

A New Year, A New Start



Dear PhD Candidates,

After a rather turbulent 2005 in the board of Promood: changing presidents twice, people leaving, last autumn I found myself together with Loesje (secretary) and Rudy (treasurer) in a bar in downtown Delft. There and then we decided to form the core of the board of Promood for the next year, not knowing who would join us. We didn't expect that after few months, we would have a full-blown board again. From all over the globe came Ann-Charlotte (Netherlands), Anand (India), Tom (Belgium) and Esteban (Colombia) to join us. Rumor has it that another lady will be joining our board soon.

Besides our monthly agenda-driven meetings, every two weeks we have an informal board meeting, which we conveniently combine with the PhD Café's in De Klomp. This is the place to relax, gossip, have the occasional discussion and of late, invite guests from other organizations.

Talking about other organizations, we increased or intensified our collaboration with the following groups over the last 9 months: other PhD candidates' representing bodies in the Netherlands, especially EPAR (Rotterdam) and LEO (Leiden), DEWIS (Delft Women in Science) and YES!Delft (entrepreneurship).

We had a volleyball tournament and a picnic with EPAR, we will cooperate with DEWIS in supporting female PhD candidates (30% of the total!) and with YES! Delft we plan to organize a symposium on how to start your own company after or during your PhD. Next to this we already had our yearly events successfully like a printers' market and BBQ, of which you can read impressions later in Het Proefschrift.

So as the year progresses, we are gaining momentum in representing the PhD candidates of TU Delft and with this winner team we have some tricks up our sleeve for the coming year!

Frederik de Wit, President of Promood

Change is good for betterment

Dear readers,

Here comes the autumn again, though late. When leaves are falling from trees, I was collecting "leaves" for our autumn issue of Het Proefschrift. It began with soliciting for articles by giving an advert in Delta, sending e-zines and changing the deadline for submission. This issue is all about changes. Changes are everywhere and it is common saying that only "change" is constant. Our president in his address stressed the changes brought into the Promood like collaboration with other organizations. In this issue, an effort is made for changes by adding some extra features in the content to make it more interesting and informative.

This issue comes with regular feature of Promood's activities round the year like Printer's market, PhD cafe, BBQ with some newly added features, which we plan to make regular feature of the magazine. For instance, we are planning to introduce an interview with a professor regarding his/her PhD as a regular feature of this magazine and it started with the person who is most closely associated with PhD candidates: Prof. Olsder, the conector of TU Delft. He talked at great length and with great enthusiasm about his PhD life and career path. Another regular feature would be a guest column by a professor; sharing his/her personal views about the PhD related topics. In this issue, Prof. Pieter Kruit writes about his expectations from his PhD researchers. I would like to thank Prof. Olsder and Prof. Kruit for their time and contributions.

In our regular feature, we have articles by our colleagues about how a PhD lunch seminar is organized for better interaction in the department and a follow up of the trilogy about buying a house in Holland. There is again a follow-up of PhD questionnaire results with possible recommendation for changes. We also changed the PhD Café location for better ambience and timing.

Without sounding cliché by talking about change, we welcome suggestions for "changes" to make this magazine better. Please write us and join us because with your help, even change would not be constant; it would accelerate!!!

Anand Kumar Dokania, Editor-in-Chief

What motivates Promood board members?



My name is Loesje Bevers and I have been the secretary of Promood for two years. I am in the final year of my PhD in the Enzymology Department at TNW. I am studying the tungsten metabolism in the hyperthermophilic archaeon *Pyrococcus furiosus*. I joined Promood because I wanted to be involved in PhD related events not only within my own group or faculty but also in the university. Joining Promood gave me the opportunity to learn more about our university and the processes of making various decisions in these kinds of organizations. It gave me the opportunity to meet many new interesting people, which in particular has influenced my life in Delft in a very positive way.



Hi there, my name is Esteban and I am doing my PhD in the area of Biotechnology, within the section of Purification Technology. I have been working on my research entitled “Protein refolding” for 2 years. I joined Promood one year ago. My purpose was to get to know people. The result was what I expected; I encountered lots of support and a group of good friends. I encourage you all to join, get to know other PhD candidates, sometimes even from your own country.



I am Anand, doing my PhD with Charged Particle Optics group of TNW. My project involves the fabrication of array of Schottky electron sources for electron lithography. I am part of the board for almost a year and to be part of decision making body of Promood is really a thrilling experience. I hope to make some positive contribution towards the PhD community of TU Delft. Moreover, Promood offers so many avenues to meet new PhDs in various platforms.



Hi, I am Tom Van Helleputte, a PhD candidate at the Faculty of Aerospace Engineering, section Astrodynamics and Satellite Systems. My research subject involves the orbit determination of GOCE, an explorer dedicated to measure earth's gravity field with high accuracy. Last year, I joined the board of Promood. Currently, I am the webmaster of Promood and representative of Promood at the PNN member meetings. I joined the board because I like organizing events for fellow PhD candidates, which enables me to meet young dynamic people involved in different types of research.



I am Rudy Negenborn, a 3rd year PhD candidate at the Delft Center for Systems and Control, 3mE. My research involves control of transportation networks, like electricity, road traffic and water networks. Since 2004, I have been a member of the Promood board, because I think it is important to have a body that stands up for the rights of the PhD candidates within TU Delft. As a treasurer, I manage the member administration and financial aspects of the Promood activities.



My name is Ann-Charlotte Toes and I am in the fourth year of my PhD at the department of Environmental Biotechnology. As a microbiologist, I analyse bacterial diversity in sediments differentially impacted with heavy metals. I joined Promood in this year because I enjoy doing something else besides science and research. Additionally, I wanted to improve my social network among PhD candidates by organizing specific events, such as the excursion to the Biesbos and the annual BBQ.



I am Frederik de Wit, a 2nd year PhD candidate, working on the understanding of the adhesion of polymer coatings on Al-Mg alloys in the Surfaces and Interfaces group of the faculty of 3mE. After having studied at TU Delft, I found out a lot of PhD candidates have the common problems like housing, salaries, supervision that require attention by the board of the university. Since I have experience with some of these issues personally or by proxy, I thought I could help. So one day I applied for a vacancy in the board with Tuba Kocatürk, the president at the time, who invited me for a formal board meeting and the rest is history!

Answers to the questions: The results of PhD Questionnaire

Are you expecting any delays in your research? What are your main concerns? How many hours of supervision do you get? Are you satisfied with your supervision? What are you planning to do after your PhD project?

