The Annual Review aims to provide a general impression of the University of Groningen in the year 2012. It discusses a wide variety of important, interesting and remarkable news facts, trends and achievements, and presents eight portraits of people for whom 2012 was a very special year. The official facts and figures concerning the University’s activities in 2012 can be found in the University of Groningen Annual Report: www.rug.nl/jaarverslag.
Foreword

The University of Groningen’s past year was excellent. There were more students, more students who completed their propaedeutic phase within a year, many more publications and citations, and more research grants. We were, for example, very successful in the programmes of the European Research Council – nine applications from Groningen researchers were successful, seven Starting Grants and two Advanced Grants.

In addition, the University of Groningen is rising in international ranking lists. The University climbed from 134th place (in 2011) to 89th place in the Times Higher Education Ranking. According to the QS World University Ranking, we are in 109th place; last year it was 115th place. We are once again one of the top 25 employers in the ‘Best Places to Work in Academia’ ranking list published by The Scientist every year. Twenty of the top 25 are American universities and research institutes, and we are one of the other five.

A degree certificate from the University of Groningen turns out to be of great value to graduates looking for a job with a major enterprise. In the 2012 Global Employability Survey published by the New York Times and the International Herald Tribune, Groningen is in 81st place, the second Dutch university. It’s probably no coincidence that international students think we are the best university in the Netherlands. This can be concluded from the latest International Student Barometer, a worldwide survey of international student satisfaction from which the University of Groningen emerged (again) as the university in the Netherlands they are most likely to recommend.

And let’s not forget the wonderful gold medal won by our student Epke Zonderland on the high bar during the Olympic Games in London. All in all, we have plenty of reasons to be proud of our performance in 2012.

The Board of the University of Groningen

left to right:
Prof. Elmer Sterken, Rector Magnificus
Mr. Jan de Jeu, Vice president
Prof. Sibrand Poppema, President
**Richard Dawkins guest of honour at opening of Biology building**

Evolutionary biologist and author Richard Dawkins opened the Linnaeusborg, the biology building of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences. He also gave a public lecture and joined in debate with Groningen students.

**Published in Nature**

An article by a team of astronomers from the Kapteyn Institute, led by Léon Koopmans, describing their study of galaxy imaging using a gravitational lens, was published in the leading journal Nature.

> SEE SPOTLIGHT

**Education Day**

Laura Batstra of the Faculty of Behavioural and Social Sciences won the Lecturer of the Year award for 2011. She gave a brief lecture on the dangers of over-diagnosis in psychiatry. An education seminar preceded the election.

**Open Day on Location**

Over 5000 secondary school students attended the University’s Open Day on Location event, in which the different degree programmes give presentations to prospective students at their own locations spread across the city.

**Emancipation prize awarded to Els Borst**

Els Borst, former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport, was awarded the Aletta Jacobs Prize 2012 for her services to society. Aletta Jacobs, the first woman to study at a Dutch University, was a student in Groningen.

**Top journals**

It is a great honour for researchers to have an article published in prestigious scientific journals like Nature and Science as these journals have very strict inclusion criteria. In 2012, no fewer than 19 articles with Groningen contributors were accepted, sometimes as first author. The journal Science (founded in the US in 1880) published an article on research on sea grasses by Tjisse van der Heide, together with colleagues from Radboud University Nijmegen and the Royal Netherlands Institute for Sea Research NIOZ (15 June). Seven other articles in Science had Groningen researchers as co-authors.

The journal Nature (founded in Britain in 1869) published an article on metabolism and the formation of fatty tissue with Hans Jonker as one of the authors (17 May). There was also an item on the formation of red blood cells, with Pim van der Harst as the first author (20 December). In addition to these two, there were nine other articles in Nature with Groningen contributors.

The Nature Publishing group also publishes specialized periodicals. These, too, included 33 articles with Groningen contributions. In the March issue of Nature Nanotechnology, Kees Hummelen and Henny Valkenier, together with other researchers, published on quantum interference in molecular charge transport. In the May issue of Nature Chemistry, Ben Feringa’s group published an item on the molecular motor.

