

## Annual Report

2017-2018

Dondrite-Study Association of the Research Master  
Cognitive Neuroscience



Nijmegen

August 2018

Tineke Banda, Wessel Hieselaar, Viola Hollenstein, Tabas Shuja



## Table of contents

<b>Table of contents</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Goals</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Events</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Committees</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Quantitative data &amp; other parties</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Feedback</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Overview of appendices</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Appendix A: list of Dondrite events</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Appendix B: graphical representation of Dondrite</b>	<b>14</b>



## Introduction

This is the annual report for the study association of the research master Cognitive Neuroscience, Dondrite. The intention with which this report is written is to provide a clear overview about the progress we made as an association during the academic year of 2017-2018.

The report will start with repeating the goals that were set for the academic year of 2017-2018 by the Board of 2016-2017 in the policy plan. This report will then summarise the most important events that occurred during the past academic year. This is followed by a short reflection on every committee and the Board. Next, we will provide quantitative data as an addition to our descriptions for the sake of comparability in the future. Additionally, we will name our collaborations and sponsors throughout the year. Subsequently we will report feedback received, so that interested parties may find the feedback easily. We will end with a conclusion that will contain our own thoughts about this year and recommendations for the future. At the end of this report the reader will find the appendices.

We hope the reader will find this report clear and complete. It was written in the name of the Dondrite Board of 2017-2018.

Sincerely,

Viola (treasurer), Tabas (webmaster), Wessel (secretary) & Tineke (president)



## Goals

The goals as depicted in the policy plan for the academic year of 2017-2018 are:

- To increase visibility of Dondrite and its committees towards students of the master Cognitive Neuroscience. To achieve this, we proposed to do the following;
  - Build a website.
  - Order T-shirts.
  - Offer a free trial membership.
- To increase the cohesion between the different members of Dondrite and to promote the integration of international members within the Dutch system and within Dondrite. Moreover, we want to keep the second years still involved in Dondrite even though they are busier with the internship that year. To achieve this, we proposed to do the following;
  - Send a welcome letter.
  - Create an explanation page on the website.
  - Organise a mentoring program during the introduction.
  - Organise smaller events.
- Improve contact with and functioning of committees and elaborate the selection of committees. To achieve this, we proposed to do the following;
  - Start a new committee.
  - Organise at least two activities for active members.
- Increase transparency of the Board towards members and increase participation of members regarding the association and the decisions made. To achieve this, we proposed to do the following;
  - Make the Board meeting minutes public.
  - Make a feedback form on the website.
  - Have a contact moment with the Board every month.



## Events

Over the past academic year, Dondrite organised many events. For a complete list, please see Appendix A. Here we will highlight the more significant events:

Some of these events were recurrent events, such as the monthly Dondrite Borrel. This usually occurs on the first friday of the month and gives the members an easily accessible opportunity to catch up with each other at the Cultuur Cafe on campus.

The Dondrite Spotlight is a bimonthly discussion event for which the members can offer topics of their choice. These topics are often introduced by a movie fragment or a guest speaker.

In concurrence with the goals set for this year, we organised a number of Board events. These included a 'meet the committees' moment in both September and February, to show new students what committees Dondrite has.

We also had a lunch in the Refter that we advocated to our active members but was open to other members as well. This was quite popular; it offered a lot of flexibility and was easily accessible, since it did not require the members to sign up and happened at a time when everyone had a break.

Next to that we organised a few events accessible only for active members. These events comprised the Board preparing lunch for them as well as everyone meeting up at the pub and the Board buying them a round of free drinks. Both of these events were meant to allow the different committees to socialize and for us to thank them for all their efforts. The events were advertised through Facebook and Whatsapp. In both events less than half of the active members attended.

We also organised several Board question hours and open Board meetings, but for lack of interest (not one member showed up) we did not continue to do so every month.