These are just some of the questions that we, as board of Promood, asked to over 800 PhD candidates of TU Delft, in the Promood PhD Questionnaire 2005. We distributed this questionnaire in the summer of 2005 to get to know your opinion on PhD related affairs. In total 422 PhD candidates completed the questionnaire, which comes down to a response of over 50%. The analysis of the questionnaire's data allowed us to paint a quite detailed picture of the opinions, visions, hopes, wishes, and feelings of the TU Delft PhD community.

In general, the PhD experience is positive: doing a PhD project in Delft is considered to be challenging and exciting to most of us. However there are issues that require our attention. It is our goal to make sure that the results of this questionnaire will not remain only a collection of interesting data, but also a knowledge instrument useful at improving the condition of TU Delft PhD candidates as workers and scientists in the future.

In following, we summarize the some of the findings regarding research, supervision, general issues, and future Promood directions.

Research

When asked about the amount of initiative PhD candidates have in their own research, the majority responds to have equal or more control than the main

supervisor (Fig. 1). Candidates in their first year indicate to have equal control, while candidates at a later stage indicate to gain more control, as can be expected.

The results of the questionnaire confirm that it is a general problem for PhD candidates to finish their thesis within the agreed period of four years. Almost 40% of all PhD candidates indicate that they expect a delay. Inadequate supervision and an unclear project description are mentioned as the two major reasons for the delay.

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Most PhD candidates consider their background knowledge to be sufficient when they start their PhD project and working facilities offered by the TU Delft are judged mostly good to excellent and therefore generally form no cause for problems. Besides this, teaching

activities are generally considered to be relevant or moderately relevant for the project and therefore are also not indicated as a reason for delays. Finishing a thesis in time is already known to be a major issue for PhD candidates in Delft as well as at the other universities in The Netherlands.

It is generally recognized as one of the major problems related to doing a PhD project. The results of this questionnaire confirm that we require more effort and new policies to try to decrease the total amount of delay.

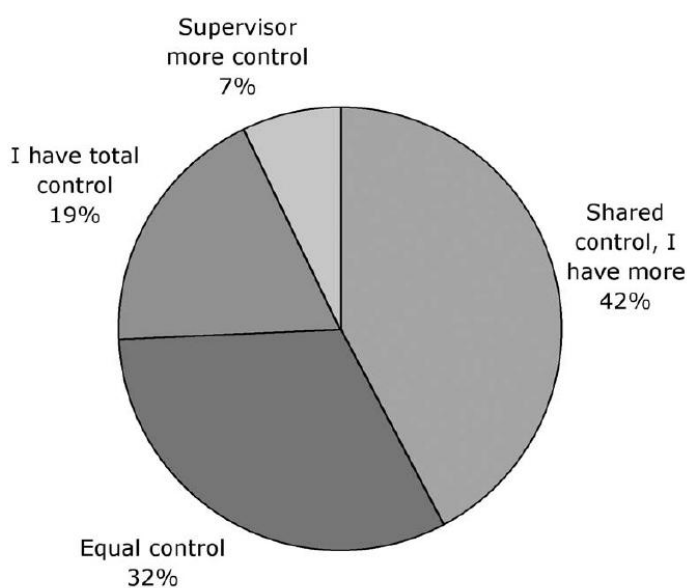


Fig 1. How much control do I have in my project?

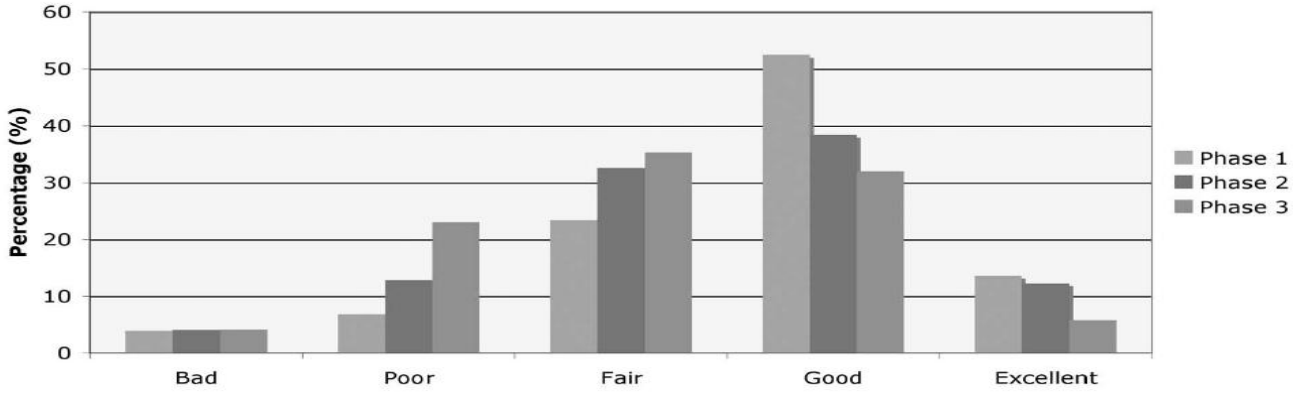


Fig 2. How much supervision do I get?

Supervision

The majority of the PhD candidates receives zero to five hours supervision per month. In general, the quality of the supervision (Fig. 2, phase 1 is PhD candidates in 1st year, phase 2 is 2nd and 3rd year, and phase 3 is more years), the literature provided by supervisors and the personal interaction with the supervisor are rated fair to good and therefore appear not to cause problems.

However, for individual cases, lack of good supervision is the main cause for delay in finishing the thesis in time. The mentioned reasons for this lack of good supervision are indicated to be insufficient contact and insufficient expertise of the supervisor. It seems that these problems occur more

towards the end phase of projects and in the case of non-EU candidates

Therefore, especially these groups might need additional supervision hours. As recommendation, the contact with the supervisors should increase for PhD candidates in the end-phase of their project. For non-EU PhD candidates there should be more contact, it is however both parties' responsibility to attain this.

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General

Results of the questionnaire show that at least 70% of all candidates expect to write one to three publications in a journal. However, publishing appears also to be one of the major concerns (Fig. 3) that PhD candidates are dealing with (36%).