> www.rug.nl/research/our-top-research/top-publications
'Leave them kids alone!'

‘When I started working in the field of psychiatry after finishing my PhD, I felt that too many children were being diagnosed with ADHD. I asked critical questions, but they fell on deaf ears. I’ve really been able to flourish at the department of Special Needs Education and Youth Care at the University of Groningen. Here we value discussion and students voted me lecturer of the year, precisely because I encourage them to think critically and to ask questions. Children aren’t born with ADHD. Disorders exist because we define certain behaviour as such. Of course some children do need help, and medication can bring considerable relief. But we can also interpret the enormous rise in children with some kind of diagnosis as a sign that we need to do something about our society – combat poverty, improve education. We ask a great deal of children: they have to do well at school, sit still and pay attention, be socially skilled and control their emotions. Not all children can do that. We shouldn’t be too quick to try and fix children – ‘Leave them kids alone!’ Instead, we should first try to fix society and adults. For example, by offering tailored parent and teacher guidance so that children don’t unnecessarily end up with psychiatric labels and treatments. Let’s acknowledge that child-rearing is difficult. I’ve got four demanding kids myself, who can be hard work at times. It’s not always as nice as the cutesy ads make out.’

Laura Batstra

Psychologist Laura Batstra has won national recognition with her ADHD research and her book on the subject.
Groningen gets ‘migratory bird professor’
The Dutch Bird Protection Association and the World Wide Fund for Nature have funded a new chair in migratory birds for biologist Theunis Piersma. The protection of migratory birds needs to be underpinned by scientific research.

Honorary consul of South Korea
Sibrand Poppema, President of the Board of the University, was appointed honorary consul of the Republic of Korea. The official ceremony was conducted by the South Korean ambassador, H.E. Key Cheol Lee.

Olympic torch unveiled
The University of Groningen and the Hanze University Groningen unveiled a ‘wall of fame’ in the Sports Centre at the Zernike complex. A plaque commemorates the names and achievements of students who have taken part in the Olympic Games.

Transatlantic conference on internet freedom
In collaboration with the George Washington University, the department of Law and ICT organized a transatlantic conference on internet freedom and digital responsibility. The conference was held in both Washington and Brussels.

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Summer Academy on Biotechnology and Society in Africa
Fifteen participants from seven countries attended the Summer Academy on Biotechnology and Society in Africa in Groningen. The aim was to help African regulators and legislators to draw up regulations in the area of biosafety.

Law and IT
A major part of our communications, work and leisure time nowadays is organized with the help of IT. The consequence is that our legal relationships are more and more often being created online. The department of Law and IT at the University of Groningen provides Bachelor’s and Master’s degree programmes at the interface of technology and legal studies that are unique in the Netherlands. They overlap with virtually every field of law. Private law concentrates on electronic agreements, automation contracts and digital evidence. Company law examines copyright, teleworking and virtual entrepreneurship. Administrative law deals with privacy protection, freedom of speech and the government’s obligation to make certain issues public and provide information. Computer criminality and investigative issues are dealt with by criminal law. The tax law aspects of cross-border internet services are also covered. Within all these legal fields, the international law character of IT law plays a major role. Finally, the Groningen degree programme Law and IT pays attention to legal information science (automation in legal practice), such as legal information and communication systems and support systems for decision-making.

www.rug.nl/law-and-ict
Stem cell biology is a dynamic field that’s changing very rapidly. To make new discoveries, researchers need a model for their experiments. Together with my team, I’d like to develop an internationally accepted model for research into stem cell functions. The model is *Macrostomum ligano*, a tiny, transparent flatworm that regenerates itself and is therefore highly suitable for research into regeneration and ageing. This worm can help future researchers with pioneering research. I anticipate that ERIBA will become one of the Netherlands’ top institutes. Success is achieved by bringing together the right people, funding and energy. To succeed in research, you need researchers with passion. You can’t keep going without motivation. I’ve experienced personally just how hard it is to find good people. I’m really happy with the team that I lead. I think it’s a shame that as team leader I have less time to conduct experiments, but I do spend a lot of time in the lab. That’s where the breakthroughs occur and of course I’d like to be there when it happens.’
**June 15**

Children’s University about the workings of the human body

More than 500 primary school children from Groningen, Friesland and Drenthe attended a real lecture on blood vessels, given by a professor in the Academy Building. It was an especially festive occasion because this was the tenth time that the Children’s University was organized.

