



## **WISE Network, TU Eindhoven**

### **New Year's Reception**

**Prof. Dr. M. K. Matters-Kammerer, Chair WISE Network**

I warmly welcome you to the New Year's reception of the WISE network. My name is Marion Matters. I'm professor at the department of Electrical Engineering on Integrated Circuit design and since September 2018 I'm proud to be the new chair of the WISE network.

The WISE network brings together female scientists from all faculties of the university. The goal is to enable successful careers, a balanced life and social interaction for women in science and technology of Eindhoven university of Technology. Since many years WISE is organizing workshops, discussions and gives advice to the board of the university.

Looking around us we realize that we live in a polarized and fast changing world: Presidents who want to build walls, the UK voting today on how to leave Europe, conservative religious leaders publishing manifests of exclusion. What we strive for is inclusiveness and room for professional development of Women in Science.

The huge relevance of increasing the number of women in science is recognized by the United Nations, who for the 4<sup>th</sup> time this year will celebrate the International Day of Women and Girls in Science.

We also see our university striving for inclusiveness, gender equality and fairness. Still in 2018 with only 12.6% Eindhoven is the university in the Netherlands with the lowest percentage of female professors. The national average is 20.9%. There is still a long way to go to reach an equal percentage of male and female scientists at our university. We should be aware that we are still today fighting an uphill battle. The deans of the faculties and the board of the university support us in a structural way and change is underway.

In the meantime, many of us are still the only female staff member in our research groups and this might sometimes feel lonely. The pressure from tenure tracks, high educational loads, management tasks, frequently combined with tasks at home for family and children can unbalance our lives and lead to unacceptable and unhealthy levels of stress. These issues are yet unsolved.

Our career chances depend to a large extent on the scientific success and forming strong networks is key to be recognized in the academic world. Networks are all around us. People are involved in formal and informal networks. Frequently networks have doors that don't naturally open to women and informal gatekeepers have the role to invite new members. Not being introduced to these networks, not being asked to join a Technical Program Committee or not being invited to give a talk is also a form of exclusion that on the medium to longer term has huge impact on careers. In these cases unconscious biases have to be uncovered. Here we need the support of many individuals' women and men to open the doors, especially for women in science.

The WISE network is one of the few inter-faculty networks of our university. This gives us a unique strength to exchange experiences with colleagues from diverse backgrounds. The board of the WISE network consists of a member of each faculty and it is great to see how devoted the board members are to improve the career chances of women in science. I would like to encourage you to profit from this interdisciplinary strength of our gathering today. Next to the social interaction, also new ideas on research and education can be generated and lead to follow up discussions and strong proposals.

Visibility makes the difference in our society. That is why we have chosen 'Visibility' as the theme of the WISE network for 2019.

Scientific visibility, as expressed in highly discussed numbers as the H-index, or the number of invited talks are used to measure success and recognition of a scientist.

We all know that there are many more facets to visibility, such as visibility on social media. This year the WISE network will improve the Social Media presence and the relations to other Women in Science networks at universities in the Netherlands and abroad.

Visibility of women in science, like you and me, supports the new generation of female students to choose for their passion and make a career out of it. It's a contract between generations. We pass on the knowledge on how to navigate in the academic world and learn from each other. Never hesitate to exchange experience and ask how others tackled certain challenges you face yourself. Be aware that the individual experience or question you have is frequently a joint experience representative of a bigger problem we are currently facing all together.

This year the WISE network intends to start a student branch to give our female students a stronger voice up to the highest level of the university. We want to listen to their experience and share our advice with them.

I want to encourage you to join the professional development workshops of the WISE network and the courses offered by the HR departments. In many years from now you might look back at these courses as the game changing experience, the eye-opener at the right moment of your career.

In case you experience biased behavior at the university, please don't hesitate to contact us. Individual experiences have a big value for the entire community. You can use the WISE network to communicate issues to the deans of your faculty and the board of the university.

Also I also would like to ask you to further strengthen the WISE network. Encourage female PDEng, PhD, assistant, associate or full professors around you to join WISE. They will profit from the interaction, just as you do today.

Make 2019 the 'Year of Visibility'. Visibility of your achievements and plans. Be visible to your students, to your groups, to your departments, at conferences and in commissions and to the

society in the broader sense. Generate your own professional webpage, join networks, push forward your own research ideas and inspire your students.

With these words, I wish you all a healthy, balanced, inclusive and successful year 2019.