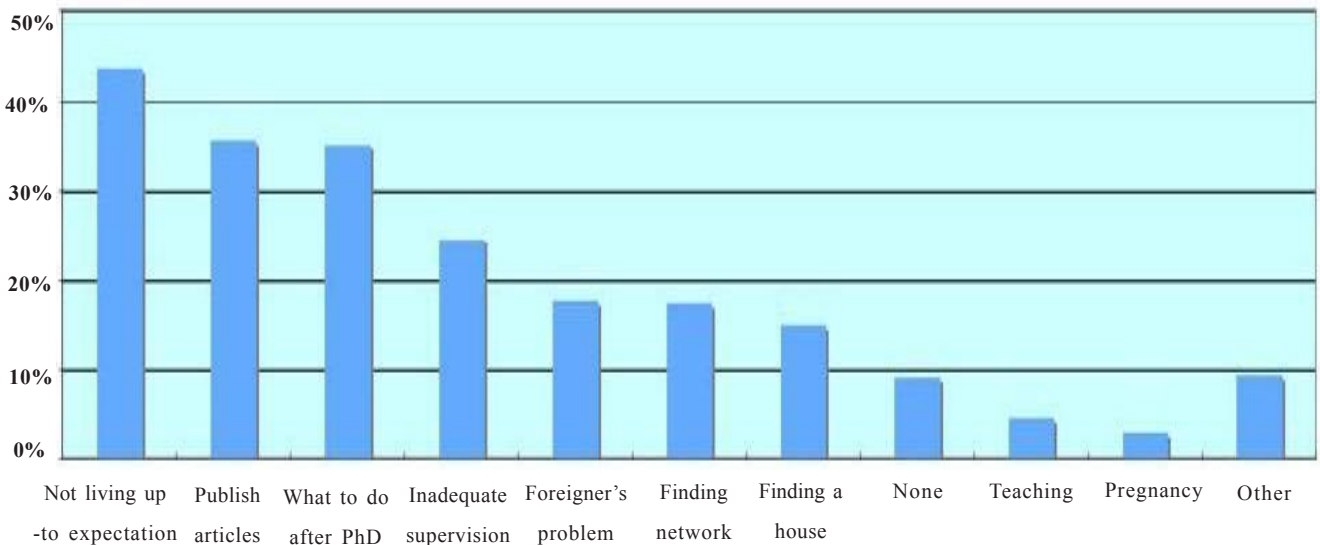


Fig 3. What are my main concerns?

This worry is mentioned equally much as the concern about what to do after a PhD (36%). Most respondents want to start a career in academia or industry, although they do not in particular know where they would like to start this career. A significant part wants to stay in Delft, although many respondents have no preference and reply with “anywhere”. Besides the concerns dealing with publications and the future plans, the main worry is not being able to live up to the expectations in the PhD work.

Future directions

The things that Promood does are appreciated, as is shown by quotes of respondents like: “Keep up the good job!..You are doing fine!...You are doing quite a lot!...It seems you are doing a good job lately!”. However, there are always points that require improvement. Based on the results of this questionnaire and further remarks given by PhD candidates, future points of attention lie in the following:

- Organize introductory meetings for all new PhD candidates.
- Inform more on how to solve bureaucratic problems.
- Help reduce bureaucracy around P&O affairs, IND, visa, housing, etc.
- Organize events to inform about job opportunities after finishing the PhD project.
- Arrange courses for supervisors to improve supervision.
- Improve information being given at the beginning of the PhD project.
- Clarify the costs of the printing of the dissertation.
- Improve the website further to improve communication.

It should be noted that these are just some of the directions for future activities. Based on future discussions about the current questionnaire results additional activities may be formulated. It is our aim to use the results of the questionnaire to its best to improve the future situation of PhD candidates at TU Delft.

The full results of the questionnaire are available in hardcopy (e-mail: r.negenborn@tudelft.nl) or softcopy (visit the Promood website at <http://www.promood.tudelft.nl/questionnaire/>).

Rudy Negenborn

PhD Cafe

One of the concerns in the Promood board meetings used to be the dropping number of PhD candidates attending the PhD cafe. Then the board tried a new innovative idea of shifting the venue from the 3mE building to a more cozy location in the center of Delft: Bierhuis De Klomp, which claims to be the oldest cafe of the Delft. Along with the venue, there was one more major change: the timing. Instead of every last Friday of the month when people used to be in a hurry to go home or busy in planning their weekend, we rescheduled it to Tuesday. After seeing the success of it, we do it twice a month. From January-2007, we will have the PhD Cafe every second Tuesday and last Friday of the month. Promood had its first new style PhD Cafe combined with the informal meeting, on March 2006. Since then, it has become a nice place to relax after work, meet new PhD candidates and enhance the social network of PhD researchers. We hope to see you there!!!

Time: 18:00-21:00

Date: Please check the Promood website

**Location: Bierhuis De Klomp, Binnenwatersloot 5
(Next to Delfia Theater)**



Promood Events



Oops!! we did it again- the BBQ

We had a lot of expectations about the people that would attend. It was surprising because one and half week before the event, there were only 10 people registered. We got going in any case, someone said – “they will all register”. So they did. Two days before the event, 87 people registered; pretty impressive.

During the event the people were impressed by the quality of the meat and the service provided. They did not expect a barbeque conducted by a Venezuelan guy with soul. We had the girls behind the bar, making sure that nobody remains thirsty. And you know how important it is to have a nice meal with a nice beer, or wine served by cool people. We also got people of all ages. This is the new generation of PhDs from spectrum of faculties gathering in a big celebration. And yes sure, what about the food, the menu, how was it?

Dear readers, for the record, we are still receiving emails and even phone calls asking about the catering service. We got all the BBQ items: from chicken to steaks, accompanied by Greek salads and some other delicious dishes. Overall the barbeque was a success, we got as many people as we expected and even more. We got to see a very integrating environment, people from different faculties and different ages sharing their experiences as PhD researcher in their own country and in a foreign country.

So, for the next year we hope to see you back, we will have Jose and his team to join us, bringing you a good time. Remember good times always come handy when you are far from home.

Esteban Freydell



Mission Possible: EPAR Volleyball Match

On a sunny day in spring, three Promood board members gathered at Delft train station to depart to Rotterdam on a mission: Win the volleyball tournament organized by EPAR, the representative body of PhD candidates at the Erasmus University of Rotterdam. The mission was challenging from the start, as we had some difficulties in finding the Erasmus sport facilities, and equally important, the other members of our volleyball team, who were already in the big city of Rotterdam. Luckily, we live in a mobile communication era and both problems were swiftly solved by a few calls. Nevertheless, we arrived a bit late and the organizers had already postponed our first match.