**June 20**

Hundredth swimming certificate for foreign student

Rector Magnificus Elmer Sterken awarded the 100th swimming certificate to a foreign student in the Willem Alexander Sports Centre. The growing interest in swimming lessons shows that they are meeting a real need among this target group.

**July 6**

Summer ceremony marks the end of the academic year

A festive ceremony brought the academic year officially to a close. Top students and researchers were awarded prizes and the group of international alumni ambassadors were introduced. Bank director Matthijs Bierman was named Alumnus of the Year.

**July 6**

Another international CASE Award for Groningen

For the second year running, the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) has awarded the University of Groningen a prize for its programme to involve regional Alumni Circles in securing funding. > SEE SPOTLIGHT

**August 8**

Olympic gold with a Groningen gloss

Epke Zonderland won a gold medal on the high bar at the London Olympics. The Groningen student of medicine achieved a score of 16.533 in gymnastics, thanks mainly to the unique ‘triple flight’ element, the Cassina-Kovacs-Kolman combination.

**Spotlight 6 July**

Alumni circles

For the second year in a row, the Ubbo Emmius Fund was awarded a prize by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) – a Bronze Award for the idea of alumni circles. CASE is the world’s most important organization of professionals in the fields of alumni policy, communication, marketing and fundraising in higher education. The principle behind an alumni circle is that alumni ask their fellow ex-students to join a circle in a certain region. The circle members meet several times a year; invite interesting University scientists to give presentations, and jointly adopt a special project or research project to support financially. The Gooische alumni circle has already raised € 250,000 for Ellen Nollen’s research on the genetic basis of neurodegenerative diseases such as Parkinson’s, Alzheimer’s and Huntington’s. The Amsterdam circle raised € 100,000 for Gerard Koppelman’s research on the development of asthma in young children. The Hague/Rotterdam circle supported Maria Loi’s research on hybrid solar cells. The Aduarder circle is supporting Beatriz Noheda’s research on piezoelectric materials, which efficiently convert pressure into electricity. A fifth circle has been founded in the East of the Netherlands. > www.rug.nl/uef
‘Most pharmacy students become pharmacists, but I opted for a career in research. Even at school I was interested in how medicines work. You take a pill and your headache goes away. How does that work? After my PhD I could have chosen for a career in the pharmaceutical industry, but the freedom of the academic world had greater appeal. Together with my team, I build fundamental knowledge, which the industry can use to develop effective medicines. We’ve received two grants totalling about €2 million for research into substances and methods that can be used to detect and inhibit inflammations. Although it’s all ‘publish or perish’ in academia, publishing should never be an end in itself. Publishing in scientific journals is a way to share your knowledge so that others can build on it. That’s why it’s so important to be sure that your results are correct. I always personally check the raw data that I get. That’s something you can’t fiddle with. You also have to accept that you don’t always get the data that you expect. You can’t tweek the results, you have to modify the applications. That’s something I look at very closely.’
13
Start of Introduction Week for first-years
More than 4200 new students attended KEI week in Groningen, the biggest introduction week in the Netherlands. Accompanied by students from other years, groups of first-years familiarized themselves with student life and with Groningen as a student city.

16–26
A University of Groningen presence at major summer festivals
The University of Groningen had a presence in the Nanoplaza at Llowlab, the floating laboratory at the Lowlands music festival in Biddinghuizen. The University also had an exhibition in the Qu3 science pavilion on the Noorderplantsoen in Groningen during the Noorderzon arts festival.