Lastly, we organised three General Assemblies (GAs) throughout this year. First of all we organised one to discuss the last part of the Bylaws, as we did not go through all of them last year and we wanted to vote in the new articles. During this GA Tineke took over informally for Emma as president, as they had switched work roles within the Board for practical reasons. In the second GA we discussed the results of the Dondrite Questionnaire, the year and financial reports of last year, the new budget and policy plan and said goodbye to Rowan, Emma and Tristan and welcomed Tabas and Wessel. During the third GA we gave updates on all committees, handed out T-shirts to committee members, gave a financial update and reallocated part of the budget, voted on feedback of the Advisory committee, said goodbye to Marlies and welcomed Viola and positively evaluated the Application committee.

Like last year, Dondrite organised an Introduction afternoon in both September and February. Unlike last year, this day was followed by a so called free trial month, meaning that within Dondrite we treat all new students as Dondrite members in the first month of their studies. They were given access to activities and discounts just like other members. They were welcome at the GAs, but would have to subscribe before receiving voting rights. The trial month was installed so that new members could get a proper idea of what Dondrite is and does, before having to decide whether or not they wanted to join.



In the end of December the Board was asked by David Norris to participate at a Donders poster session. Little did we know that they were going to hand out several prizes, including the Donders cube. This was awarded to Dondrite as a whole for our outstanding contribution to the Donders Institute. David mentioned specifically our support to his courses, in the form of study groups.

The past year the travel committee organised a day trip to Amsterdam in the beginning of the academic year. They organised a successful weekend trip for the first time, to Berlin in the beginning of the second semester. Lastly they organised a hitchhiking competition to the north of the Netherlands at the end of the academic year. These events were very well received and the trip to Berlin was sold out.

For the second time, the Activity committee organised a gala in the beginning of February. This date was picked because it is the beginning of the semester, so students are not too busy yet. Since Dondrite was founded on January 31st, it also served partly as a birthday party. This gala was organised with the Donders Institute and was meant for everyone related to this institute and to the CNS master. The gala was called 'Through the looking glass' and sold out all 150 tickets. This was more than expected, so the committee was left with money.

From a conversation of the Board members with the new chair of the Donders Institute, Harold Bekkering, the idea arose to have a discussion panel about stress and mental health with people from different levels. This was organised by the Education committee. It was hosted by a Board member, who interviewed a current student, a PhD student and Harold himself on stage. Many people reacted positively and about 30+ students attended it. The Board feels strongly about this topic and may want to take this up again next year.

The Synapsium took place in June as usual, but on a weekend day this year. This was chosen because of the availability of locations on campus, but also to promote the presence of more people from outside the Radboud University. It sold out all tickets and had great speakers and workshops. The theme of this year was 'New waves in neuroscience'. The keynote speaker Tamar Makin spoke about artificial limbs and brain plasticity and the student keynote speaker Danielle Tump discussed the effects of zero gravity on the brain.

This year Dondrite had a pilot yearbook, made by the Scribe committee. Even though this committee was only formed in the second semester and didn't have many members, the result was very well received. It was free for Dondrites and cost 3 euros for non-members. Printing was organised online and did not exceed the budget. All members were invited to take part in it by filling in a google form. When filling in the form, members could indicate whether they wanted a copy.

During the last GA the gathered members voted to spend leftover money in the budget on Dondrite Merchandise. The Board looked up several options and possible costs for merchandise, after which the members voted via a poll on Facebook for mugs. These were ordered and arrived during the summer break. They are for sale to Dondrite members for 5 euros a piece and can also be used as promotional gifts by committees or the Board.