So without warming up, we entered one of the volleyball fields of the sports complex. So without having played together earlier, we started our mission. And we started magnificently. Well placed services dropped like precision bombs behind enemy lines, hard smashes made our opponents run for shelter, perfectly timed receptions turned our defense into attacking opportunities ... and above all that the communication in our team was as if playing volleyball is all we do.

We also had some difficult matches, but were able to stand to the pressure and take it to the next round, the semifinals. There, we started nervously, balls

hitting the net, the wrong side of the lines and occasionally the ceiling....but thanks to our great team-spirit we could turn the tide and started playing better than we had ever done. And then, after tons of sweat, shouts and cheers we had a first match point. We didn't need one more and with a razing smash we finished the game and had our ticket to the final. Here we didn't have time to start nervously, as the balls were flying around our ears, striking the corners of our field and looping over our blocks. The mission we had taken upon us proved to be impossible; we were up against a far better team. With this knowledge we tried to find our best level again and kept

enjoying the game. After a while we were defeated, but we could keep our heads up.

Then we departed on a new mission: finding the place where the beers were served in the big campus of the Erasmus University. Luckily the mobile helped again and the beers were still cold. After the prize-ceremony and a group photo we left for dinner, which was



scheduled in a cozy bar at the old Delfshaven. The sun was setting when we entered the bar, where we enjoyed live band, beer, tapas, wine, more tapas, some dancing, tequilas, even more tapas and so on ... into the night.

Tom Van Hellepute

Promoods camping trip to the Biesbos: Postponed, not cancelled

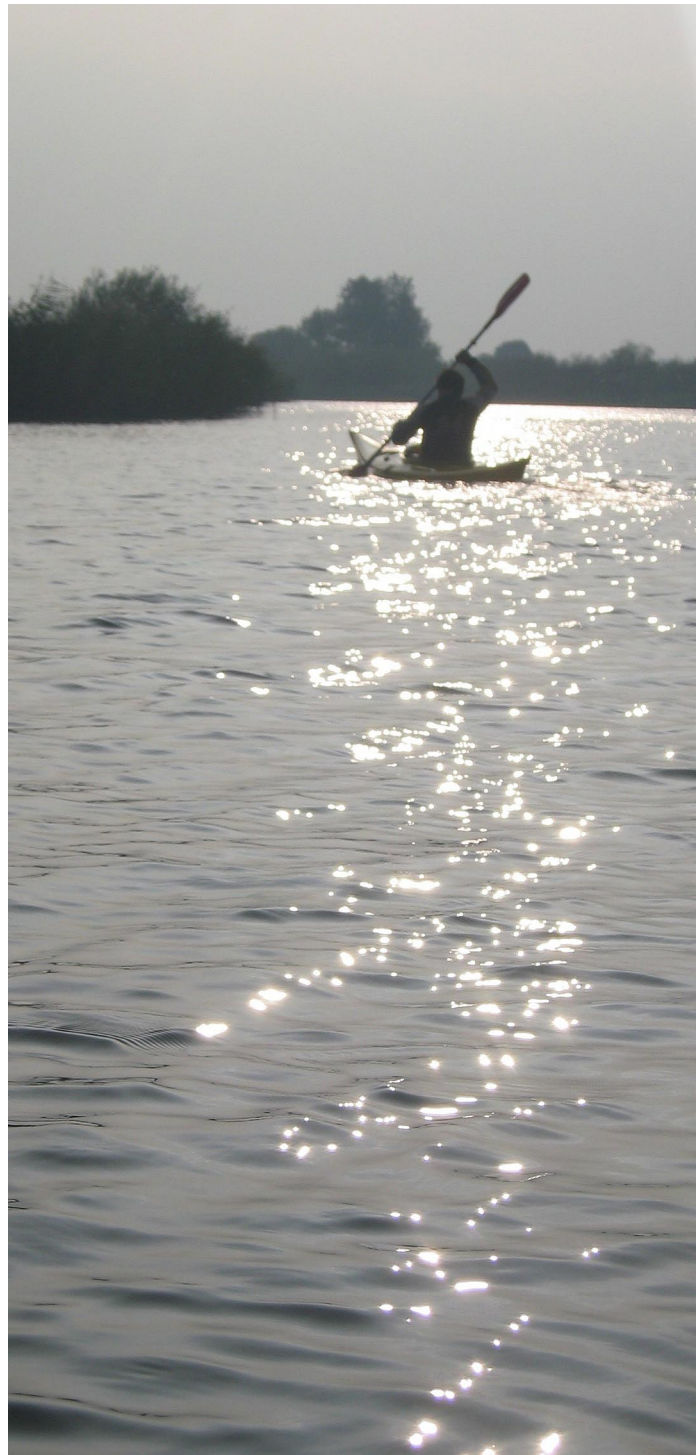
This year, from 25th to 27th March, Promood had planned an excursion to a unique wetland ecosystem in the Southern part of the Netherlands called the Biesbos. On the very last minute, the board of Promood decided to cancel the whole trip, due to extreme weather conditions.

This was probably a reasonable decision since in those three days 47mm of rain was collected! Nonetheless, it was a bit of a disappointment for the 20 something participants, including myself. Due to the many responses received, we have decided to reschedule the whole trip and pick a new date in spring 2007.

