European Society for Biomaterials-YSF (ESB-YSF) Board Elections Application Form

It should not exceed two A4 pages and should include a photo of the candidate.

Name: **Geert-Jan W. Graulus**

Nationality: **Belgian**

Date of birth: **21/08/1989**

Current position (position, affiliation):

Assistant professor Biochemistry and Biomaterials, Hasselt University

Research interests (5 keywords):

1. *recombinant biomaterials*
2. *elastin-like proteins*
3. *biorthogonal chemistry*
4. *biodegradation*
5. *dynamic hydrogels*

Position applied for (please rank your preferences from 1 (most preferred position) to 6 (less preferred position):

5	YSF Spokesperson
3	YSF communication and dissemination officer
1	YSF educational officer
2	YSF secretary
4	YSF national chapters liaison officer

Past ESB conferences attended:

1. *ESB2023 (Davos, Switserland)*
2. *WBC 2024 (Daegu, South Korea)*
3. *ESB 2025 (Torino, Italy)*

4. Candidate summary (max 1 page)

Motivation:

I'm a late bloomer when it comes to biomaterials and, consequently, to the European Society for Biomaterials. After completing a master's thesis in the domain of gelatin-based materials for bioreactor applications at Ghent University (Prof. Dr Peter Dubruel and Prof. Dr Sandra Van Vlierberghe), I lost track of society during my PhD, shifting my focus to degradable polyester synthesis for photonic applications. After joining Hasselt University, I was drawn back into the field of biomaterials, where I established a new research line in the field of recombinant biomaterials, building on the available expertise and infrastructure in protein engineering. Currently, the Biomolecule Design Group at Hasselt University is home to 12 PhD students, of whom eight are actively engaged in the field of biomaterial development.
In 2023, I attended my first ESB meeting in Davos, where I was happy to reconnect with former colleagues and friends while making new connections in my area of research. Since then, I consider the ESB meeting to be my home conference, where BDG simply has to be present.
Seeing the impact the ESB and the YSF have on the career development of junior researchers, I would love to contribute to this mission by serving on the YSF board. This commitment aligns well with my passion for coaching junior researchers.

Achievements:

2022-present: Educational ambassador of the Belgian Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (BSBMB) to the Federation of European Biochemical Societies (FEBS)
2021: Selected delegate of the Royal Flemish Chemical Society (KVCV) to the Chemistry Europe early-career researchers meeting (Weinheim, Germany)
2014-2016: President of the Chemistry Conference for Young Scientists: ChemCYS 2016 (Blankenberge, Belgium)

Communication skills:

My communication style is characterised by a love for metaphors and the occasional meme. I genuinely believe that a well-executed joke (mostly puns) can lighten the mood during meetings on complex issues or when teaching a difficult subject.
With respect to written communication, I draw energy from nicely formatted documents and presentations, something I hope to contribute to the YSF board. As a board member of the BSBMB and an educational ambassador to FEBS, I have experience in effective meeting strategies. I hope to bring this experience to the YSF table.
Finally, being more introverted, I may come across as quite cool and reserved, but rest assured: I'm a warm person who will put the YSF's interests first.

Any other ideas/remarks:

Since I really enjoy mentoring students and junior researchers, I'm setting my eyes on the educational officer role. Since textbooks focus on the bachelor's/undergraduate level, while many of us start specialising in the domain of biomaterials during our master's education, I would like to introduce ways to share best practices with respect to biomaterials education. In this respect, I really enjoyed the educational luncheon organised during WBC2024. By educating educators, I aim to contribute to the development of effective teaching methods that enable future students in the interdisciplinary field of biomaterials to become independent researchers. By acting as a liaison to FEBS, I believe many common issues in life science education could be addressed in collaboration with this related society.