29
RUG welcomes 1500 international students
Some 1500 international staff and students, newly arrived in the Netherlands, were welcomed in Martini Church and the Academy Building. Speeches, a lunch and an information market accompanied the welcome.

1
Hans Aarsman begins his writer in residency
Author-photographer Hans Aarsman, the University of Groningen’s writer in residence for 2012, presented seminars to students in September and October on looking, writing and presenting. He also gave public lectures.

3
Opening of Academic Year 2012–2013
The university year was officially opened in the Academy Building’s Aula. Matthijs Bierman, Director of Triodos Bank Nederland, was awarded the Alumnus of the Year prize for 2012. This was followed by a festive programme of events outdoors.

29 August
International Student Barometer
All over the world, students registered at a university or university of applied sciences outside their home country were sent a questionnaire at the end of 2011. The aim was to measure how satisfied they were with teaching quality, accommodation, support and facilities, and arrival services. Within the Netherlands, twelve institutions – eight universities and four universities of applied sciences – participated in the survey. A total of 8,670 foreign students completed the questionnaire, including 1297 students at the University of Groningen. The University of Groningen scored well to very well in all four categories, landing it in first place overall. Groningen is in the Top 3 when it comes to the categories degree programme content, support and arrival services. Topics such as the content of course units, study advice, contact with lecturers and the annual University of Groningen Welcoming Ceremony were especially appreciated. The latter in particular has been assessed as very good by international students for many years. University of Groningen students answered the question whether they would recommend their university to fellow students in their home country with an enthusiastic ‘yes’. The ‘recommendation score’ of 89 is significantly higher than that of other universities in the Netherlands and puts Groningen in a comfortable first place in the category of ‘most recommended university’ for the third consecutive year.
As a student I took lectures in social psychology by Robert Cialdini, one of the most famous social psychologists in the world. I knew instantly what I wanted to do with the rest of my life. He asked the same fundamental questions about human behaviour that I was asking. Why do we stereotype? Why are we influenced by people who are similar to us? We know more about the universe than about what happens in our own brain. I explore the question of moral self-image. We all want to be moral and yet we do immoral things, like dropping litter on the ground, cutting others off in traffic. People often compensate for immoral behaviour by doing something good so that they don’t feel so bad. A possible example of this is the cyclist Lance Armstrong, who used doping and lied about it, but at the same time did a lot for cancer research. I want to find out how our moral self-image develops and how we deal with it. I feel it is an honour to be a Rosalind Franklin Fellow. It gives me an opportunity to be a role model for women in academia. Worldwide I note that few women rise to the rank of professor, certainly in economics faculties. Here the number of men and women in my department is about the same. That was one of my reasons for choosing Groningen.”
National Spatial Election Debate
Students and young staff of the Faculty of Spatial Sciences organized a debate in the run-up to the national elections on 12 September. Six prospective MPs discussed their views on issues relating to landscape planning.

Opening of centre at theological faculty
The Centre for Religion, Conflict and the Public Domain at the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies (GGW) was officially opened. The research institute examines the role of religion in Western society.

Desmond Tutu made an honorary doctor
South African Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu was awarded an honorary doctorate on the recommendation of the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies. The award recognizes his exceptional services to his country in the fields of reconciliation and health care.

Third European-Asiatic meeting
The administrators from some 100 top universities in Europe and Asia met together at the Asean European Meeting (ASEM) Rectors’ Conference in Groningen. The aim was to promote cooperation in the field of education.

Spectacular rise in Times Higher Education ranking
The University of Groningen jumped from 134th place in 2011 to 89th place in the Times Higher Education ranking. The British educational magazine Times Higher Education, which rates universities across the world, not only looks at research and teaching, but also at international reputation.