## Committees

Dondrite currently exists of the Board and six committees. For a graphical representation, please see the organogram in Appendix B. We will here provide an overview of the committees, with the first person mentioned serving as chair, and a short reflection on these in total seven different organisational groups with highlights and improvement points:

*Activity committee:* the committee consisted of Isabel Terwindt Kari Bosch, Lennart van Melis, Renuka Raghavan, Riv Maas, Marta Blasco Olivier and Idil Bostan and was supervised by Tineke. The committee repeated many of its successful events from last year and added some new (see Events). Organising these events ran mostly smoothly and in good spirit. A difficulty faced was transfer of knowledge and responsibility from the more experienced committee members to the newer ones. This was handled successfully within the committee by discussing it.

*Education committee:* the committee consisted of Vivian Vonk, Pablo Cásani Galdon, Sebastian Idesis, Margot Mangnus, Julia Pötkamper and Nancy Peeters and was supervised by Tabas. The committee repeated some of its successful events of the previous year, but also organised new events. In the beginning of the year, there were some cultural differences in terms of attendance within the committee. However, after discussing internally how the committee would like things to go and what they expect from each other, they reached an understanding and things improved. This resulted in members working well together and organising all events successfully.

*Scribe committee:* the committee consisted of Laura Toron, Wiebke Schwark, Georgia Carter and Victoria Poulton and was supervised by Wessel. The committee organised the monthly Dondrite News and the yearbook, which were well organised and finished on time. The creation of the yearbook was a first-time trial, which could be improved upon, mainly in regards to logistics and distribution. Nevertheless, the yearbook turned out beautiful and everyone participated equally in creating it.

*Synapsium committee:* the committee consisted of Amy Abelman, Lenno Ruijters (co-chair), Rebecca Wogan, Sebastian Idesis, Ilgin Kolabas, Anne Hoffman, Laura Toron, Anna Trimborn, Sophie Fennema, Jette de Vos, Thirza Dado, Debora Nolte, Tristan Looden, Flavia Arnese, Chen-Pei Lin and was supervised by Wessel. The committee organised the Synapsium, which was a great success! The communication between members and subcommittees could be improved, and the committee did not reach our intended sponsoring target. The committee updated the budget and organised a great event with few difficulties.

*Travel committee:* the committee consisted of Anneloes Hulsman, Wiebke Schwark, Amy Abelman, Marta Blasco Oliver, Chen-Pei Lin, Eline Radstake and for the big trip also Karol Piera, and was supervised first by Marlies and later by Viola. The committee organised a day trip to Amsterdam, a longer weekend trip to Berlin, and a hitchhiking competition to Groningen. The interest in the events were generally bigger than expected which made the continuing planning more exciting and positive, however sometimes the number attending our weekly meeting were rather small. Nonetheless this was compensated with engagement and communication between the meetings, and the committee



ended the year on a very positive note, excited to turn their ideas for next year into fun trips together with new committee members.

*Advisory committee:* the committee consisted of Arno Koning, Emma van Dijk and Rowan Sommers. The committee evaluated the documents before every GA and gave advice to the Dondrite Board throughout the year. In the beginning of the year the Advisory committee asked the Dondrite Board for more elaborate replies when they did not take over feedback. As far as the Board can tell, the committee worked efficiently and collaborated smoothly.

*Board:* the Board started this year by saying goodbye to Rowan Sommers, Emma van Dijk and Tristan Looden, who were replaced by Tabas Shuja and Wessel Hieselaar. In April Marlies Hiemstra left as well and was replaced by Viola Hollestein. We coordinated committees, organised several informative and social meetings and a few GA and made decisions regarding new plans, money, unexpected difficulties, etc. We cooperated strongly in the sense that we all updated each other and weighed in on discussions about every topic. A division of labour existed in so far that Tabas was responsible for the website, Viola for finance related issues such as reimbursements and checking the budget, Wessel for keeping the membership administration up to date and Tineke for organising the meetings. This collaboration went pleasantly and amicably, although it was sometimes difficult when one or several members were less available to balance tasks.

Additionally, Application committees have been temporarily formed to select new Board candidates. This process has been conducted successfully and has been positively evaluated.



