The Annual Review aims to provide a general impression of the University of Groningen in the academic year 2013-2014. The official facts and figures concerning the University’s activities in 2013 and 2014 are shown in the University of Groningen Annual Reports: www.rug.nl/jaarverslag (only in Dutch).
Foreword

Academic year 2013–2014 will not be easily forgotten, for a number of reasons. First of all, 23 August marked our University’s 400th anniversary, a momentous occasion that was celebrated with a varied programme of academic, social, cultural and sporting events. The visit by His Majesty King Willem-Alexander on 15 May 2014 was a fitting opening to the anniversary celebrations.

But 2013-2014 brought other important events too, such as the award of the Spinoza Prize to Theunis Piersma, professor of Global Flyway Ecology, and the University of Groningen’s achieving a place in the top 100 in several influential international university ranking lists. All these as well as other interesting items of news are covered in this publication.

In its 401st year and into the future, our University will continue to work at the frontiers of knowledge, including on our research priorities of Healthy Ageing, Energy and Sustainable Society. We will continue to work on answers to the big questions that affect our society.

Board of the University
University of Groningen

From left to right:
Prof. Elmer Sterken, Rector Magnificus
Mr. Jan de Jeu, Vice President
Prof. Sibrand Poppema, President
The academic year was officially opened in the Academy Building, marking the start of the year in which the university commemorated its 400th anniversary. Klaas Knot, president of De Nederlandsche Bank and professor at the University of Groningen was a keynote speaker. After the ceremony students joined the Board of the University in raising a toast.

Students have enrolled in record numbers at the University of Groningen. The 6330 new students represent an increase of 9.6 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.

Exactly sixty years ago the announce- ment 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.

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.

Three research proposals were selected from all the questions. These were announced by Rector Magnificus Elmer Sterken during the opening of the academic year. The public was invited to vote on which of the three should become the Gift for Infinity: the question that would ultimately led to a PhD research project. Some 8,000 people voted via the website. The final winner was ‘Let old be gold’, a project that focuses on healthy ageing through continued participation in society. The Gift and associated research were the central theme throughout the anniversary period.

The 400 questions project was launched on 10 April 2013, precisely 400 days before the start of the anniversary celebrations. In an article in the Dagblad van het Noorden newspaper, editor-in-chief Pieter Stijperma asked the public to send in questions for the University of Groningen. This was accompanied by a light-hearted campaign, whereby thousands of travellers who had parked their bikes at train stations in Groningen, Friesland and Drenthe returned to find old-fashioned spoke cards wedged in the wheels asking them to send in questions. Three research proposals were selected from all the questions. These were announced by Rector Magnificus Elmer Sterken during the opening of the academic year. The public was invited to vote on which of the three should become the Gift for Infinity: the question that would ultimately led to a PhD research project. Some 8,000 people voted via the website. The final winner was ‘Let old be gold’, a project that focuses on healthy ageing through continued participation in society. The Gift and associated research were the central theme throughout the anniversary period.
JANUARY
University of Groningen teacher training used to train education administrators in Kenya
The University of Groningen, in collaboration with Erasmus University Rotterdam and educational experts from Ghana and South Africa, is to provide training for the Commission for University Education (CUE) in Kenya. The aim of the project is to improve education, training and research at universities.

DECEMBER
Zonderland Sportsman of the year
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.

November / December 2013
St Nicholas in town
St Nicholas’s arrival in Groningen could be watched live on national Dutch television. A place of honour was reserved near the Academy building for 400 children from in and around Groningen. Following two mini lectures – about the moon and salt – they serenaded St Nicholas, after which sweets were distributed.

DECEMBER
Start of the Energy Academy Europe
The Energy Academy Europe (EAE) will study 10,000 households in the northern Netherlands for at least five years. They represent a ‘living lab’, in which producers will investigate how consumers experience new energy technologies for in the home. Working together within the Energy Academy Europe are the University of Groningen, Hanze University of Applied Sciences and Energy Valley.

NOVEMBER
Centre for Entrepreneurship opened
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.

NOVEMBER
Feringa supervises 100th PhD student
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.

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APRIL

Opening exhibition ‘400 years of Academic Science’
The exhibition ‘400 years of Academic Science’, a co-production by the University Museum and Science LinX, the science centre of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, opened in the Der Aa-Kerk. The exhibition displays old objects, instruments and preparations, and also offers a glimpse of the present and distant future with interactive set-ups, games and discussions.

APRIL

DNA Experience on the Vismarkt
The DNA Experience held on the Vismarkt was hosted by Evelien Bosch, presenter of the children’s TV programme Zapplive. Directed by movement director Bart Brandts, 400 children (all dressed in colourful T-shirts and caps) imitated the actions of DNA as it divides. The event was organized in association with the Genetics Department of the UMCG.

APRIL

Open-air photo exhibition by Sacha de Boer
The University of Groningen and the Groningen City Club commissioned photographer and former newsreader Sacha de Boer to take photos of the Groningen DNA: a unique combination of university, the city of Groningen and the environs. Her photos appeared on banners throughout the city during the anniversary celebrations, drawing attention to the University of Groningen’s research priorities: healthy ageing, energy and sustainable society.

