Annual Review
University of Groningen
2013
The Annual Review aims to provide a general impression of the University of Groningen in the year 2013. 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 year 2013 has been a difficult one for many universities across the globe. Even distinguished universities in Europe, Asia and the United States have seen their growth decline or stagnate with falling student and publication numbers. Dutch universities have coped well by comparison: student numbers did not decline, nor did the number of publications. Among Dutch universities, the University of Groningen has achieved one of the best performances.

Our University’s growth is without doubt the positive result of policy adopted several years ago by the faculties. There are two cornerstones to this policy. The first, and perhaps most important, is the creation of broad-based Bachelor’s degree programmes. These programmes appeal strongly to today’s students, who are well aware that society attaches less value to specialist knowledge than it does to in-depth knowledge that is imbedded in a more comprehensive academic framework.

The second cornerstone underpinning the appeal of programmes on offer at the University of Groningen is the introduction of English-taught programmes. These have secured the University a strong position in the market for international students. This is critically important for the University’s growth prospects, given that the number of 18-year-olds in the Netherlands is set to decline in the not too distant future. Like all universities, the University of Groningen exists by the grace of students who flock here from all over the world. They are vital not just in terms of funding for research and teaching, but also for the creativity and innovative spirit that are the very essence of university life.

This year for the first time the University of Groningen featured in the top 100 of the three major international league tables: the Shanghai ranking (92nd place), the Times Higher Education Ranking (98th) and the QS World University Ranking (97th). Governments around the world consult these lists when deciding on policy with regard to granting student scholarships, and when entering into partnership projects or commissioning research assignments. Large companies are often keen to work with universities that have succeeded in making the top 100 in these three lists. Highly ranked universities have a global visibility and in today’s global economy it is this visibility that is without doubt one of the most valuable assets that a university can possess.

Lastly, the University of Groningen celebrated its 400th anniversary this year. The chosen theme was ‘For Infinity’, whereby the University communicated its ongoing commitment to working towards a balanced and sustainable world. If possible, it will continue to do so with even more vigour than in the past year.

Sibrand Poppema
President of the Board of the University
University of Groningen the most sustainable university in the Netherlands

The University of Groningen is the most sustainable university in the Netherlands according to the 2012 GreenMetric World University Ranking. This ranking by the Universitas Indonesia (UI) assesses universities in terms of ‘sustainability on campus’ and ‘environmentally friendly management’. In six years the University of Groningen managed to save 33 percent on energy consumption and 60 percent on water consumption.

Dutch Antarctic laboratory

The first Dutch laboratory at the South Pole was opened by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO). Three of the five scientific projects are linked to the University of Groningen. The Groningen researchers are investigating the effects on Antarctica of the rapid warming of the Antarctic Peninsula, where the laboratory is located.

Justin Kroesen wins Lecturer of the Year award

The jury prize in the Lecturer of the Year election went to Justin Kroesen, lecturer in Art History of Christianity at the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies. The main prize was an art work and an envelope containing €7,500.

Grant for cardiovascular research

The UMCG will research chronic inflammation of the gut and the development of cardiovascular disease. CardioVascular Onderzoek Nederland (CVON), an initiative of the Netherlands Heart Foundation, the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW), the Netherlands Federation of University Medical Centres (NVU) and the Netherlands Organisation for Health Research and Development (NWO/ZonMw) have granted funding worth €5 million for this purpose. The initiators and universities will invest a total of €48 million in five new cardiovascular projects at various institutes.

Prime Minister Rutte visits Groningen

Prime Minister Mark Rutte paid a working visit to the University of Groningen and Hanze University of Applied Sciences. His visit included the Carbohydrate Competence Center (CCCG), a knowledge centre for innovation in the field of carbohydrates from the dairy, potato and sugar industries. Rutte also went to CUBE050, an initiative of the University of Groningen and Hanze University of Applied Sciences to help enterprising students set up their own businesses.

Hans van Ees appointed dean of University College Groningen

Hans van Ees, professor of Corporate Governance and Institutions, was appointed dean of the new University College Groningen (UCG). Students at the UCG, half of them from abroad, will be able to take course units from different disciplines. Central elements of this innovative teaching concept include learning communities, small-scale teaching and project-based teaching. Another special feature is its residential character, with students living together on their own campus to create an academic community.

World first can limit shortage of donor organs

Researchers and liver surgeons at the UMCG were the first to successfully keep a liver at body temperature outside the human body. This technique not only allows a check of a liver’s suitability for a ‘second life’, in the future it will also enable physicians to improve a liver’s quality. The UMCG is the largest transplant centre in the Netherlands, carrying out about sixty liver transplants each year, about a third of them on children. Some 140 liver transplants are performed annually across the Netherlands.
Jeroen Smit gives inaugural lecture

Newspaper journalists are not aware of the extent to which the survival of printed newspapers is under threat. This is the claim made by Jeroen Smit during his inaugural lecture as professor of journalism at the University of Groningen. Smit rose to national fame with his bestselling books *De Prooi: blinde trots breekt ABN Amro* (The Prey: Blind Pride Proves Downfall of ABN Amro) and *Het drama Ahold* (The Ahold Drama).

