Foreword

In the north of the Netherlands is a unique university with four centuries of experience in research and teaching. It plays a prominent role as a research university, both on a European and global scale. 25,000 students, including 2,000 foreign students, are working on a Bachelor’s or Master’s degree. I’m talking about my university, the University of Groningen.

I am very proud to present this brochure, which hopes to provide an overview of what happened in 2008 at this special university. They include not only academic achievements, but also, for example, sporting success for our students at the Olympic Games. There was a memorable farewell party for Dr Simon Kuipers, who had been President of the Board of the University since 2000. The cover of this brochure features a photograph of the theatre group Close Act, who performed at his farewell party.

Research and teaching are jobs that are shaped by individuals. That is why I would like to draw your attention to the portraits in word and image of eight excellent researchers. These eight people represent all the academics who are involved with the University of Groningen. They are all driven by their dreams and ambitions. The University does all it can to help realize these dreams. Groningen is the base and the world is the workspace!

Prof. Frans Zwarts
Rector Magnificus of the University of Groningen
The University of Groningen has been involved in high-level academic teaching and research for almost four centuries. The University was founded in 1614 and is one of the oldest universities in the Netherlands. Many well-respected academics (including Nobel Prize winner Frits Zernike) and other men and women who have played an important role in society have been students, researchers and lecturers at the University. The University of Groningen has a modern, student-oriented approach to education, with close contacts between engaging and inspired tutors and active and innovative students. Each degree programme uses this approach in its own way. For example, in the problem-oriented approach to education in the medical sciences, emphasis is placed on the patient from the very first week. Third-year law students gain experience as barristers or judges in their own student court, under the supervision of experienced and often well-known lawyers. Students are given plenty of freedom to compile their own study programmes. This process is made easy by the wide and varied range of options, consisting of 60 Bachelor’s programmes and 115 Master’s programmes. The structure of these programmes, with flexible Bachelor’s modules, Majors and Minors, also adds to the options. Nine faculties...
cover practically all academic fields, from Material Science to Religious Studies, from Archaeology to Psychology and from Business Science to Movement Science. The University has more than 24,000 students, 2000 of which come from abroad. Every year, 2,500 students graduate and 300 researchers receive a PhD. About ten percent of the total research and teaching at all Dutch universities happens in Groningen.

Leading research university

Aside from playing an important role nationally, the University of Groningen is a leading research university at European and global levels. Groningen’s researchers and research groups are among the best in the world, particularly in the fields of Chemistry, Biology, Material Science, Astronomy and Philosophy. The University of Groningen is working hard to further strengthen this position. Young and promising academics qualify for tenure-track positions, which offer them the opportunity for a full academic career, leading to a professorship. The position of Rosalind Franklin Fellow is a tenure-track path specifically for female researchers. The University’s personnel policy emphasizes the development of talent, where good performance leads to good career prospects and rewards. The University looks for practical applications of its research in many different ways. New companies emerge directly from the University as part of the University of Groningen Holding Company, which encourages researchers to put their applications on the market and helps new companies to make a successful start. The University of Groningen is also a partner in various alliances, consortia and other projects with companies, public organizations and the government in fields such as nanotechnology, information technology, life sciences, social cohesion and energy. The University is working closely with the Dutch company Gasunie on the Energy Delta project. The aim is to play a leading role in the global field of energy research.

Plenty of room for talent

Research and teaching are closely linked. Excellent researchers pass on their up-to-date research results to students. The University of Groningen expects students to get the best out of themselves, providing an educational environment which makes this possible. Ambitious students may sign up for more challenging programmes in both the Bachelor’s phase (the honours track for excellent students, e.g.) and the Master’s phase (the ‘top’ or Research Master’s programmes, such as the Research Master’s in Nanoscience). Students who find themselves, for whatever reason, in a programme that is not right for them can easily switch to a programme that is better suited to them, whether at a university or a higher professional education institute. For those who have serious sporting aspirations, there is ample opportunity to combine top-level sports with a university degree. For students wishing to develop commercial initiatives, the StudEnterprise Foundation provides stimulus for the development of entrepreneurship among students. The University of Groningen takes its students seriously, an example of which is their participation in management. The University of Groningen is an academic community in which staff and students are strongly involved and well represented. Students take part in the discussions and the decisions, and thus feel involved with the university proceedings.