## Quantitative data & other parties

<i>Start date</i>	<i>Number of members</i>
February 2016	3
September 2016	24
February 2017	6
September 2017	49
February 2018	9
Other	5

This totals to 96 members in the entire academic year of 2017-2018.

There were 37 active members, excluding the Advisory committee.

There were in total three GAs this academic year. The first one had 19 attendees, the second one had 26 attendees and the third one had 23 attendees.

The Dondrite Questionnaire was filled in by 24 members.

Dondrite was sponsored by:

- The CNS Master
- The Donders Institute
- MedCat
- ANTNeuro
- Brainproducts
- Studentlife
- The Donders PhD council
- Cultuur Cafe

Throughout the year Dondrite collaborated with:

- The gathered Master study associations of the faculty of Social Sciences
- The Master study association of Artificial Intelligence, CognAC
- The Donders PhD council
- The other study associations of research masters of our faculty, Maizena and Mosaic



## Feedback

*General assemblies:* during the GAs additional feedback received was that a GA should start half an hour later than the pizza arrives. Another question raised by the members was whether Dondrite could do something for Arno as he had just become a father again. Some suggestions were made to improve the use of the website, namely synchronising a calendar (which had already been done), and adding pictures of Board and committee members. Lastly the Board was asked to make the shared meeting minutes more visible.

*Advisory committee:* we received advice concerning the structure of the Advisory committee, which was taken over partly in the Board script and partly taken over and voted into the Bylaws by the GA. We also received advice on how to structure our year report, which has been integrated in this year report. The Advisory committee also performed a half-year check on our bookkeeping. Lastly they gave advice on when to hold the GA concerning the plans for 2018-2019, which we choose not to follow because of practical reasons.

*Questionnaire:* before the fourth GA (november) we sent out an online questionnaire. This was very broad and concerned several Dondrite matters. When it comes to online communication, the members were on average satisfied with the frequency. This was the same regarding the frequency of Dondrite events, although a preference was expressed for more informal events like lunches. The questionnaire made clear that many people were not aware of the website, but the ones that did know it were happy with it the way it is. There was a similar attitude towards the Dondrite News. The people that read it generally like it, but many people don't read it. Often this is because they expect it to only contain a schedule of upcoming events. Most members are at this point aware of the shared Board meeting minutes, but are not sure where to find them. Overall the Board members are considered approachable, although they differ in visibility. Regarding the call for Board members it was mentioned that many people were unsure on the amount of work it would be. The introduction was well-liked, but could have been earlier in the week and the crazy 88 game was a little too long. When it comes to the study groups, the majority of the members would like a bit more structure and guidance.

*Website form:* on the website is a feedback box meant for any questions or comments that members would like to pose anonymously. It got one entry this year, concerning the question whether Dondrite could organise a LinkedIn session on self promotion. As the Board we like this idea and have passed it onto the Education committee. They will probably organise an event related to this, although checking resumes and making professional pictures is a service the Radboud university already provides for free during the Career weeks every year.



## Conclusion

In this section of the year report we as the Board will reflect on the activities and developments of this year. We will then give our advice for the coming year.

2017-2018 was the first complete year in Dondrite's official existence. This meant that there was much room for growth and development, which is reflected in numerous changes and expansions. Looking back at the goals we had formulated at the beginning of the year, we are generally pleased with the progress made. Of the 12 concrete suggestions we formulated in the policy plan for this year, 11 were carried out in full. The last one, have an open Board meeting every month, was not continuously implemented, because of a lack of interest.

With regards to the visibility of Dondrite to external parties, we think this has improved over the year. This was clearly exhibited when Dondrite won the Donders Cube, for which we are very grateful. It was also demonstrated by the increased proportion of Donders employees taking part in Dondrite events, such as the gala. Less visible for the general public but equally important, is that Dondrite has received more emails from Donders employees on topics such as events and internships that may interest the Dondrites. From this, we conclude that our visibility and reputation is expanding, which is a very useful development and therefore worth continuing. To that end we came up with the idea of purchasing merchandise, which was approved during the GA and carried out at the end of the academic year.