**Night of Art and Science**

For the fourth time, the Night of Art and Science was held in Groningen’s city centre. The festival offered the public surprising combinations of art and science at a wide range of locations. The theme for this year’s ‘Night’ was energy.

**University of Groningen launches Institute for Sustainable Society**

The Board of the University took the decision to establish an Institute for Sustainable Society. Sustainable Society is the University’s third focus area, alongside Healthy Ageing and Energy. Research will focus on the issue of how to make societies more sustainable from a social/societal, legal, spatial-economic and ecological perspective.

**Nanoscience programme rated excellent**

The Master’s degree programme in Nanoscience at the University of Groningen was rated as ‘excellent’ by the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO). This is the highest accolade that can be given. NVAO’s report described the programme as an example of ‘best practice’ for similar programmes in the field, both at home and abroad. Earlier this year, the programme topped the tables as best university degree programme in the Netherlands in the Master’s Guide 2013.

**Inhabitants of Terschelling, Ameland, Curaçao and Aruba perceive tourism in different ways**

PhD ceremony: Albert Postma, Faculty of Spatial Sciences

**Listening to music while driving has negligible effect on driving performance**

PhD ceremony: Ayça Berfu Ünal, Faculty of Behavioural and Social Sciences
Forty Arctic terns to be fitted with geolocators

Thanks to the support of donors, ecologist Maarten Loonen was able to purchase forty geolocators. These tiny data recorders (0.6 gram) would be fitted to the legs of forty Arctic terns on the island of Spitsbergen. Loonen wants to record their ‘flight plans’ to learn more about the effect of climate change on these migratory birds. The University of Groningen is the first university in the Netherlands with its own crowdfunding platform.

IBM Service Centre in Groningen

IBM opened a Service Centre in Groningen. Together with the provincial and municipal authorities, the University of Groningen, Hanze University of Applied Sciences, UMCG and University of Groningen, the Americans multinational wants to create 350 IT jobs in the coming years for technology graduates and experienced professionals. IBM’s choice of Groningen as the location for this dynamic centre is based on the fact that it is home to talented young people with an excellent training, and has an open atmosphere of cosmopolitan, cultural and academic exchange.

Pijbes named Alumnus of the Year

At a meeting of the University of Groningen Alumni Circle Amsterdam Wim Pijbes was named University of Groningen alumnus of 2013. The General Director of the Rijksmuseum was awarded the prize for the way in which he has drawn Dutch cultural heritage to the attention of a broad national and international public. In December 2013 Pijbes was also named Dutch Person of the Year by Elsevier magazine.

New vision on text of Paul the Apostle

PhD ceremony: Karin Neutel, Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies

Dead Sea Scrolls

The Drents Museum in Assen opened an exhibition on the Dead Sea Scrolls, the result of close collaboration between the University of Groningen (in particular the Ubbo Emmius Fund), the Drents Museum and the Israel Antiquities Authority. Guest conservator was University of Groningen professor Mladen Popović, director of the Qumran Institute.

European grants for top researchers

Molecular geneticist Jan-Willem Veening and biochemist Ryan Chiechi were each awarded a €1.5 million starting grant by the European Research Council (ERC). These grants are awarded to talented young researchers to enable them to establish their own team. In 2013 the University secured European grants to the value of more than €30 million.
EU grant for Rosalind Franklin Fellowship
The European Union awarded a grant of €6.6 million to the Rosalind Franklin Fellowship programme at the University of Groningen. The University plans to use this money to attract top international women researchers. This fits within the University’s policy to raise the number of women professors to 25% (currently about 20% is female). The University of Groningen is investing €10 million of its own money in the programme.

BSA a proven success
Student success rates at the University of Groningen have risen sharply. In 2013, 76% of first-year students earned more than 45 ECTS credit points, the cut-off point for the binding study advice (BSA). In addition, 48% earned the full 60 ECTS credit points. These figures are about 15% higher than before the introduction of the BSA system in 2010. The number of students completing their Bachelor’s degree in four years rose by about 15% to 66%.

International students welcomed
The University of Groningen welcomed 1500 new international students during the welcoming ceremony in the Martinikerk and the Academy Building. The University has 4000 international students of more than 120 different nationalities and is hoping to increase this number to 5000 in 2015. Twenty percent of staff come from abroad, as do 60% of PhD students.

Descartes’ ideas less innovative than supposed
PhD ceremony: Han Thomas Adriaanssen, Faculty of Philosophy

German satellite
The University of Groningen is opening an auxiliary campus in the Marien Hospital in Papenburg (Germany). The University hopes that the satellite will intensify cooperation with the border region.
Record number of students

Students have enrolled in record numbers at the University of Groningen. The 6330 new students represent an increase of 8.6 percent on last year, and an all-time high in the University’s 400-year history. The total number of students enrolled at the University on 1 September was 29,407, an increase of 1.8 percent compared with 2012. The proportion of female students is 52.2%.