Archipelago of knowledge islands

The University of Groningen offers a stimulating study and working environment. The university buildings are spread like an ‘archipelago of knowledge islands’ throughout the city and its surrounding area. These ‘islands’ may be one of the atmospheric historic locations in the city centre, right at the heart of patient care in the University Medical Center Groningen or the modern and architecturally exciting Zernike campus. Students and staff have access to ad-
advanced equipment and the most up-to-date IT facilities. The University Library is excellently equipped and available for study and research. The distances in Groningen are small and meeting up is easy. This is important, as significant discoveries are often made on the blurred lines between academic fields. For example, researchers in the Behavioural and Cognitive Neurosciences research school are trying to find answers to the many questions surrounding the workings of the human brain. This involves biologists, medical scientists, psychologists, physicists, mathematicians, philosophers and linguists working together.

Crossing Borders
In today’s professional environments, whether you have a career in research and teaching, the business world or diplomacy, international experience is essential. The University encourages its students and researchers to gain experience outside their own fields of study and in other countries. Finding a good destination for foreign research or study experience is made easier by the diverse networks and alliances that the University has. For example, the University is an active member of the Coimbra Group, an association of long-established European universities. An alliance has also been formed with Uppsala University in Sweden, to which the universities of Göttingen in Germany and Ghent in Belgium also belong. Additionally, there has been long-standing cooperation with leading universities in Indonesia and China, including the renowned Pudan University. The University of Groningen puts special focus on the advancement of higher education in developing countries.

Cosmopolitan
Because the advancement of knowledge and innovation flourishes in an international environment, the University of Groningen’s orientation and ambitions are turned towards the whole world. The University’s character is rapidly becoming international. Students and researchers are streaming in from all over the world. For example, there is a large contingent of Asian students, particularly from
China and Indonesia, as well as many from Eastern Europe, the United States and South America. There are also more than 500 students from Germany, following in the footsteps of Groningen’s first Rector Magnificus, Ubbo Emmius (1547-1625), born in Greetsiel in Northern Germany. The range of degree programmes follows these developments, with already more than 75 Master’s programmes and 8 Bachelor’s programmes being offered in English, and more being added each year. All of this is making the University and Groningen as a city increasingly cosmopolitan.

Groningen: City of Talent

Geographically, the University of Groningen has an unusual position within the Netherlands, as it is the only large university in the northern part of the Netherlands. More than 4000 first-year students from all over the country move to Groningen each August to start their university studies. Together with the students of the Hanze University Groningen and the students arriving from foreign countries, this creates a concentration of talent within the city, with 25 percent of the population of the city studying in higher education. Because of this, the University, the Hanze University and the Groningen council like to refer to Groningen as a City of Talent, a knowledge centre that functions as a hothouse in which young talent can ripen and bloom.

The University and the northern region are constantly influencing each other. The University of Groningen attracts high-quality economic activity and supports this with technical facilities, know-how and investment. The University Medical Center Groningen is a top medical institute that contributes at a national and international level.

Open horizons

Conversely, the city and its surroundings determine the appearance and character of Groningen’s university. Groningen is an atmospheric, historic city that is almost 1000 years old. Old buildings and modern architecture stand side by side. The controversial Groningen Museum that stands in the main creates an immediate and lively link between the main train station and the inner city. Groningen’s ‘living room’, the Grote Markt, will see the development of the Forum, an architecturally challenging cultural and debating centre, in the coming years. In the Euroborg Stadium, 20,000 supporters of FC Groningen can cheer on their team. The surrounding countryside also has much to offer in the form of open space, nature and a beautiful cultural landscape. The open horizons have contributed to a mentality which the University of Groningen and its staff recognize: sensibility, honesty, freedom and an open view of the world.

‘Sensibility, honesty, freedom and an open view of the world.’
Ben Feringa

Ben Feringa is professor of synthetic organic chemistry and one of the University’s most renowned scientists. He was appointed KNAW Academy Professor in 2008.

“My dream is to build something that can replicate itself.