International position
As a result of the internationalization of higher education, global competition between universities is increasing – everyone wants to attract talented students and top researchers. As a consequence of this, the University also has to continually attract research grants from the limited funding sources of the Dutch government, the EU and the business world. A strong international profile is thus essential, partly reflected in international ranking lists. This makes clear at a glance exactly where a certain university stands. The Strategic Plan states that by 2015, the University of Groningen wants to hold a stable position in the top 100 of the world in the most important international ranking lists. The year 2012 brought realization of that ambition an important step closer:

- THE World University Rankings 89
- QS World University Rankings 109
- Academic Ranking of World Universities 103
- National Taiwan University Ranking 75
- Webometrics 77
- Essential Science Indicators Citation Impact 56

These positions mainly refer to academic research. There are ranking lists for other areas as well. The Universitas Indonesia Green-Metric Ranking puts the University of Groningen in 53rd place with regard to sustainability. In addition, Groningen graduates appear to be sought after on the international labour market, according to the ‘Global Employability Survey 2012’, published by the New York Times and the International Herald Tribune.

www.rug.nl/about-us/where-do-we-stand/rankings
‘At school I found it fascinating to really think things through – not stopping if you no longer know the answer, but keeping on going. It was logics and the philosophy of language in particular that really grabbed my interest, and they still do. With logic you can distinguish sense from nonsense, reflect on what’s possible and what isn’t, how a sentence can be grammatically correct and yet nonsense. Is the sentence “The king of France is bald” true or false? France doesn’t have a king, so what is it really saying? I focus on logical reasoning: when does it work and when doesn’t it work? In my inaugural lecture I illustrated this question with a magic trick. If a trick works, it’s based on good reasoning. If it doesn’t, then there’s something wrong with your reasoning. Why is that? Take paradoxes. You know intuitively that there’s something wrong, but you can only solve this philosophical puzzle by reasoning logically and treating language very precisely. It gets even more complicated if the information keeps changing and you have to take into account what other people know. As in the game Cluedo, in order to win, you have to work out who knows what about whom and who doesn’t. I find that fascinating.’

‘The king of France is bald’
European Medical School Oldenburg-Groningen
The University of Oldenburg in Germany, together with the University of Groningen and the UMCG, established a European Medical School. The institutions will join forces to train doctors. Forty students from Oldenburg will do clerkships in Groningen and vice versa.

Installation of Rosalind Franklin Fellows
Fourteen top female researchers, most of them from abroad, were installed as Rosalind Franklin Fellows. Through this programme the University has now offered 68 tenure-track positions to top female talent.

Gronings team wint Labyrint Publieksprijs
Two University of Groningen teams, ‘Overlevende Noordpool’ and ‘Love to Know’, reached the final of the Labyrinth Public Award. The Leiden team iSPEX won the Jury Award, and ‘Over-levende Noordpool’ took the Public Award.

Groningen graduates sought after in job market
The 2012 Global Employability Survey of the New York Times and International Herald Tribune shows that degrees from the University of Groningen are highly rated by major companies. The University of Groningen ranks in 81st place, thanks in part to its broad international degree programmes.

University honours Olympic athletes
The University honoured the four students who took part in the Summer Olympics: yachtswoman Philipine van Aanholt, athlete Marit Dopheide, rower Rogier Blink and gymnast Epke Zonderland.

Labyrint Audience Prize
Every year, the Annual Academic Prize is awarded to the most successful popularization of academic research. The team with the most creative communication plan wins the prize of € 100,000 to implement the plan submitted. The organizations involved include the VPRO and NTR (the broadcasting stations behind the television programme ‘Labyrint’), NWO, KNAW and NRC Handelsblad. The participating teams comprise university staff and students from all Dutch universities.

The most notable part about the 2012 edition was that two Groningen teams reached the final three. Their projects were ‘Over-levende Noordpool’ [Surviving/About the living North Pole] and ‘Love to Know’. Unfortunately, the expert jury awarded the Annual Academic Prize to the only non-Groningen finalist, the ‘iSPEX’ team from Leiden. The audience could choose the winner of the Labyrint Audience prize, which did go to a Groningen team, the ‘Over-levende Noordpool’ project. The winning subject will form the content of an episode of the TV programme Labyrint.

