



New GYA Leadership to Further Develop the Global Young Academy as a Platform to the Benefit of Society and Nature

Berlin, 2 June 2016 – The Global Young Academy (GYA) has just completed its Annual General Meeting, which this year was held in Eindhoven, the Netherlands. The members elected their new leadership and for the second year in a row, the election brought to the head of the academy two female Co-Chairs: Dr. Mari-Vaughn Johnson from the United States of America was elected for the first time, alongside the re-elected Co-Chair Dr. Orakanoke Phanraksa (Bangkok, Thailand).

The GYA is an international academy of young scientists – embracing all disciplines from humanities to natural sciences – with 200 members from 54 countries. The membership comprises leading early career scholars from around the globe, all dedicated to using their research to benefit society. “The GYA has immense potential to have lasting impacts on science and society across the planet due to our capacity to bring the strength, character, and determination of each individual in our diverse membership together to achieve common goals,” Dr. Johnson says.

Mari-Vaughn Johnson (Temple, TX, USA) followed a liberal arts degree at Tufts University with a Masters in Environmental and Plant Biology from Ohio University and a Ph.D. in Wildlife from Texas A&M, and furthered her systems-based training with a postdoctoral appointment in the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). During a AAAS Science and Technology Policy Fellowship she served as Science Advisor and Lower Mekong Initiative Coordinator at the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs. Dr. Johnson enjoys her current career, where she functions at the nexus between science and policy development. Within the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, she works with a team of scientists and engineers to identify and address regional and national concerns related to agro-ecological systems, soil health, and water quality. She believes that it is imperative to develop and support policy-savvy scientists, who may then provide policy and decision makers with decision support tools grounded in sound science.

Dr. Johnson is committed to supporting the GYA vision of serving as a platform for young leaders across a broad variety of disciplines to find a mutual voice to the benefit of society and nature. She further believes that members’ lives are enriched and professional proficiencies grow through active membership with GYA, such that members will continue to serve society and champion science-based, inclusive, and fair solutions during and beyond their membership in GYA.

"We are a six year old organization, but that does not slow us from progressing to make changes. Currently, more visibility is needed for the GYA. It is the best timing to have Dr. Mari-Vaughn Johnson with us to help leading the organization. With her experiences and

engagement with top policy makers and diplomats, the visibility of the GYA will be escalated”, said re-elected Co-Chair Dr. Orakanoke Phanraksa.



The newly elected Executive Committee of the GYA.



Co-Chairs Orakanoke Phanraksa (Thailand, left) and Mari-Vaughn Johnson (USA, right).

Further elected to the Executive Committee of the GYA are:



Yusuf Baran (Kayseri, Turkey)

Yusuf Baran is the Dean of the Faculty of Life and Natural Sciences and a professor at the Department of Molecular Biology and Genetics at Abdullah Gül University, Kayseri, Turkey. His research focuses on cancer molecular biology and science and technology policies.



Thomas Edison Dela Cruz (Manila, Philippines)

Thomas Edison Dela Cruz is professor for Microbiology at University of Santo Tomas, Manila, Philippines. He documents fungi for drug discovery and environmental clean-up and also develops learning materials on fungi for kids.



Martin Dominik (St Andrews, UK)

Martin Dominik, astronomer at University of St Andrews in Scotland, is a strong advocate of communication being an essential part of science as well as science being an integral part of society. Moreover he is engaged in fostering education and development across the world with a current focus on the Middle East.



Ali Douraghy (San Francisco, California, USA)

Ali Douraghy is a science policy expert with the Office of the Foreign Secretaries of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine where his professional interests are focused on revitalizing the role of science in international development and diplomacy.



Fridah Erastus (Nairobi, Kenya)

Fridah Erastus is Senior Lecturer at the Kenyatta University, Nairobi, Kenya. Her research involves questions of General Linguistics and English philology and investigates phenomena of multilinguality, indigenous languages, and urban and youth languages in Africa.



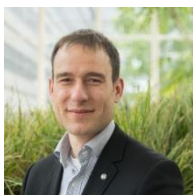
S. Karly Kehoe (Halifax, Canada)

Karly Kehoe is the Canada Research Chair in Atlantic Canada Communities at Saint Mary's University in Nova Scotia. As a historian her research focuses on religion, ethnicity and migration in the nineteenth-century British Atlantic.



Shamsun Nahar Khan (Dhaka, Bangladesh)

Shamsun Nahar Khan is the Chairperson and Associate Professor at the Department of Pharmacy, East West University, Dhaka, Bangladesh. Her specialization is in "Drug Discovery and Development" and "Quality Assurance" system in pharmaceutical industries. As a researcher she has a big passion for society and engages for the sustainable development of high-quality contemporary science education systems in Bangladesh.



Moritz Riede (Oxford, UK)

Moritz Riede is Associate Professor at the Physics Department of the University of Oxford. He is passionate about renewable energies and the transition to a sustainable energy system. His research focus is on emerging solar cell technologies.



Samuel Sojину (Abeokuta, Nigeria)

Samuel Sojину is affiliated with the Department of Chemistry at Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Nigeria. As teacher and researcher in the field of organic geochemical studies he is driven by his passion for a sustainable future.

About the Global Young Academy

The Global Young Academy was founded in 2010 with the vision to be the voice of young scientists around the world. The GYA empowers early-career researchers to lead international, interdisciplinary, and intergenerational dialogue by developing and mobilizing talent from six continents. Its purpose is to promote reason and inclusiveness in global decision-making. Members are chosen for their demonstrated excellence in scientific achievement and commitment to service. Currently there are 200 members and 134 alumni from 70 countries. The academy is hosted at the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities (BBAW) in cooperation with the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina. The GYA has been supported by the IAP: the Global Network of Science Academies and received its seed funding from the Volkswagen Foundation. Since 2014 it has been funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). The GYA has also benefitted from project funding from a variety of donors and partners.

A brief report giving insight into the organization's major achievements as the voice of young scientists may be downloaded at <http://bit.ly/1L7WbQy>.

Contact persons for the media:

Florian Wiencek, GYA Media Officer; wiencek@globalyoungacademy.net.

Tel: +49 30 20370-653

For more information on the GYA:

Orakanoke Phanraksa, GYA Co-Chair (Thailand); orakanoke.gya@gmail.com

Mari-Vaughn Johnson, GYA Co-Chair (USA); mvj.gya@gmail.com

Heidi Wedel, GYA Managing Director (Germany); wedel@globalyoungacademy.net,

Tel: +49 30 20370-631

Learn more at: <http://www.globalyoungacademy.net>

Follow us on Social Media:

Facebook:

<http://www.facebook.com/GYA.online>

Twitter:

<http://www.twitter.com/GlobalYAcademy>

Subscribe to the GYA newsletter:

<http://eepurl.com/bjM-Xr>