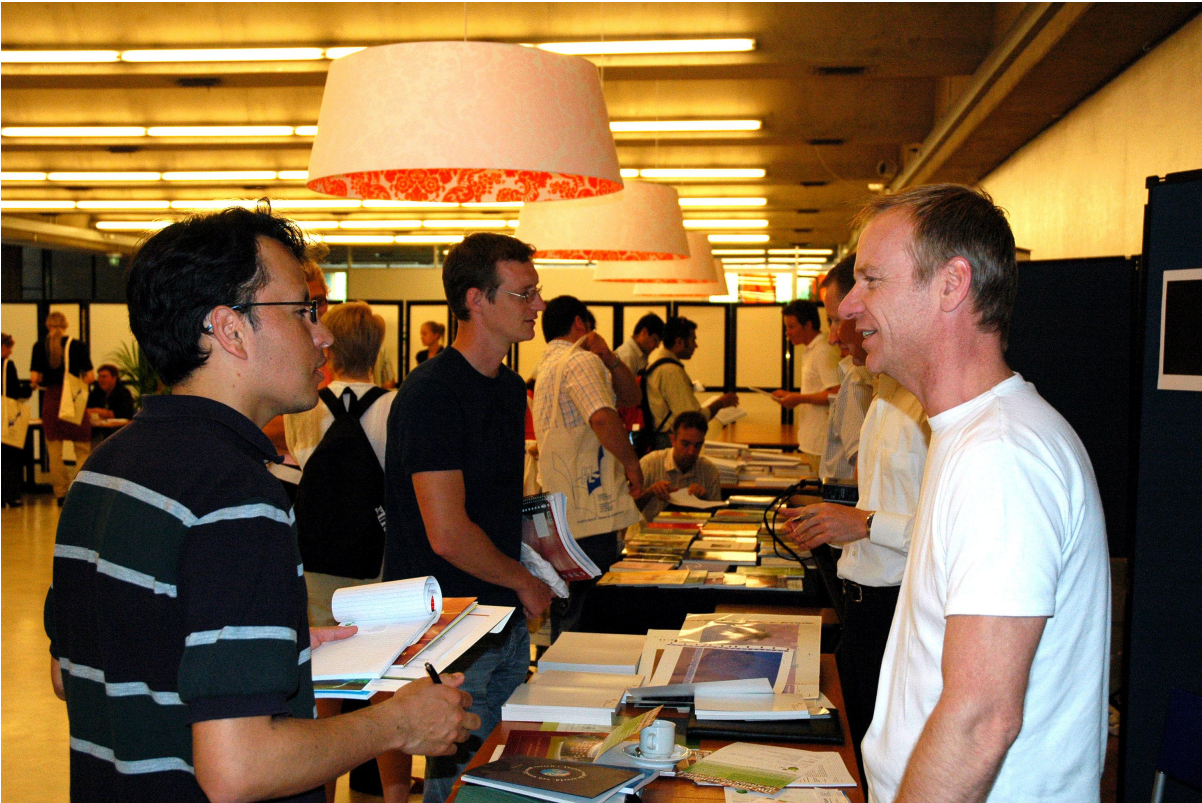
The destination is National Park the Biesbos in the Netherlands. It comprises a brackish estuary with tide differences and contains a remarkable diversity of flowers, birds and small animals. This region truly invites visitors to outdoors activities, such as hiking, cycling, swimming, boat trips and canoeing. Besides these sporty events, relaxation is granted when sitting at cozy campfires at night.

While there is a lot to see and do in the Biesbos, we don't want to over-organise your weekend. Therefore we would arrange a basic camping trip for the magnificent price of 25 euro (including camping site, food and drinks for 3 days and canoe-excursion). And for those of you interested in other activities, optional tours can be arranged, as for instance an afternoon of sailing or a boat trip with a professional nature guide.

All you really need is a swimming suit, a plate, cup, fork and knife, and some clothes that can get dirty and wet. If you don't have a tent, sleeping bag or a mattress, we can arrange some extra. Hope to see you in de Biesbos next spring!



Ann-Charlotte Toes



Promood Printers Market 2006

Every year in the beginning of June, Promood organises the Printers market. From the results of the questionnaire, held in the summer of last year, we already concluded that our members consider this as one of Promoods main events, besides the BBQ of course!

The market is organised by active members and people from the board of Promood and takes place on the foyer of the aula. During this afternoon, various printer companies get the opportunity to present themselves to the PhD candidates of TU Delft. Many of these companies have special price offers for printing your thesis on days like this, for which you can already sign up at their stand. This year, the Printers market was organized on Friday the 9th of June from 15:00 to 17:00.

We started the market with a mini-workshop on all the issues and aspects that are important for the printing of your thesis. This workshop was given by one of the participating companies, Ponsen&Looijen, and was attended by approximately 25 PhD's. They all found it very useful and Ponsen& Looijen supplied all the participants with informative guides on how to make your thesis. The attendance of the market was also quite high, around 75 PhD candidates passed by that afternoon and spoke with the representatives of the various

companies. We had to plan the day carefully because of the football Worldcup, and luckily the openings match between Germany and Costa Rica did not prevent the people from coming. Also the very nice weather, with temperatures going up to 25 degrees, was no reason for most finishing PhD candidates to stay at home enjoying the sun.

The beadle was also present with a stand, available for all questions regarding the procedures and promotion rules at our university. Most of the visitors dropped by at their stand, to pick up a hard copy of the 'promotie reglement' and to be informed about the new procedure that all PhD candidates should register at the beadle's office already as soon as they start their 1st year!

Looking back, it was a very successful event that should definitely be organized again in the coming years. It really gives PhD candidates the opportunity to get a quick overview of all the companies and the possibilities concerning the printing of a thesis. If you are interested in helping to organize this kind of event next year, don't hesitate to contact Promood. You will get acquainted with many companies and it is also just great fun!

Loesje Bevers

“I considered quitting my PhD and going to industry”: Prof. Olsder

Prof. Geert Jan Olsder, the conrector, shares his journey from his PhD to his current role as conrector of TU Delft with Anand Kumar Dokania. The following is an edited version of the interview taken in April 2006.



Let's start with your present role. Many students in TU Delft do not know the role of conrector precisely. Could you briefly explain your responsibilities?

Prof. Olsder: I have several responsibilities. The specific duties are related to *Promotion* (PhD) like the dissertation committee, thesis-defending ceremony etc. Officially, it is the responsibility of the rector but in practice I play his role. Since he has many duties, I take over some of his duties. In a jokingly way I sometimes say, “Everything that falls from the table of the rector, I take it up again”. I also chair various committees for internal and external scholarships. I represent the university at several occasions, for instance at a retirement or welcome ceremony of a colleague at the university.

How do you divide your time between research, teaching and responsibilities of conrector?

Prof. Olsder: It is a part time job, which takes 60% of my time. For the rest of the time, I am still in mathematics.

Which one do you like most and why?

Prof. Olsder: I like both. If I only do mathematics, I would like to do some other works and if I only do administrative work, I would miss my mathematics again. But this combination keeps me fresh and awake. I have been professor here for almost 23 years and after that something different is welcome. And, when I was offered the position of con-rector, I liked to do that as well. You get to know the university faculties much better because in inaugural speeches you meet many colleagues from other faculties. You can do research but you also need a social environment.

How many PhD candidates are you supervising now?

Prof. Olsder: Presently I have only one PhD candidate under my direct supervision but a new PhD candidate

will join in the summer.

What is the difference in PhD candidates during your time and now?

