

YOUNG SCHOLARS NETWORK (YECREA)

NETWORK ACTIVITY REPORT FOR 2015

1. Organisation

Membership: The young scholars' network now has 277 members according to intranet membersearch. The membership numbers have decreased by roughly 60 members since the last report. This is unpleasant especially since the interest in our activities in terms of Facebook group membership is steadily growing. While some shifting in terms of the consistency of our membership is to be expected given that "young scholar" is a temporary status (thematic interests are rather stable), we will have to be more soliciting for young scholars new to the association also to become members of the network. It will also be necessary to interpret the membership figures in relation to general developments of the association and other networks/sections/TWGs.

2. Activities

Information dissemination

One of the main tasks of YECREA is to provide information. YECREA informs its members of job opportunities, conferences, workshops, and relevant publications through the website yecrea.eu, a bi-annual newsletter, and a Facebook group.

In 2015, the website yecrea.eu continued to be used for information dissemination although we must acknowledge that the importance of the website within the communication infrastructure of YECREA has decreased in terms of page visits and interaction. Thanks to one of our members and TWG representatives we are preparing a relaunch of the website as a rather static but up to date information hub.

The Yecrea Facebook group has fostered its role as the main channel of information dissemination and interaction among members of the network. The Facebook presence has resulted in increased interactivity and we still get higher rates of our membership to share information, provide content and support the cause of the network. The group is steadily growing and now has 825 members (an increase of 150 since our 2014 report). However, what we will need to strengthen are our efforts and our success in capitalizing of this high Facebook attendance in terms of actual membership of YECREA

In 2015 YECREA continued to develop and coordinate its network of young scholar representatives in the ECREA sections and TWGs. Although the number of TWGs is growing and there is a lot of fluctuation among the representatives, Yecrea manages to have young scholar representatives in all but a few groups. One problem we identify is that in some groups but also in general young scholars who become new members do not identify with sections or groups so strongly that they want to get involved on a regular basis; partly this is due to them not being aware how welcome they would be to get involved and take active roles in sections and TWGs. After the ECC 2014 the network decided to dismiss the idea of country representatives. We now seek liaisons with

national partners on a more action and activity orientated basis. This is why we are trying to have country liaisons for specific tasks and activities and not on a permanent basis. Representatives continued to inform young scholars through the Yecrea website and the Facebook group.

Young scholars workshops

In 2015 YECREA has again organised a variety of events, workshops, master classes and roundtables. They were mainly organised by the Section and TWG representatives and typically took place in association with the Section and TWG off events.

Most notably were:

- 1) A workshop at the Interpersonal Communication and Interaction Section off conference, regarding “Reviewing Scholarly Communication” (organized by Sara Atanasova)
- 2) A Phd Student Master Class and in the Children, Youth and Media Section (organized by Jane Fleischer and Philipp Sinner)
- 3) A workshop at the Political Communication Section Conference regarding successfully publishing research in peer reviewed journals (organized by Melanie Magin)
- 4) A workshop at the Communication Law and Policy Section Workshop regarding matters of doing interviews in Law and Policy research (organized by Sarah Ganter)
- 5) And a workshop on scholars and political activism in the Communication and Democracy Section (organized by Tina Askanius)
- 6) A panel at the Gender and Communication Off-Event, titled “A feminist toolbox for young scholars. Developing strategies to cope with the gendered challenges of the academic work environment.” (organized by Sara De Vuyst)

3. Future plans

YECREA’s main plans for 2016 are to sustain and further develop its current activities and network of section reps. A stop to the drop in membership and to make YECREA grow again will be pursued. As the numbers above indicate, we face strong expansion in terms of Facebook followers and a decline in real membership within the organisation. One point of future action therefore is the conversion of Facebook members into YECREA members. We aim to inform more offensively about the benefits of getting involved not only in YECREA but also in sections and TWGs. More attention to the challenges that young scholars face in the general activities of ECREA might as well encourage them to engage in the association as well as in our network. There seems to be a rather high threshold for young scholars to feel like their voice matters and that they

would be welcome. This is less due to the actual nature of sections and TWG hierarchies but more do a lack of awareness on the young scholars side. We also see that not all young scholars who are members of ECREA as part of institutional memberships are aware of the possibility to login to the ECREA intranet and to select their thematic section and networks. Furthermore not all of them receive personal account data from their institutional coordinators. We will provide information on that. YECREA representatives are involved in the organisation of (events at) pre-conferences to the ECC in Prague. The YECREA management team will sponsor a network workshop/panel at the ECC and also organize a young scholars social event in Prague.