

Leiden Institute of Physics: response to Research Assessment (2016)

The Leiden Institute of Physics wishes to thank the Peer Review committee for its careful evaluation of LION and its very positive view of both our past achievements and of our future. We are very pleased that the committee values our ambition to enhance our knowledge of the world around us at the highest possible level and our endeavor to uphold this level of quality into the future. The committee holds our efforts to attract a diverse, excellent faculty and to create an open and collegial atmosphere that fosters interactions and cross fertilization of ideas in high regard. It is impressed by LION's management, in particular its broad support for the members of the faculty and the PhDs.

LION is delighted with the committee's support for the fundamental, curiosity-driven research as being performed at LION and shares the committee's confidence that it will show its societal relevance in due time. In line with the committee's view LION sees good prospects for application of various research topics, such as novel mechanical structures, and will pursue this with vigor in the coming years. The connections with the financial world and the Leiden University Medical Centre have been established and will be expanded. The committee's suggestions to pursue opportunities for valorization in the areas of biophysics and instrument development will definitely be sought and/or expanded.

The LION management is acutely aware of the issue of safeguarding technical expertise around critical and complex equipment. Over the period of this review, it has supported the hire of a number of technical experts on temporary contracts with the firm belief that, in the long run, that would work best for LION. The philosophy is not enshrined in any way, and is reviewed on a regular basis, induced, e.g., by changes in the job market for technical experts, or changes in the university's collective labor agreement.

The committee has expressed its admiration for LION's commitment to redress the gender imbalance among the scientific staff and in the BSc student population. LION is very appreciative of the committee's endorsement and its suggestion that the University should subsidize a new staff position for a woman scientist for a six-year period, enabling it to further strengthen and rejuvenate itself. The committee's reflection on the representation of women in the Colloquium Ehrenfestii is fully in line with the policy change formulated by the Institute in early 2016 on this issue.

LION is firmly committed to putting its scientist in the spotlight. Therefore, it regularly nominates members of its staff for various international awards but the success has been disappointing. In the near future, LION will reflect on this issue.

LION is aware of the need of finding a successor for the current director and is confident that someone can be found to do the job.

March 14, 2017