Prof. Olsder: At that time the economy was more prosperous than now and almost everybody used to get a job within the university. There were more PhD candidates around and some of them were busy for more than eight years. As their contracts used to get renewed every year, some used to continue for 10 years and that was not uncommon. But now you have fixed contract of 4 years to realize your thesis. Now PhD programs are much more international than in those days, as more than 50% of PhD candidates come from different countries. I like this internationalization very much. But in extreme, if we have PhD candidates only from other countries, I would not like that either. Our own culture should also be represented by having Dutch PhD candidates. It should not become a soccer club that only attracts players from other countries with only one Dutch player in the team. There should be some fruitful interaction between Dutch and other PhD candidates also to the benefit of both groups.

Now tell us about your PhD experience. What was the motivation behind doing PhD?

Prof. Olsder: I did my PhD in Groningen and I could talk about this at great length. When I passed my doctoral exam, nowadays you call it M.Sc., in 1968, then my professor offered me a PhD position. But I hesitated very much because I had the other option of going to army for one or two years. While taking a psychology test for the army, they told me that with my applied mathematics background, they could offer me a job in Ministry of Defence in computer science. As at that time IBM was helping them, I got in touch with IBM and I had already arranged that if I had gone for military services, I would have got a job afterwards with IBM. The other option was to continue with research. As I

liked doing research, a PhD position was an obvious option. I liked to be somewhat independent, choosing my own way and responsibilities within certain limits. There was another reason also that had nothing to do with science. I just got to know a young girl and I thought, "If I leave Groningen, I don't know whether my relationship will continue". From that point of view, I thought it is good to stay in Groningen. She has become my wife and we are very happy. So that was the decisive reason to choose the scientific career, otherwise it might have been different.

So the last reason played a major role in your decision to pursue PhD?

Prof. Olsder: Major, I don't know but it did play a role. In my students life I was a "good" student, and quite active in studies but I did not have many girl friends. I was not active in that field.

What was your most pleasant experience as a PhD candidate?

Prof. Olsder: When I got results. In the beginning, I had to write and submit some internal reports. It was ok but not something really to be proud of. After two and half years, my supervisor posed certain questions and I thought that I must figure that out and my real work started. And then I got results and more results. I got to the point where everything seemed to fit together and once you feel that you have something, you can work day and night. I used to work till 3 a.m. in the morning and used to be in the office at 10 a.m. next day. Now, at my age, it would be difficult to do that but once you like your research very much and see the results crystallize out, this combination makes you very enthusiastic. After that it took only one year to complete and I got my PhD after three and half years, which was considerably fast at that time. I felt good that I did something original and started climbing the scientific mountain. Of course, thesis-defending was nice too but on that day I was a bit nervous. I enjoyed climbing the scientific mountain more than reaching the summit of the defence.

What was the most difficult experience you had in

your PhD?

Prof. Olsder: I also had some frustrations. I had my pride that those internal reports were not enough and I had to do more. For the first two and half years, I had doubted myself whether I was suitable for research, as I had not found any substantial results to work on. I must add that I considered quitting my PhD job and going to industry. After two years of my PhD, I had been to certain industries to talk about possible job

opportunities. Then I met some person from industry and I talked about my frustration- "I like my research but I am not sure whether I am right person to do that". He felt that I could be useful for his industry and we made an appointment for further discussions and they offered me a job. At that moment I was not sure what to do next. Then, I said to that person "it might be a bit

impulsive to quit right away, so just wait for three months. If after three months I have the same doubts and my research does not come through then I would join your company but if my research blossoms up then I am going to continue with my PhD". Then, as I said before after two and half years I got some good ideas and my research went well. But later on I have been working in that company.

How did you overcome that period?

Prof. Olsder: In the beginning you don't know whether you have a real

subject and you try a little bit. But then you realize that you have got a right subject and some nice results to work on. My supervisor helped me a lot. He used to organize some sort of seminar once a month with a group of colleagues of his and together we used to study some books related to my subject followed by discussions. That helped and motivated me a lot in the sense that other people are interested in discussing my research.

So, the first two years of your PhD was a kind of difficult situation for you.

Prof. Olsder: I was rather free; I could do what I liked to do. I used to have interaction with my supervisor

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" For the first two and half years, I had doubted myself whether I was suited for research, as I had not found any substantial results to work on. I must add that I considered quitting my PhD job and going to industry"

Interview

but he was not an expert in my field. He was an expert in fluid dynamics and my research was in optimal control. He said, “this is a new field and nobody knows about the subject”. He asked me to study a recent book related to that subject, which was part of my master thesis also. He could follow the book but he had not done any research in that field. On one hand that made me a bit independent but also put higher responsibility on my shoulder. But that also made me more insecure than other PhDs; because you normally study in a field related to what your supervisor also does. Jokingly you can say, quite often a supervisor pulls PhD candidates because (s)he is expert in a field and walks ahead, but in my case he was pushing me. He said, “I am sure it is a good field; you do it and I will follow you. I am a mathematician so I can think but I am not an expert in this field”. So in that respect my PhD was slightly different from an average PhD study. I was not pulled but pushed.

Did you ever have any disagreement with your supervisor?

Prof. Olsder: I did not have any complains against my supervisor. He was kind to me and we used to sit together quite often to discuss. But he said that I had to stand on my own feet. He left me somewhat independent and I struggled also.

I used to have some disagreements with my supervisor. If I handed a handwritten report he used to make some remarks on that, and it used to be red all over with remarks like “what do you mean by this...I think that cannot be correct ...be precise.... this piece of English is not correct”. Then I used to think its all red and how did he dare to challenge my writings. But sometimes he was

also wrong and through discussions, I had to convince him.

Research apart, what were your extra-curricular activities?

Prof. Olsder: I played piano a lot. When I was student I was a rower. I did long distance skating and I liked it very much....

.... Did you participate in Elfstedentocht, the 11 cities tour?

Prof. Olsder: In 1963, the most notorious and difficult *Reinier Paping* one in Frisland, only 50 people made to the end and 9500 had to give up and I belonged to the majority. But, I was just a second year young student and I kept on skating, as winters during those time were colder than now. After 1963, the first 11 cities tour race was held in 1985 and I managed to finish this time.

Oh! I forgot to tell you by the way, coming back to my own choice of doing PhD; my supervisor also skated very well. I thought we have the same hobby and therefore probably we could go along well.

