Young Alumni Network offers possibilities after graduation

Staying connected to your ‘second home’

As a new graduate you are embarking on a new phase of life. Armed with your degree, this is where your career really starts. To give young alumni better guidance in their personal development, TU/e and a group of active young alumni have set up a new network: Young Alumni Network (YAN).

YAN chairperson Loek Overes is enthusiastic: ‘Bringing together people with a shared connection and different backgrounds can be a very effective way of broadening your mind.’

Loek Overes (30), Built Environment alumnus, remembers clearly how as a new graduate he took his first steps on his career path. Following a traineeship with Rijkswaterstaat (responsible for Dutch national road, waterway and water infrastructure) and various subsequent positions, he is now an advisor for portfolio management there, a position he has held for the past year.

‘It is refreshing to get to know a new environment. Yet it still feels good to saunter around the TU/e campus now and then. For years it was a sort of “second home”, a familiar place.’

Last year Overes was one of the young alumni who frequently came together to brainstorm on the policy for young TU/e alumni. These brainstorming sessions arose from an earlier observation that few appropriate activities were being held for recent graduates. The success of young alumni networks at other universities and different backgrounds can be a very effective way of broadening your mind. ‘Everyone should feel welcome’, says Overes, for having a young target group. Various departments have their own alumni association and they no longer organize an activity suitable for recent graduates now and then. But some departments don’t have this and, besides, many alumni want to look beyond departmental boundaries.

We are multidisciplinary and TU/e-wide and that certainly has added value,’ Overes points out that YAN is very keen to be seen as easily accessible. ‘Everyone should feel welcome, and we are open to ideas. If you have a suggestion for an interesting activity, would like to help with the preparations – feel free to come and meet us. And, naturally, we hope that among these interested alumni there will be some who are keen to take over the job of running YAN in the future. Who are you?’

While TU/e has several active alumni associations, YAN is clearly distinctive, says Overes, for having a young target group. Various departments have their own alumni association and they no doubt organize an activity suitable for their own alumni and feeling like one. Being an alumnus isn’t usually something that occupies your thoughts; now and again you receive an email.

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The YAN agenda includes lectures, workshops, company visits, as well as informal gatherings. The aim is to learn from other people’s experience, and to expand your network while doing so, says Overes. ‘Many of us occupy our own worlds, with our own fixed opinions and views. Bringing together people with a shared connection but different backgrounds, and sharing each other’s experience and opinions is a very effective way of broadening your mind.’

“Everyone who has been inspired to take action: ’Invest in the present generation of graduates and aim to keep hold of them rather than trying to generate some feeling for their alma mater among people who left TU/e thirty years ago’ and who never returned”.

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This is a missed opportunity, because it is the young alumni who can benefit from a little extra support. You are in a new phase of your life, starting your career demands so much of your energy and often your personal life is going through great changes, like buying your first home or starting a family. We hope that by starting the Young Alumni Network we can give new graduates a helping hand.’

In addition, YAN hopes to maintain the graduates’ attachment to the university, right when that bond is still warm. ‘Even after you’ve left, you can still be valuable to TU/e. By informing prospective students about choices, coaching students or, later on, giving guest lectures and offering internships. It would be great if YAN were to be built up from both sides.’

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As an alumnus/alumna of TU/e you are part of a worldwide network comprising some 35,000 TU/e science and engineering degree holders of more than 90 nationalities. By registering on the AlumniNet (www.alumninet.tue.nl) you will be kept informed of TU/e news, you will receive the alumni magazine Slash (in Dutch only) and can enjoy various benefits. Did you graduate from TU/e within the past ten years? If so, you are automatically a member of the Young Alumni Network and will soon receive more information about it.

www.tue.nl/YAN