

From the Chair

Dear Matrix Aficionados,

As 2023 begins **we are looking forward to hearing about new advances in the matrix world.** In many fields the importance of the extracellular matrix (ECM), and its support of cells in all forms is coming out of the shadows. Model systems are being developed with greater emphasis on ECM, and cross-discipline research is seeking input from matrix experts to a greater degree than ever before. This is an exciting time for all who love matrix!

As a society, we also need to find a way out of the shadows. The COVID induced lock-downs have had an impact on our members' willingness to be engaged in society activities. Our routine schedule of coming together for the annual meeting was disrupted, and the timing of when we were able to gather had to be altered in 2021 and 2022. As requested by the members, the board have arranged for our cycle to return to a more "normal" rhythm in 2023 (see below for details). We hope that all members will join our annual meeting, and bring a new friend with them, to help grow our society activities. These networking events are the life blood of our society and the chance to develop novel ideas that can move the field forward.

Our society is, in general, made up of a large proportion of early career researchers. This provides many opportunities, but also challenges for us. There would be benefits for all if we were able to increase the scope of mid- to later stage researchers who were interested in our society activities. To this end, if you are aware of research groups who could contribute to discussions focused around matrix please reach out to them to encourage them to join, and also make the board aware of these groups so we can try to engage with them at a society level.

In the coming years, our board will need to undergo some changes. Many of the familiar faces who have now served our society for years are coming to the end of their cycle of eligibility to serve on the board. To ensure the effective management of the society we need new people to step into these roles. This important task is rewarding on many levels, and while there are periods of activity required is not overly onerous in the demands on individuals. Anyone is welcome to let the current board members know if they have interest in learning more about this role, or volunteering to nominate for a position.

As in previous years, we would love to hear our members news. Let us know of any achievements, publications, thesis defenses or other significant professional happenings within our members' labs so we can share this happy news. With your permission we will include this information on our website and social media channels. In this way we aim to raise the visibility of our society and foster multidisciplinary interactions within and beyond our field.

On behalf of the NVMB,
Janette Burgess, President

NVMB Membership

Ensuring that members contribute to the society through **payment of their annual membership fees** has been a challenge for our society in recent years. Particularly during the COVID years, many members have not remembered to maintain their financial affiliation with the society. These membership fees are important for the society as they provide the stream of income that enables us to support early career researchers through the awards we, and the European society, offer. These

funds also support the thesis support we offer PhD members when they complete their training program. As many members remember to pay their membership fees when they want to register for our annual meeting, the board have decided to change the administration of our membership payment cycle. **Membership will be included as part of the registration for the annual meeting**, everyone who attends will join the society for the forth coming year. This means there will no longer be an option for non-member registration for the annual meeting. For existing members who cannot attend the meeting a request for membership payment will be sent at the time of the annual meeting.

For current members who have outstanding obligations in the form of unpaid membership fees you should have received an email reminder to pay these owings. If you are in doubt about the soundness of your membership standing please contact our treasurer ([Arjan van Caam](#)) to check. Maintaining financial soundness with the society is particularly important for early career researchers, as **one of the qualifying elements for the NVMB thesis support is being a (paid up) member of NVMB for three years**. We have had to reject a few requests for this support recently from applicants who did not meet this criteria, and we would prefer not to need to do this again in the future.

2023 Annual Meeting – 1st and 2nd June

Following feedback from members during our meeting in 2022, the board has arranged for **our 2023 NVMB annual meeting to be held at the Fiji Hotel, Utrecht on 1st and 2nd June**.

We are already in full swing planning a series of exciting keynote talks, and the ESR committee (Early Stage Researchers) of the NVMB are, once again, developing content for a session during the meeting.

We encourage each and every one of you, including PhD / MSc students, technicians and other team members to submit abstracts for talks and/or poster (elevator pitch) presentations. The call for abstracts will open soon on our website and will close on April 14th.– we are looking forward to seeing what engaging activities they bring for us this year. Registration for the meeting (an paying membership fees) will also open shortly.

Make sure you regularly check our website to keep updated: <https://www.matrixbiology.nl/>.

ESR Committee calling for new members

As several members of the ESR committee have completed their terms, and / or are completing their PhD programs the committee is **calling for expressions of interest from anyone who would like to join** them. Anyone who is interested, or knows a potential candidate for committee membership, should contact the committee to discuss this interest on esr.nvmb@gmail.com. They are also always open to hearing about possible ideas for activities they could organize to support NVMB ESR members.