I also liked traveling like going to conferences, staying abroad for sabbaticals etc. After my PhD study I got a scholarship and got a chance to spend a year at Stanford University, California. My supervisor in Stanford used to play piano very well and so we got along very well together.

What have you learned during your stay in Stanford and how did that enhances your career?

Prof. Olsder: My stay in Stanford was excellent as it broadened my horizon, because so far I had been only in The Netherlands, essentially only in Groningen, my alma mater.



Riding the journey of life together since their student's days: Prof. Olsder with his wife.

It was amazing. But the beginning was difficult. I did not know anybody there and my English was very modest. There were many people like me: they all came from different countries, all were new and they all had same difficulties. So they all used to come together. Then you meet lot of people and make contact with them. I still have contact with a guy from France who worked under my supervisor in Stanford. Later on I have been to France two times for a sabbatical in his group.

Now if you look back and see your whole career, are you happy the way your career took shape?

Prof. Olsder: Directly after my PhD I went to Twente University as a young *docent* (teacher) and then to Stanford for sabbatical. After coming back from Stanford I stayed in Twente University for 8-9 years, then I thought of trying something else, as I did not want to stay at the same university forever. Then I went to industry, which is known as Thales now, a military equipment company. After two years the opportunity to become a professor at TU Delft came up and I decided to quit in favour of this Delft position. I felt a bit guilty for quitting industry so fast since after two years I did not yet consider myself to be a radar expert (they could have benefited from me from the 3rd or 4th year onwards). Sometimes you have to take a decision based on the information available at that time. As in my case, should I go to research or to the army with IBM; that was an almost 50-50 situation. There were more such situations like why did I choose industry when I could have stayed at Twente University. But in case I would have taken a different decision at that time, that might have also worked, who knows. Whatever has happened in reality; I am not unsatisfied, I am satisfied. One should not look back; one should always look ahead

“It’s my personal opinion, I emphasise personal, and not an official policy, that I would like the duration of PhD reduced to three years as in France and England”

Today many PhD candidates face a similar dilemma: after PhD what -academia or industry?

How can one take a decision?

Prof. Olsder: At a university, you have much more freedom, you can choose your own way, but in industry there is more money. Also, if you have a good idea, it is easier to realize it in an industry than in the university. From my point of view, I would like to have different experiences as I have said earlier. When you spend your

whole life at a single university, you miss a part of other cultures. For me it had been very useful to be in industry for a while. So if you have different options after your PhD, I would certainly say- extend your experience.

As a connector of TU Delft, what are the goals you have set for the future and how are you planning to achieve that?

Prof. Olsder: I will be 65 within some years and essentially this would be my last part of the official career at the university. We have the IDEA league and some universities from France will join our umbrella. Nowadays we are getting request from universities in Germany and France for “*Double Promotions*”, the students who study two years here and two years there would like to receive two diplomas for one piece of work. That is difficult but sometimes it happens. It is not very popular and we don’t know exactly how to solve this problem. We have to see in the future how to deal with these requests. I think that it should be a more European decision and thus a single university cannot take such a decision.

But if both universities agree to do so, is there any problem?

Prof. Olsder: Then I think most of the PhDs would like to have two diplomas and there would be some kind of inflation of diplomas. You can show one diploma to one employer and the other to another employer. It also depends upon the duration, as different universities have different time durations for PhDs. It’s my personal opinion, I emphasise personal, and not an official policy, that I would like the duration of PhD reduced to three years as in France and England. So I would not be surprised if in 10-15 years, we also go in the same direction.

Finally, what’s the best message you would like to give to PhD candidates?

Prof. Olsder: Have confidence in yourself. Work hard and be happy. But be open to your PhD and your supervisor. You should keep networking. I can recommend everybody not to spend the whole life at one university. Do not be afraid of exploring new avenues during your PhD or later in life.

Compensation for thesis printing

Dear board of Promood

Now there are four TNW members in the board, I would like to bring something to your attention. I have always surprised myself by the requirement to deliver 200 copies of your thesis to your TNW supervisor, while the current compensation is only about 1/3 of the actual cost. This requirement is, to my understanding, quite unique in comparison to most Dutch Universities, but also in comparison to other faculties within Delft. Most faculties do not require such high volumes and are satisfied by pdf versions or require only a few copies. If, like some medical departments, there is a requirement, the compensation is usually in keeping with the actual cost. Another strange regulation is that if the PhD candidate receives external funds/sponsoring, the compensation is lower accordingly.

The printing of the thesis alone is generally close to 2500 Euro. This means there is a 1500 Euro gap that Ph.D. candidate has to cover for copies that are sent out to friends and colleagues of the professor around the world, most of whom the Ph.D. candidate has never met. This is not necessarily a bad thing, but in my opinion requires a bit more financial consideration. Also these copies are usually distributed amongst students and other people in the department and sit on a bookshelf until they finally die in the wastepaper bin. I do think it is fair to have a Ph.D. candidate pay for this. I have brought the discrepancy between required copies and compensation to the attention of the head of the biotechnology department (Prof Han de Winde), who agrees there is some unfairness in the current system.

Although my defence is to be held this Tuesday (Sept 5th), meaning that any decrease in printing volume or increase in compensation will be too late for me, I feel a need to force a change in regulations for future students. He also mentioned he will discuss matters during next the interfaculty meeting. I would like to know in what way Promood could help to force a positive change.

Jan-Maarten Geertman, via email to promood@tudelft.nl

Write us if you have any PhD related issues that warrant immediate attention of TU Delft authority.

PhD-Imaging Science & Technology lunch seminars

How many fellow PhD candidates do *you* know outside your own group? As a PhD candidate, new to the department, it felt a little like I was living on my own quiet but pleasant Charged Particle Optics Island, part of the big archipelago of the Faculty of Applied Sciences. Because I never came off the island; I had no clue what was going on on the other islands. Apparently my promoter recognized the isolation his PhD candidates were in. Following the example of the monthly lunch seminars organised for the entire Department of Imaging Science & Technology (IST), he suggested in a board meeting to start up a separate series of lunch seminars for PhDs only. This would allow PhD candidates to practice scientific presentations and discussions and get acquainted with each other. Who knows what comes out from that cross-pollination.

We have been organising biweekly lunch seminars since January-2006 for all PhDs of IST. Two PhD candidates take care of the organisation. Every two weeks about 15-20 of us gather in the Kronigzaal of the building of Applied Sciences for a presentation in which one of us presents his/her work, or in a room of one of the four participating research groups for a lab tour. After the science we have lunch together, a free lunch, sponsored by the department.