‘We are building our own molecules and basically designing our own molecular world. We are doing this with practical applications in mind, such as new medicines, new materials or new chemical processes. Our main aim, however, is to discover why nature does particular things in particular ways. One example of the work we are doing is our design of the world’s first molecular motor. We did this in order to study how nature makes these motors. The motors can be found everywhere in nature and they have all sorts of important functions in your body. My dream is to build something that can replicate itself. In Darwin Year it is nice to be working on something that was here before biological evolution began. Because, of course, evolution did not start with the complex systems that we now know of, but was preceded by a chemical evolution in the primordial soup. I want to know what these primitive replicating systems are. How do they reproduce? How do they pass on information? It is one of the greatest mysteries of our time. I find it hugely fascinating.’

Groningen student is Dutch figure skating champion
Karen Veenhuizen, who studies Communication and Information Sciences, has become the Dutch figure skating champion for the ninth time. She was 14th at the European Championships, but had to miss the World Championships due to an autoimmune disease.

Bernoulliborg opening
The Bernoulliborg has been officially opened. The new main building for the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences is named after father and son Johann and Daniel Bernoulli. These mathematicians lived in the 17th and 18th centuries and came from Groningen and Switzerland.

Oldest agrarian settlement in Egypt
Researchers from UCLA (Los Angeles) and the University of Groningen, including Prof. René Cappers, have discovered traces of an agrarian settlement in the Fayum region, 75 km south of Cairo. Dating from 5200 – 4200 BC, this is the oldest in Egypt.

Delegation from the University visits Latin America
A delegation from Groningen made a two-week tour of partner universities in Mexico City, São Paulo and Campinas (Brazil), and Buenos Aires (Argentina). This has initiated a number of new partnership projects.

Centre for Synthetic Biology
The University of Groningen has a new Centre for Synthetic Biology. Biologists, bioinformaticians, chemists, physicists and engineers will work together to construct the elements of a biological cell using chemical and biochemical building blocks.

Annual Academic Prize
The ‘Battle of the Universities’ took place for the third time on 11 June 2008. Eleven Dutch universities competed in Leiden for the Annual Academic Prize 2008, a prize for the best presentation of academic research to a general audience. The Groningen team, led by astronomers Prof. Peter Barthel and Dr Gijs Verdoes Klein, presented a communication plan to demonstrate the importance of infrared light, which is all around us, and the secrets of infrared astronomy. The eight astronomers from Groningen won first prize, EUR 100,000. This will be enough to allow them to continue their project on the popularization of infrared astronomy. One important aspect is the RUG-Discovery, a truck that has been converted into a traveling laboratory and is used for open days for the general public and schools. The programme for 2009 (the UN Year of Astronomy) also includes an infrared photography contest and the election of a ‘Mister/Miss Infrared Universe’. 2009 is also the year in which the European Space Agency will launch an infrared space telescope, which will be carrying measuring equipment that was developed by the Groningen section of the Netherlands Institute for Space Research (SRON). University of Groningen astronomers work closely with SRON Groningen. They also advised the ESA on the building of the infrared space telescope, which was named after William Herschel, who discovered infrared.

Go to www.academischejaarprijs.nl
Armagan Koçer, a top talent in biochemistry from Turkey, has received both a Vidi grant and a top European grant, the ERC Starting Grant.

I would like to discover what happens in the senses at a molecular level. Every day we were able to follow the television, radio and internet reports by Eelco Bosch van Rosenthal and Sander Warmerdam, both of whom are correspondents for the NOS (the Dutch ‘BBC’) in Washington and graduates of American Studies in Groningen. The University of Groningen is the only Dutch university that offers a Bachelor’s programme in American Studies. The programme is taught entirely in English and was recently rated ‘excellent’ in a national quality survey. What makes the programme unique is its interdisciplinary character. The study material is approached from various perspectives, focusing on culture, history, language, literature, constitution, ethnicity and religion. Many students do placements or follow courses in the United States, often as a part of their Groningen curriculum. Maarten Kolsloot, for example, was a volunteer in the campaign team for Christopher Dodd, the presidential candidate who resigned from the race for the Democratic nomination in early 2008 after receiving only 0.02 percent of the vote in the Iowa caucus. Bosch van Rosenthal and Warmerdam are not the only NOS foreign correspondents that earned their degrees in Groningen. Ineke Holtwijk (who studied Dutch) was a long-term correspondent in South America and we regularly receive news from Rome by Andrea Vreede (classical languages, archaeology and Italian).