When it comes to cohesion within Dondrite members and integration of international students, this remains a difficult subject because such processes are both hard to influence and hard to quantify. However, we do feel progress is being made in this area. This is demonstrated by the fact that the Multicultural Initiative arose this year. This was an initiative independent from Dondrite from several international and Dutch students to talk about the culture and integration in the CNS master. Together they organised several brainstorm evenings. At the end of the year, they took inventory of what was discussed and formulated several goals. Some of these will be communicated to the CNS master management, while the others have been taken up by Dondrite.

The collaboration between committees has not changed much from last year. Collaboration was clearest at big events such as the gala, when the event was organised by one committee but needed more people to help out during the event. Additionally, sometimes regular events were influenced by other committees, such as a theme Borrel to promote the trip. This collaboration worked well, yet didn't seem to increase the overarching feeling of belonging to Dondrite in the committees, compared to last year. There were a few events organised only for active members but these may have been inefficient because not all active members were present or because there were not enough of these meetings.

Finally, the transparency of the Board has improved in our opinion. This trend was already evident in the questionnaire. We have tried to improve this by being more active on social media, for example by having Board members take over the Instagram account for a week and post about their daily lives. The organogram has been updated and restyled. We have also added a personal introduction and picture of each Board member on the website. On the website our members can also find the meeting minutes of every Board meeting. As with some of the other points, it is hard for us to judge how other members feel about this topic.



Now that we have evaluated Dondrite's development of this year, we would like to briefly make some recommendations for next academic year. For more detailed plans and explanations of our intentions, please consult the Policy plan for 2018-2019. Here we will focus on linking the evaluation we just made to points of improvement:

- To stay connected to and informed by our members, we propose to repeat the questionnaire. Repeating this over the years will not only show our development over time but also serve as a check up that Dondrite is still focussed on the wishes of our members.
- To improve the cohesion amongst students we think stimulating student culture should be a point of action. One of Dondrite's main objectives is to make students feel welcome.
- As said before, the collaboration between committees to form one united association was a point of focus last year, but we feel that there is more to be gained in this area. Therefore, we propose this will explicitly be part of the new Policy plan.
- The past year, we have worked on visibility and approachability and made good progress. To continue that in a flexible, non-formal way we think the use of social media should be stimulated in the coming year. While doing this we also advise to think about information structuring, as we want to reach all members but do not want to become a nuisance.
- To make sure Dondrite remains visible, we also propose to invest in merchandise again during the coming years. If the coming Boards do this regularly and obtain different items every time, we can build up a collection of merchandise items for everyday use.
- To keep improving the transparency of the Board, we want to specifically focus on the recruitment of new Board members, by making clear what the Board does and to better support new Board members with documentation and a one month transfer period.



## Overview of appendices

Appendix A: overview of all Dondrite events in 2017-2018

Appendix B: organogram graphically displaying of Dondrite's organisational structure



## Appendix A: list of Dondrite events

- Introduction day September
- Meet the committees September
- Dondrite Spotlight
- Team building challenge
- Day trip Amsterdam
- Refter lunch
- GA, bylaws
- Dondrite Borrel
- Board question hour
- Dondrite Spotlight
- Scientific movienight
- GA
- Dondrite Borrel
- Dondrite Spotlight
- Dondrite Borrel
- Matlab session
- Introduction day February
- Dondrite Spotlight
- Gala
- Meet the committees February
- Dondrite Borrel
- RAGweek laserquest
- Career event
- Active member lunch
- Berlin trip
- Master party
- Dondrite Borrel
- Donders paintball
- Scientific movienight
- GA
- Active member drinks
- Brewery excursion
- Hitchhiking trip
- Discussion panel
- Synapsium
- Dondrite Barbecue

## Appendix B: graphical representation of Dondrite