Team leader Maarten Loonen of the Arctic Centre of the University of Groningen expects that the Audience Prize will result in enough support to send an expedition to an unknown part of Spitsbergen – the unspoilt island of Edgeøya, where no-one has set foot for sixty years.

www.wetenschap24.nl/programmas/labyrint
‘Organizing the exhibition on the Dead Sea Scrolls in the Drents Museum is taking up most of my time at present. In Jerusalem I selected the scrolls that we’re going to exhibit. The really big scrolls aren’t allowed out of Israel, but I chose a few magnificent smaller ones, plus some interesting fragments. I support a multi-disciplinary approach and you’ll see this reflected in the exhibition. We show not only the scrolls, but all aspects: classical languages, archaeology, ancient history, the ancient Near East. The ancient world wasn’t made up of isolated communities. There was a lot of interaction – East and West were in contact with one another and exchanged ideas. Like modern-day globalization, but then in Antiquity. I want to place these scrolls in their historical and cultural context and tell the stories of the people behind them. The scrolls show that the Bible didn’t drop ready-made from the skies. Two thousand years ago there were still many different versions of what we now know as the fixed scriptures. It’s like stepping into a time machine and seeing with your own eyes how ideas about life after death and the coming of the Messiah evolved. All these scrolls, fragments and snippets make up the pieces of the puzzle that is the religious and historical development of our culture.’
Major grant for research into molecular self-assembly
The Functional Molecular Systems research project, a collaboration between the University of Groningen, Radboud University Nijmegen and Eindhoven University of Technology, has been awarded a grant of €26.9 million. The project is one of the six to receive a Gravitation Grant from the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO).

Report on fraud affair prompts regulations
The Levelt, Noort and Drenth Committees presented their joint final report on the Diederik Stapel fraud case. As a result, the University of Groningen has taken action to emphasize to students and researchers the importance of academic integrity.

Child care foundation supports Groningen research
The Kinderpostzegels (child care stamps) foundation donated €150,000 to Orthopedagogy researchers who are developing a ‘toolkit’ for sexually abused children taken into foster care.

Meeting of University of Groningen Alumni Circle in Rijksmuseum
Sixty University of Groningen alumni gathered in Amsterdam’s Rijksmuseum under the watchful eye of Rembrandt’s painting ‘The Sampling Officials’. General Director Wim Pijbes and paediatric pulmonologist Gerard Koppelman gave presentations. The event was hosted by Princess Marilène of Orange-Nassau.

Groningen team iGEM world champions
A team of eleven Groningen students became world champions in Boston in the annual iGEM competition. iGEM is the abbreviation of ‘International Genetically Engineered Machine competition’. The Groningen team beat 170 teams from all over the world with bacteria that can detect rotting meat. The Groningen team had previously won the European championships. The Groningen iGEM team had designed genetically manipulated bacteria that change colour as meat begins to go off. This ‘food warden’ is attached to a plastic rod packed in foil and stuck to the meat. The bacteria come to life once the rod is broken. Rotting meat emits a volatile substance that penetrates the foil and reaches the bacteria. These then change colour and thus indicate when the meat is no longer safe to eat. The foil does not allow liquids or bacteria to pass through it and is thus safe to use. The Groningen team won the prize partly thanks to their multidisciplinary approach and their original, professional presentation. The jury was also impressed by the fact that the application really works and was worked out to the last detail, even down to the packaging. The team hopes this application will contribute to counteracting unnecessary food wastage.