I would like to discover what happens in the senses at a molecular level. I can see several possibilities for progress and I love working these out, like a puzzle. Our senses are incredibly important, yet we know very little about them. Before I came to the University, I was working on the development of a method of administering medicine. The idea was to use synthetic balls as a casing for poisonous cancer drugs (for example). The drugs would only be released once they reached the cancerous cells. In the course of this research, I used a particular protein which was a very simple variant of a protein that plays a role in the senses, such as hearing and touch. Learning more about this protein is not only fundamentally valuable, it may also lead to new applications, such as the treatment of diseases. However, there is still a long way to go.
Lodi Nauta Professor of Medieval and Renaissance Philosophy at the Faculty of Philosophy. He was awarded a Vici grant of EUR 1.25 million in late 2008.

Lodi Nauta

I want to approach Renaissance humanism from a new angle.'
Trudy Dehue

Trudy Dehue, Professor of Theory and History of Psychology, published the book *De Depressie-epidemie (The Depression Epidemic)* in 2008. In this book she argued that science not only describes reality but also creates it.

‘Why is it that especially in wealthy societies the number of people with ADHD, autism and depression is growing so quickly? I consider this to be one of the most important questions in the world, because if we are not happier even with enough food and high levels of prosperity, health care and housing, then what is prosperity for all countries worth striving for? The current depression epidemic in affluent societies cannot be understood without looking at it from a historical and philosophical perspective. I demonstrate that the meaning of words such as depression, ADHD, etc. have changed over time and that they acquire added meaning. For example, what we now call depression used to be known as sadness or suffering. In the mid-nineteenth century a process of classification of many forms of suffering and unusual behaviour as psychological disorders began in medical science. The term ‘depression’ was coined as a label for a lack of ‘lust for life’. As new meanings were added to that label, millions of people began to suffer from depression. It is partly because of this sort of mutual influence that I think that science must have more contact with society.’

International Master Bandung - Groningen

On 29 August 2008, twelve students from Indonesia received their Master’s degrees in Environmental and Infrastructure Planning. This two-year programme is the result of a partnership between the Faculty of Spatial Sciences (Planology department) and the School of Architecture, Planning and Policy Development, part of the Institut Teknologi Bandung in Indonesia. The Master’s programme focuses primarily on sustainable solutions for problems concerning infrastructure, environment and water. International comparisons are constantly made to help the process. It helps to compare identical problems (such as traffic jams, floods, and privatization) in various contexts. The Indonesian students usually have a few years’ work experience, often as engineers, geographers or planners with local and regional government bodies. This programme gives them a basis for a managerial position. They also gain an insight into possibilities for improving policies relating to these fields in their own country. The first year of the Master’s programme takes place in Bandung and the second in Groningen. The first student from Groningen recently started his year in Bandung. The Technical University in Bandung is highly regarded in Indonesia. The double degree programme is part of a wider partnership in both teaching and research between Groningen and Bandung.
‘You could say that I’m paid to solve puzzles.’

Tammo Bijmolt

Tammo Bijmolt is Professor of Marketing and the scientific director of the SOM research institute and graduate school. He is conducting research into the consumer loyalty. ‘What I find very motivating about my field is that it concerns everyday matters and thus is often closely tied to practical reality. I can, as it were, explain to an aunt or uncle at a party what it is that I do, because it is recognizable. I am currently researching the interaction between people as consumers and the business world. How do people make choices in shops? What are the effects of advertising? What makes people loyal to a particular chain of shops? What is the effect of customer loyalty cards? I want to know what it is that attracts customers and what companies can do to create a bond with the consumer. My research is certainly not conducted in an ivory tower – I love getting out into the field. You could say that I’m paid to solve puzzles. I take practical data and try to distil surprising conclusions from it. Often things turn out to be a bit different from what you expect.’

