as it may be difficult to do a complete survey on the outcomes of all projects. If possible, the Board would like to have an update of both student projects at next year's spring meeting.

7. Future of the NRF

As the future of the NRF after 2020/2021 is highly dependent on whether new finances can be obtained, the Board agreed that for now this would be the first objective.

Prof Sauer suggested to offer Danone one Board membership for a Senior Management officer. However, after a thorough discussion the Board concluded that this would not be a preferred development because of the need to be fully independent. The activities to evaluate the performance of the NRF-grants initiated by the Sci Adv Committee are highly appreciated and their output will surely be useful for a discussion with Danone Senior Management by end 2019 / early 2020.

8. Any other business

Dr. Pepping informed the Board on the Nutrition Capacity building activities he was aware of/involved with for French-speaking Africa. Danone is well represented there by Dr. N. Gausseres and working together with Unilever (Dr. G. Meyer) and recently also Nestle has joined the group.

Prof. Carla Bruynzeel resigned from the Board and therefore we might explore to do something for showing our appreciation like organizing a dinner ? Prof Ruitenbergh will contact her and check possibilities and options.

At this place, the Board congratulated Dr. Fre Pepping with his Royal distinction obtained upon his formal retirement event and was pleased that Dr Pepping decided to continue his activities for the NRF.

9. Closure

The meeting was closed at 16:00 hrs.