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30
OCTOBER

5
NOVEMBER

15
NOVEMBER

28
NOVEMBER

31
OCTOBER

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› www.igem.org
Oscar Kuipers: ‘We use the iGEM competition as a teaching method in which the supervisors remain in the background and just offer feedback and facilities. It’s the students who dream up what they want to do and develop their idea completely independently. The great thing about these students is that they’re open to the wildest ideas and are willing to try anything. I think it’s fantastic working with such motivated people. The idea of developing bacteria to detect rotten food has heaps of potential. One possibility is that we’ll devote a separate research project to it.’ Alicia Daszczuk: ‘The night before we had to submit our data for the European championship, we were still busy working on the final details. One student couldn’t stand it any longer and went to the lab. He came back absolutely delighted: the bacteria had changed colour. This was the first visible proof that our idea worked. You have to be really motivated for this competition – you don’t do it just to earn credit points. I’ve learned a lot and it was an inspiring experience. We wanted to make a statement about the waste of food: too much food is thrown away because of the date on the packaging. Thanks to these bacteria, that’s no longer necessary.’
### University presents Green Mind Award

PhD students Tuan Anh Nguyen and Faris Nizamic won the Green Mind Award. They received €200,000 to make the University of Groningen ‘greener’. Their prizewinning plan will make the Bernoulliborg a highly sustainable building. 

See Spotlight

### Recipients of EU grants honoured

Nine applications from Groningen researchers – seven Starting Grants and two Advanced Grants – were honoured by the European Research Council in 2012. A festive event was held in their honour. The University of Groningen scores very highly each year when it comes to European grants.

### First Groningen biologists leave for Antarctica

Researchers at the University’s Willem Barentsz Polar Institute are going to the Antarctic research station Rothera, where the Netherlands has four new mobile laboratories. The Groningen study is investigating microlife in the Antarctic Ocean.

### Number of PhDs reaches record level

Marc Kramer gained his PhD at the Faculty of Economics and Business with a study into the returns of investment advisors. This was the 410th and final PhD conferral for 2012, breaking the previous record (399 in 2011, 384 in 2010, 343 in 2009, and 321 in 2008).

### €6.5 million grant for astronomical research

The University of Groningen has received a new science data-handling centre. It will support the European Space Agency mission to launch the Euclid satellite in 2020 in order to study dark matter and dark energy.

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**Green Mind Award**

In spring 2012, the Board of the University of Groningen set up a competition for students and staff – the Green Mind Award. Who could come up with the most pioneering, original idea to improve the sustainability of the University’s operations or buildings? There were 62 entries, from all kinds of fields. Two PhD students from the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences won first prize. Their plan was to make the Bernoulliborg, where they work, more sustainable in its waste processing, energy and water use. Their plan is based on simple ideas such as waterstops on all taps, economical toilet flushing systems and warning systems to reduce the energy use of your PC. The ideas that won second and thirds prize were also so good that they will be implemented too. Second prize went to two students for a solar panel system to heat water for the showers at the ACLO sports complex. Professor of Photophysics Maria Antoinetta Loi won third prize with her ‘solar umbrella’, a parasol with plastic solar cells that can be connected to a laptop, for example on a sunny day when the user wants to work outside.

[www.rug.nl/duurzaamheid/greenmindaward](http://www.rug.nl/duurzaamheid/greenmindaward)
'I still take Plato down from the shelf on a regular basis; they’re interesting texts that make you think. To really puzzle out the language, wrestle with Greek particles that make the language so much richer and express nuances that we need a roundabout translation for in Dutch, I find it all absolutely fascinating. I like to convey this passion to students during the few lectures that I still give. I have gradually come to love administrative work. I found it a challenge to make this step, wanting to discover new sides to myself, and contribute to the development of the Faculty. This allows other colleagues to focus more on research and teaching. The Faculty is changing quickly in response to changes in society. I’m proud of many of the innovations taking place in the Faculty. For example, I firmly support the new degree programme European Languages and Cultures. The fact that we’ve had to cut back and give up some of the minor languages really affects me. But how can we justify to society programmes with only zero to four first-year students a year? It’s traumatic for the people involved, I am well aware of that, but I want to be able to pass on a financially healthy Faculty to my successor.'
A university for society

The University of Groningen focuses on three special fields of interest: healthy ageing, energy and sustainable society. All three aim at a sustainable development for both people and planet. A few examples in 2012 are mentioned below.