Healthy Ageing

How can people stay healthy as they grow older? And how can we provide patients with chronic conditions (who are often elderly) with the best care? These are essential questions for our ageing population. The University Medical Centre Groningen (UMCG) has always conducted a lot of research in this area. This has ranged from fundamental research into ageing processes in fruit flies and stem cells to the development of improved prosthetics and the tutoring of medical teams on care for the elderly. For this reason the UMCG and the University of Groningen are investing a lot in research, patient care, and education concerning ageing. The aim is to make the north of the Netherlands the most important European centre for knowledge on Healthy Ageing. This will be realized through partnerships with higher education colleges, companies and institutions in the northern provinces and the city of Groningen. LifeLines and the European Institute on the Biology of Ageing (ERIBA) are central to the activities concerning Healthy Ageing. LifeLines is a large biobank and cohort study with an ambitious research programme on the factors that influence the development of common chronic conditions. The researchers will collect information on the health of a total of 165,000 people in the north of the Netherlands over a period of thirty years. The research will provide a wealth of data which will benefit more than just the medical world. ERIBA will be the most important European research institute in the field of the biology of ageing and will bring top researchers from all over the world to Groningen.

www.umcg.nl/azg/nl/research/20/
Groningen must become the centre for Energy Law.

Martha Roggenkamp

Martha Roggenkamp is the first professor of Energy Law in the Netherlands and is a pioneer in her field. She works in the Faculty of Law.

‘Energy law has only recently become an academic field. Previously, very few people concerned themselves with it outside a few company lawyers for energy companies. I found it exciting to start something new in this unexplored field. Since the late 1980s, when I first became interested, this niche has developed considerably. It no longer only involves government and business, but also lawyers and law students. It concerns legislation that covers the most basic needs of humankind and the economy. If there is no energy, everyone has a problem. We were given an example of this when the gas supply through the Ukraine was disrupted. This example shows how broad the field has become and that it can have global political consequences. Due to legislation on carbon emissions even environmental protection is involved. I hope to contribute to the development of legislation as a basis for ensuring sustainable energy supply and avoiding conflict. Groningen will be the Dutch centre for core knowledge on energy law!’

International Bachelor’s degree programme in Law

In September 2008 the Faculty of Law started the international Bachelor’s degree programme International and European Law (LL.B). This degree programme will focus primarily on internationally orientated excellent students from the Netherlands and abroad. The programme is extraordinary in that it will teach students international and European law without using the Dutch legal system as a basis. This makes the programme especially suitable for foreign students and Dutch students who have international careers in mind. The new Bachelor’s degree programme in International and European Law is a legal degree programme with a multidisciplinary perspective. Although students of this degree programme will primarily be legal specialists, they will also have knowledge of political and economic issues in international and European contexts. We expect that students who complement this programme with an internationally orientated Master’s degree programme will be well prepared for jobs at ministries of foreign affairs, the European Union, the United Nations and other international cooperation organizations. The same applies to non-governmental organizations such as Amnesty International and Greenpeace. The new programme is not intended for students aiming to work in the courts. There are other internationally oriented Bachelor’s programmes in law that are more suitable for these students, such as Law in Europe or International and European Law.

European support for gas research

GrASp (Gas research And Sustainability program) has received a EUR 10 million grant from the European Fund EFRO. GrASp is a national consortium headed by the Energy Delta Research Centre of the University of Groningen.

Record number of students at the University of Groningen

On 1 October, the official polling date, the total number of registered degree students at the University of Groningen was 25,167, which is more than ever before. The 25,000th student to enrol was Fenghui Xiong from Shanghai.

Another Nobel Prize winner visits Groningen

Prof. Frank Wilczek from the USA, who won the 2004 Nobel Prize for physics, has given a lecture at the University. Prof. Günter Blobel, the German-American winner of the 1998 Nobel Prize for Medicine, was the keynote speaker at a medical conference in June.

The University of Groningen moves up the world rankings

The authoritative British magazine Times Higher Education has published the QS World University Rankings, placing the University of Groningen at 144, 28 places higher than 2007.

Discovery Truck visits Burgers’ Zoo

Pupils from the Nijmegen school Scholengemeenschap Groenewoud studied the heat patterns of animals in Burgers’ Zoo, making use of infrared cameras. This was made possible by the travelling laboratory and lecture room RUG-Discovery, which is on tour for the whole year.

‘Groningen must become the centre for Energy Law’

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More and more DNA being revealed

University researchers have isolated mitochondrial DNA from the breast bone of a cave bear, which became extinct 15,000 years ago. Biologists from DSM, the University of Groningen and TU Delft have also established the full DNA sequence of the fungus that produces penicillin.