Although I have to admit that my expectations of the meetings might have been too high, I do find the interaction with my fellow PhD researcher valuable. I found out that my fellow PhD researchers, just as myself, are not the most enthusiastic, inspiring and vibrating personalities from outside, but the presentations are of higher quality than the average monthly IST – seminar, and to learn about the work of fellow PhDs in related fields is interesting and can also be motivating and encouraging. Your own struggle is much more bearable when you know of others struggling too, and to see what others have accomplished or to encounter interest in your work makes you to try even harder. It puts my own work in better perspective and gives a bit of a reference of how I ‘should do’.

The meetings have expanded my knowledge of the archipelago and made island hopping, e.g. to borrow

something or get information, less of a big adventure.

I would recommend our concept to other departments. While scientific debate is highly valued, PhD researchers, contrary to (assistant) professors, do not have an 'official' platform for interaction, except within their own group or at an occasional conference. The costs are minimal and getting acquainted with fellow students can also help PhD candidate, coming from abroad or even from the building next door, feel more at home.

Merijn S. Bronsgeest

Buying vs. renting: A trilogy in an upbeat tempo Part 2: The details before buying

In Part 1 of this trilogy, I told you about why you should buy a house or apartment instead of renting one. The main reason is that it is probably cheaper. Now if you decide to buy, how do you actually get a house?

You can start with browsing, actually even without having decided anything yet. Go to www.funda.nl and look at the houses that are available. There you can find out what kind of house you would like, how much the houses cost at different locations and even see what kind of neighbors you will have! And all for free.

You can also check how much mortgage you can afford with your current salary, although the online tools for this give you only an estimate. So you've virtually browsed and found out that you can afford a 120.000 euro house (which is probably the right price range). Now comes the next part.

You can do two things at this point: either you go and look in real life at the houses you picked out online or you go and see a bank or mortgage company. Let's start with the last: the mortgage company (such as De Hypotheker) or a bank will again take a look at your salary and other financial business, such as loans, extra income, savings etc. They will recommend you a certain amount of mortgage (from a certain bank) and then you're done for now.

In the mean time you could already have looked at some houses. This is a craft of it's own, I found out. So if you

have no experience in buying houses, architecture or construction, you might want to get some help. My tips: see as many houses as you can and try to find out as much as possible. You can ask the real estate agent that sells the house (with whom you need to make an appointment) any question related to the house and he has to give you an honest answer if he is a qualified real estate agent. In the aforementioned price range you can probably find a lot of apartments in the greater Delft area such as Rotterdam, Rijswijk or Den Haag. Since there are so many, you can afford to be picky; if you don't like one for some reason or other, move on. The way I did it was the following: I would check out a house and if I would like it I would get a second opinion from either my dad and/or my own real estate agent. This is a service real estate agents provide for free. They will only charge you if they represent you in buying the house from a different real estate agent. The fee is most of the time not that high and it will save you the hassle of negotiations with the real estate agent of the people that sell the house. If you think you can do it on your own, then you can save some money.

Take your time in each house and each neighborhood. I looked around for 5 months and seen about two dozen houses before I decided. So in the end you find one and then the bidding game starts... You (or the real estate agent representing you) make a first offer on the house. Let's say the selling party asks 130.000 for the house. You can decide what your offer will be taking into account what you can afford, how much you like the house or if you need to do some modifications. Your real estate agent will help you with this. You make for instance an offer of 120.000. The selling party will get your offer and give you a counter-offer. This can take some time, so you have to be patient! Let's say they come back with an offer of 129.000. This means, they can't or won't afford a lot less than the asking price. You have two options, you can make another offer (stating this is your final offer to put some pressure on them) or go and check out other houses. In my case I kept on looking and found a better house for a lower price with less hassle in the bidding process. And then it's time for the last and final steps, which this will be Part 3. So till next time, I wish you happy house/mortgage hunting!

Frederik de Wit

So much depends on the PhD researchers...



It starts when applying for research funds. The level of work must be fit for a PhD candidate, the duration of the project must be four years, the money must be sufficient for one or two PhD candidates and their equipment, etc. In fact the modern international standard unit of scientific effort is the PhD researcher! Then, when the money is in and the work starts, the progress is dependent on the quality of the PhD researcher. At the end of the project, results must be published. A professor may write a small theoretical paper once in a while, or a patent application, or a review, but the PhD candidate must write the bulk of the papers. Without those, a group at the TU Delft cannot gather sufficient "BTA points" to earn its share of the TU finances. And then, when a big-time professor is invited to give a talk at an international conference, who has to work late making the sheets for the PowerPoint presentation? Right, usually the PhD researcher on the subject.

You can understand why a professor gets unhappy when a PhD researcher does not live up to the expectations of the professor. Not only does it delay the project for which he had promised the funding agency or contract partner great results, but it also starts taking his valuable time. It takes so much effort to keep coming up with new suggestions, checking the calculations, finding the relevant literature, correcting the draft publications, applying for extra money to extend the contract and, worst of all, worrying that the PhD candidate will not be able to write and defend a reasonable PhD thesis, worrying about the well-being of the candidate him/herself.

" A professor may write a small theoretical paper once in a while, or a patent application, or a review, but the PhD candidates must write the bulk of the papers"

" The occasional disappointment, however, is usually more than compensated by the satisfaction of seeing a young person who starts out not knowing what (s)he can do, gradually gain confidence and then grow into a creative scientist. "

The occasional disappointment, however, is usually more than compensated by the satisfaction of seeing a young person who starts out not knowing what (s)he can do, gradually gains confidence and then grow into a creative scientist. It is so rewarding to find out that a PhD researcher who has gone away with a few suggestions in a work discussion, comes back with something the professor had not thought of beforehand. It is such a thrill to go together to a conference and see a PhD researcher interact with the rest of the scientific world, getting into discussion with a foreign colleague who then compliments you afterwards on the quality of your PhD candidates.

As a scientist, there are two things that I really enjoy. The first is to sit down with a cigar, a pencil and piece of paper to work on a new idea, possibly a new invention or a new explanation for something we have seen. The second is to have a discussion with a PhD researcher, together trying to improve on that idea, trying to further understand the measurement, or designing an innovative piece of equipment.

So much depends on the PhD candidates, including the Promotor's professional happiness!

Prof.dr.ir.Pieter Kruit, Charged Particle Optics, Imaging Science and Technology, Faculty of Applied Sciences.