1. healthy ageing

Eugene Berezikov
› stem cells, regeneration and ageing
Awards an ERC Starting Grant

Ciska Wijmenga
› genetic mechanisms in celiac disease
Awards an ERC Advanced Grant

2. energy

Maria Loi
› solar cells from liquid and organic half-conductors
Awards an ERC Starting Grant

Marc van der Maarel
› transforming biomass to fuel and other applications
Installed as professor of Aquatic Biotechnology and Bioprocess Engineering

Beatriz Noheda
› piezoelectric energy from mechanical stress in materials
Nominated as Fellow of the American Physical Society
sustainable society

Desmond Tutu  
> champion of peace and reconciliation in South Africa  
Awarded an honorary doctorate by the theological faculty

Jacques Wallage  
> integration and public administration  
Appointed as (temporary) director of the Institute for Integration and Social Efficacy

Erin Wilson  
> the role of religion in contemporary society  
Appointed as director of the Centre for Religion, Conflict and the Public Domain

> www.rug.nl/research/our-top-research/
Facts and Figures 2012

General
- Founded in 1614
- 28,000 students
- 5238 Full Time Equivalent staff
- Annual turnover: EUR 614 million
- 9 faculties, covering all academic disciplines
- 110,000 alumni

Strategic partners
- Europe: Uppsala University (Sweden); Universiteit Gent (Belgium); Georg-August-Universität Göttingen (Germany)
- Asia: Universitas Gadjah Mada, University of Indonesia, Bandung Institute of Technology (Indonesia); University of Beijing, Tsinghua University, Fudan University (China); Osaka University (Japan)
- America: National Autonomous University (Mexico); University of São Paulo (Brazil); University of California, University of Pennsylvania (USA)

Research
- 2,059 Full Time Equivalent academic staff
- 479 full professors (male/female ratio: 385/94)
- 1,500 PhD students
- 436 dissertations
- 14 Research Master programmes
- 5,000 academic publications
- 9 graduate schools

International
- 2,974 of 27,345 Master and Bachelor students
- 1,100 visiting students
- 800 of 1,500 PhD students
- 18,2% academic staff
- 115 nationalities
- 20 English-taught Bachelor's degree programmes
- 93 English-taught Master's degree programmes
- 8 Erasmus Mundus programmes
International rankings
› Times Higher Education World University Rankings 89
› QS World University Rankings 109
› Academic Ranking of World Universities 103

Renowned scientists, past and present
› Johan Bernoulli, pioneer in the field of calculus, 1700
› Gerardus Heymans, professor of philosophy and psychology, 1890
› Jacobus Kapteyn, discoverer of the evidence for galactic rotation, 1900
› Heike Kamerlingh Onnes, student in Groningen, Nobel Prize for Physics 1913
› Albert Szent-Györgyi, researcher in Groningen, Nobel Prize for Medicine 1937
› Willem Kolff, PhD student, inventor artificial kidney 1946
› Frits Zernike, professor of physics, Nobel Prize for Physics 1953
› George Sawatzky, professor of physics, Spinoza Award 1996
› Dirkje Postma, professor of pulmonology, Spinoza Award 2000
› Ben Feringa, professor of chemistry, Spinoza Award 2004
› Serge Daan, professor of ethology, Japanse Eminent Scientist Award 2006
› Petra Rudolf, professor of physics, Descartes Award 2008

Famous alumni
› Wim Duisenberg, first President European Central Bank
› Aletta Jacobs, first Dutch female student in modern history
› Klaas Knot, President Central Bank of the Netherlands
› Prince Bernard of Orange-Nassau
› Prince Maurits of Orange-Nassau
› Princess Annette of Orange-Nassau-Sekrève
› Princess Mariëlle of Orange-Nassau-Van den Broek
› Wim Pijbes, managing director Rijksmuseum Amsterdam

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Communication Office
University of Groningen
P.O. Box 72
9700 AB Groningen
The Netherlands
communication@rug.nl
0031 50 383 5445
www.rug.nl

Interviews
Marjan Brouwers

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Jeroen van Kooten
except:
ESA: 18
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