Publication in Nature on dark matter

Three supercomputers, including ‘Stella’ at the University of Groningen, have provided clues for the search for dark matter in the universe after a long series of computer simulations. The scientific journal Nature has published an article on these results.

Karel van Mander prize for Groningen theologians

Lecturer Justin Kroesen and former lecturer Regnerus Steensma, of the Faculty of Theology, have received the 2008 Karel van Mander prize for their book on medieval village church interiors.

Partnership extended

The strategic alliance between the University of Groningen and the University of Uppsala (Sweden) has been expanded to include the universities of Ghent (Belgium) and Göttingen (Germany). The four universities will work together on programmes, student recruitment and grant proposals.

International energy congress

Energy experts from all over the world, active in business, government, and knowledge institutes, visited the Energy Delta Convention, which was organized by the Energy Delta Research Centre at the University of Groningen, the Energy Valley Foundation, and the NOM (Investment and Development Agency for the Northern Netherlands).

Dead Sea Scrolls Expertise Centre

The Qumran Institute at the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies is the largest knowledge centre on the Dead Sea Scrolls in Europe. The scrolls were found in eleven caves near the ruins of the settlement of Qumran on the north-west shore of the Dead Sea, 12 kilometres south of Jericho, in the 1940s and 1960s. The Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek texts date from a period between roughly 250 BC and 50 AD and provide insight into the Jewish culture and social-religious contexts of the time around Jesus’ life. The reconstruction and translation of the more than thousand documents has been carried out at various places, including Groningen. Apart from a dozen nearly intact scrolls, some of which measure between 7 and 8 meters, the documents had disintegrated in thousands of fragments. Experts at the Qumran Institute at the University of Groningen published the complete translation of the non-Biblical scrolls in one bound and attractively designed volume in 2007. This edition contains an extensive general introduction to the scrolls and introductions to the individual texts. The book also contains a complete and up to date list of all of the written works discovered as well as information on recent publications. The former head Prof. Florentino García Martínez was made a Knight of the Order of the Dutch Lion, a prestigious royal decoration, in 2008. The current deputy head Dr Mladen Popovic received the prestigious Keetje Hodshon Prize for his dissertation, which had already been awarded a cum laude.

‘We need more understanding of the development of psychiatric problems.’

André Aleman

Neuropsychologist André Aleman has been a professor of cognitive neuropsychiatry at the UMCG since 2007. He also became the head of the research school BCN-BRAIN in the same year.

I started working in research because I wanted to contribute to a more fundamental understanding of psychiatric problems. In many cases, the causes of these problems are unknown. This is why many treatments are not as effective as we would like them to be, particularly those for neuropsychological disorders concerning memory, attention and concentration problems. One question that I would like to try to answer is why patients with psychoses have such a limited perception of their own situation. Many patients with schizophrenia cannot function normally. Their living conditions can be very chaotic, they may be prone to self-neglect, etc., and those around them notice this. However, as soon as somebody tells this patient that they need to be treated, he or she is convinced that there is nothing wrong. The whole world is mad, apart from them. For family members and therapists this is a very serious problem, because in the Netherlands you cannot simply force somebody to have treatment. Why is it that these people are so unaware of their situation? I want to explore whether this is connected to disrupted brain circuits, as well as, of course, whether it is treatable.’
Kader Abdolah, a refugee from Iran writing in Dutch, has concluded his period as guest writer for the University. He taught seminars on the Koran as a literary inspiration and gave public lectures on his writing, literary examples and dreams in literature.

Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende was a guest at the Donald Smits Centre for Information Technology (CIT). He was informed about Draadloos Groningen (Wireless Groningen), the LOFAR radio telescope, and TARGET (large-scale data processing).

The Canadian Studies Centre, the first and only centre of its kind in the Netherlands, was established twenty years ago and now has partnerships with seven universities across Canada. Founder and organizer Jaap Lintvelt received a Royal Decoration.

The Centre for Isotope Research has started using wine to study the effects of greenhouse gases. Carbon dioxide is absorbed by grapes, and wine is useful for studies as the place and time of harvest are precisely documented.