Three times in the top 100

The University of Groningen was ranked 98th in the international Times Higher Education (THE) ranking of universities. The University also secured a top-100 ranking in two other prestigious/reputable university league tables: 97th place in the QS Ranking and 92nd place in the ARWU (Academic Ranking of World Universities). This places the University in a select company of about 60 universities worldwide that have achieved this position.

Sixtieth anniversary of Nobel Prize for Zernike

Exactly sixty years ago the announcement came that the Nobel Prize in Physics had been awarded to Frits Zernike. Zernike (1888-1966) received the prize for his invention of the phase contrast microscope, which enabled scientists to view living cells and bacteria. At long last, they were able to study the process of cell division. Staff, students and visitors to the Zernike campus were treated to chocolate, following Zernike’s example at the time.

Groningen plays pivotal point in development of flu vaccine

A team of researchers from the University of Groningen took on the leadership of a major European project to develop new flu vaccines.

University of Groningen gauges opinion on gas extraction

The University launched a study to gauge the opinions of residents in the province of Groningen on gas extraction in the Groningen gas field. The study was commissioned by the NAM (Nederlandse Aardolie Maatschappij).

Mayors unable to tackle nuisance caused by home owners

PhD ceremony: Michel Vols, Faculty of Law

Ageing research institute opened

The European Research Institute for the Biology of Ageing (ERIBA) was officially opened by the King’s Commissioner for Groningen Max van den Berg. Leading researchers will carry out fundamental research into the ageing process and associated diseases. The research is conducted at the cellular level and uses model organisms such as worms and fruit flies.

Long-term contracts advantageous for name recognition of sports sponsor

PhD ceremony: Merel Walraven, Faculty of Economics and Business
In a move to encourage entrepreneurial students, the University opened the University of Groningen Centre for Entrepreneurship (UGCE). Aard Groen, Professor of Entrepreneurship & Valorization, was appointed Dean of the new centre. The UGCE is intended as a meeting place for students, starters, entrepreneurs and researchers.

The University of Groningen Discovery truck, a mobile laboratory, set out for the 1000th time. This Groningen science truck has been visiting schools and events since 2005. Visitors are treated to a mix of practical and theoretical lessons designed to help them choose a degree programme. The aim is to draw young people’s attention to technology and science in society and to familiarize them with study options at the University of Groningen.

The LifeLines project received its 165,000th participant, confirming its status as the biggest medical population study in the Netherlands. LifeLines has been going since 2006, monitoring changes in the health of people in the northern Netherlands – ten percent of the total population of the provinces of Groningen, Drenthe and Friesland – for a minimum period of thirty years. The data will be used by researchers all around the world.

Apparao Draksharapu from India was awarded his PhD at the University of Groningen, the 100th PhD candidate to be supervised by Professor of Organic Chemistry Ben Feringa. Feringa is one of the most creative and productive chemists. In 2013 he received a TOP NWO grant and four prizes: the Lilly European Distinguished Science Award, the Yamada-Koga Prize and the Nagoya Gold Medal in Japan, and the Marie Curie Medal in Poland.

Gymnast Epke Zonderland, a student of medicine at the University of Groningen, was elected Sportsman of the Year at the National Sports Gala. He had already received that same award in 2009, 2011 and 2012, putting him in the company of historic sporting heroes such as judoist Anton Geesink and skater Ard Schenk. On 6 October 2013 he won the world title on the high bar, giving him a special trifecta of world (2013), Olympic (2012) and European champion (2011).
Facts and Figures 2013

General

› Founded in 1614
› 29,400 students
› 6,500 staff
› Annual turnover EUR 614 million
› 10 faculties
› 110,000 alumni

Strategic partners

› Europe: Uppsala University (Sweden); University Gent (Belgium); Georg August University 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)

International rankings

› Times Higher Education World University Rankings 98
› QS World University Rankings 97
› Academic Ranking of World Universities 92

Renowned scientists, past and present

› Johan Bernoulli, pioneer in the field of calculus, 1700
› Gerhardus 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 Physiology or Medicine 1937
› Wim Duisenberg, first President European Central Bank
› Aletta Jacobs, first Dutch female student in modern history
› Klaus Knot, President Central Bank of the Netherlands
› Prince Bernard of Orange-Nassau
› Prince Mauritius of Orange-Nassau
› Princess Annette of Orange-Nassau-Sekrève
› Princess Marilène of Orange-Nassau-Van den Broek
› Wim Pijbes, managing director Rijksmuseum Amsterdam

Research

› 3,118 Full Time Equivalent academic staff
› 504 full professors
› 94 professors by special appointment
› 56 associate professors
› 1,500 PhD students
› 447 dissertations
› 6,405 academic publications
› 9 graduate schools

International

› 3,286 Bachelor’s and Master’s students
› 800 PhD students
› 31.3% academic staff
› 175 nationalities
› 21 English-taught Bachelor’s degree programmes
› 93 English-taught Master’s degree programmes

Famous alumni

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1 The Spinoza Prize is the highest science award in the Netherlands. It is granted to Dutch researchers who according to international standards belong to the absolute top of science.