

*“ Be the change you want to see: How being authentic can improve academic culture”*

*Given by Prof.dr. Belle Derks and dr. Jenny Veldman*

*Wednesday, March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024 (09:30 – 12:45 hrs.)*

*Filmzaal de Zwarte Doos*

**Goals:**

TU Eindhoven loses a lot of talent when young scientists drop out because they do not feel at home in the academic climate. The traditional culture of academia is focused on competition and individual achievements. The goal of this afternoon is to challenge the notion of this academic climate as a given and to discuss new and different ways of being a scientist. To this aim, we will discuss the dominant organizational climate in academia and talk about how many (and especially young) scientists experience a lack of belonging in this culture. However, we will also present evidence that many academics feel this way and challenge the perception that this culture is fixed and broadly shared (also called ‘pluralistic ignorance’). Young scientists will be invited to think about the kind of scientist they want to be and ways to be their authentic self at work. Moreover, we will challenge them to develop their individual role as agents of change in academia. Senior scientists will be stimulated to discover their potential role in organizational change and learn about the potential of diversity in the group of young scientists at their university.

**Program:**

**09:30 – 10:00: Lecture by Prof. Belle Derks that builds upon her previous lecture (WISE Annual Event, October 2022)**

Prof. Derks will discuss the current academic climate and opportunities for change. She will discuss themes like pluralistic ignorance, being authentic at work, challenges that junior scientists face and opportunities for bottom up organizational change. To increase the relevance of the lecture for the audience, we will send around a short survey to the participants so that we can present group-level results during the lecture that will help to show pluralistic ignorance.

**10:00 – 11:00: Participants will be split up in groups for workshop (60 minutes).**

Junior and senior scientists together discuss their role in academia and opportunities for being agents of change. Active ways of working will be used to reflect on personal experiences with feeling a lack of fit, what changes are needed to be a more authentic scientist, and what can be done by individuals to achieve this. The goal of the workshop is that each participant leaves with a concrete action they can take tomorrow to become to the scientist they want to be and contribute to a more inclusive and supportive academic climate.

**11:00 – 11:30 uur: Coffee/tea break**

**11:30 – 12.00 uur: Plenary session**

We will end the morning with a plenary session to reflect on lessons learned and ways to move forward.

**12:00 - 12:45:** Opportunity for informal follow-up discussion and the option to take advantage of a sandwich lunch.



**Belle Derks** is Professor of Social and Organisational Psychology at Utrecht University. Derks studies the organizational culture within academia, focusing on organizational dynamics that limit diversity and the inclusion of international scholars, women and working parents within academia. She examines how academic excellence is defined and scrutinizes the impact of the competitive "superhero" image on the careers of junior academics. Her research is aimed at developing a more sustainable and inclusive academia.

Derks is an experienced speaker and gives lectures and workshops based on her expertise in public and private organizations, such as the KNVB, ASML, and the Ministry of Finance .

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**Jenny Veldman** is Assistant Professor in Social and Organisational Psychology at Utrecht University. She examines the underrepresentation of social groups in work and education, with a focus on women in majority-male fields (e.g., science, engineering, the military) and students from lower socio-economic status (SES) backgrounds in higher education. Veldman is especially interested in understanding how people actively cope with, rather passively undergo, the challenges they face in work and education. Ultimately, her work is aimed at understanding why, despite substantial changes, group inequalities in work and education persist.