The Kernfysisch Versneller Instituut has been conducting research on nuclear and atomic physics for forty years and held a big celebration. Special attention was paid to its boss, Muhsin Harakeh, who is leaving.

Italian medievalist Sabrina Corbellini became a Rosalind Franklin Fellow in September 2008. She has been awarded a Starting Grant from the European Research Council. ‘The Middle Ages have always fascinated me – the period between classical antiquity and humanism. It was a time of transformations that looked to the past while moving towards a new apogee. I also feel the need to develop myself in new directions. At first sight, it seems that my career has not been straightforward. Initially, I specialised in Dutch and Italian literature. Subsequently, I moved on to a different academic field, namely history, although I continued to focus my research on the Middle Ages. Despite the difficulties in switching between different academic fields, I am now able to integrate a large variety of research methods. At this moment, I’m working together with my research team on the study of the diffusion of vernacular bible translations. The analysis of medieval book ownership allows me to reconstruct the social and cultural context of the circulation of religious texts. Thanks to the combination of different sources of information, I’m in the opportunity to create a comprehensive picture of vernacular bible reading. If possible, I’d like to map out the entire culture of reading in the late Middle Ages.’
Facts & Figures 2008

University of Groningen
› founded in 1614
› 26,500 students
› 5,500 staff (20% international, 80% Dutch)
› annual turnover: 545 million euro
› nine faculties, covering nearly all academic disciplines

Strategic partners:
› Uppsala University (Sweden); Ghent University (Belgium); Göttingen University (Germany)
› Universitas Gadjah Mada, University of Indonesia, Bandung Institute of Technology (Indonesia);
University of Beijing, Tsinghua University, Fudan University (China); Osaka University (Japan)
› National Autonomous University (Mexico); University of São Paulo (Brazil)

Over 100,000 alumni, including:
› Job Cohen, Mayor of Amsterdam
› Aletta Jacobs, first female student in the Netherlands
› Willem Kolff, inventor of the artificial kidney
› Hans Wijers, Chairman of the Board of Management Akzo Nobel
› Ernest Yonli, former Prime Minister of Burkina Faso

Education
26,500 students
› 5,350 first year students (46% male, 54% female)
› 2,200 from abroad (1,600 degree and 600 exchange students)
› coming from 113 countries
› 850 outbound exchange students from Groningen University
60 Bachelor’s programmes
› 8 English-taught
115 Master’s programmes
› 75 English-taught
› 10 Double Degree (in collaboration with other universities)
4 Erasmus Mundus

Research
1,717 full academic staff
571 professors (489 men, 82 women)
› 506 full professors
› 65 associate professors
1,500 PhD students
› 870 from abroad
› 310 dissertations
› 16 Research Master’s programmes
› 5,000 academic publications
› 100 million euro contract research
› 9 graduate schools

Excelling research groups (in European Top Three):
› Astronomy, Biology/Ecology, Chemistry, Materials Science

Other high scoring research groups:
› Archaeology, Arts & Humanities, Medical Sciences, Molecular Biology, Nanoscience, Neurosciences, Philosophy, Sociology, Theology

Renowned scientists working at the University of Groningen, past and present:
› Heike Kamerlingh Onnes, student and PhD (1870-1879): Nobel Prize Physics 1913
› Albert Szent-Györgyi, researcher (1922-1926): Nobel Prize Medicine 1937
› Fritz Zernike, Professor of Physics (1920-1958): Nobel Prize Physics 1953
› George Sawatzky, Professor of Physics (1969-2002): Spinoza Award* 2000
› Ben Feringa, Professor of Chemistry (1988-present): Spinoza Award* 2004
› Serge Daan, Professor of Ethology (1994-present), Japanese Eminent Scientist Award 2008

* The Spinoza Award is considered to be the Dutch ‘Nobel Prize’

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Michiel de Groot
except:
› Evert-Jan Daniels, Hollandse Hoogte: 12
› Jim Robot: 18
› Justin Kroesen & Regnerus Steensma: 24
› Jur Kuipers: 2-3
› Elmer Spaargaren: cover, 14, 18, 19, 20, 27

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Drukkerij de Bruin, Zuidbroek

Photo on cover: street theatre company
Close Act performing at the farewell party for Board President Dr Simon Kuipers.