APRIL

Loe de Jong biography on 100th birthday
Boudewijn Smits was awarded a PhD for a biography of Loe de Jong (1914-2005) on the exact day that he would have celebrated his 100th birthday. De Jong was an iconic Dutch historian, who became famous for his thirteen-part series Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog [The Kingdom of the Netherlands in the Second World War]. The thesis has been published under the auspices of the Biography Institute of the University of Groningen, supervised by Hans Renders.

MAY

New director Royal Netherlands Institute in Rome
Harald Hendrix, Professor of Italian Studies at Utrecht University, was appointed as the new director of the Royal Netherlands Institute in Rome, the oldest and largest of these Dutch institutes abroad. The KNR is part of the University of Groningen, and has academic ties with the universities in Leiden, Amsterdam (UvA and VU), Utrecht and Nijmegen.

MAY

CCC presents its results
The Carbohydrate Competence Center (CCC) presented a final report to the King’s Commissioner in Groningen, Max van den Berg, and SNN director, Eise van der Sluis. The CCC focuses on carbohydrates, which are produced on a large scale in the Northern Netherlands in the form of potato starch, beet sugar and lactose. The University of Groningen and Wageningen University are working alongside other knowledge institutes, companies and government bodies in this consortium. More than €17 million was invested in the 2009-2013 research programme, which resulted in 9 patent applications and €27.7 million of elicited investments.

MAY

Ambassador of Mongolia at CEASG Launch Conference
The Ambassador of Mongolia, H.E. Davaadorj, opened the launch of the Centre for East Asian Studies Groningen (CEASG), which aims to initiate and support inter-disciplinary teaching and research on China, Japan, Korea and Mongolia, and strengthen and broaden the University’s academic partnerships in East Asia. The Centre also coordinates the Master’s specialization in East Asian Studies.
Lustrum

15 MAY
Opening 400th anniversary celebrations
King Willem-Alexander officially opened the festivities to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the University of Groningen. He was presented with a special edition of the photos taken by Sacha de Boer, portraying ‘the DNA of Groningen’. After the formalities, the King made an appearance on the balcony of the Academy Building with Rector Magnificus, Elmer Sterken, and President of the Board of the University, Sibrand Poppema. The King was serenaded by choirs from Groningen singing a special anniversary song.

15 MAY
Largest ever Dutch student gala
The doors to the Martini plaza opened for the largest ever student gala to be held in the Netherlands: the Gala Mysteria, which attracted ten thousand visitors. The theme ‘Expect the unexpected’ was reflected in the acts, atmosphere and stage setting: the trapeze act, the fairy-like dresses of the stilts walkers and the magicians. The numerous musical acts included Groove Department, Izaline Calister with the Stage Band, FeestDJRuud.

16 MAY
Première Voor Eeuwig
Zernike Campus hosted the first performance of the open-air theatre production Voor Eeuwig, a co-production of the University of Groningen and theatre company Noord Nederlands Toneel. Director Tom de Ket managed to weave the history of the University, academia and the city into an impossible love story, in combination with a swinging anniversary party.

23 MAY
Workout with speed-skater Mark Tuitert
The Academy Square was the venue for an event organized under the motto ‘Let old be gold’. This theme is based on the premise that staying active will keep you healthy, and so a Zimmer frame race and work-out were organized on Academy Square, with expert instruction from Olympic speed-skating champion Mark Tuitert.

23 MAY
Children’s University
Primary school pupils packed into auditorium of the Academy Building, eagerly awaiting a lecture by the Children’s University. Outside was a science fair with dozens of stands, where visitors could conduct experiments, listen to lectures and ask academics questions. The Dutch astronaut André Kuipers was one of the lecturers.
Top of the Profs
The new Infoversum served as the stage for two public lectures by top academics from the University of Groningen. Ben Feringa (organic chemistry) and Eric Bergshoeff (theoretical physics) lifted the lid on their fascinating field. Similar lectures were given in Leeuwarden and Assen by Cisca Wijmenga (genetics), Ben Douwe Draaisma (history of psychology) and Bram Buunk (social psychology).

Night of Art & Science
On 24 May 2014, Groningen held its fifth Night of Art & Science. Acts included a concert by singer-songwriter Douwe Bob, a laughing workshop in the Academy Building and a dance performance by Club Guy & Roni, to name but a few. There were also mini-lectures in the Groninger Museum, the University Library, the Academy Building, the KNAW Ontdekkerscafé and the Nachtmis. The event attracted 13,500 visitors.

Première For Infinity – The Movie
The première of ‘For Infinity – The Movie’, a swinging, absurdist, musical film lasting 30 minutes, was held in the Pathé Cinema in Groningen. Countless students and alumni helped to make the film, taking on roles as actors, dancers and extras.

Walk for Infinity
Almost 3,000 participants from Germany and the Netherlands joined the Walk for Infinity, which formed part of the Tocht om de Noord (Northern Walking Train) walking festival. The walk started in Greetsiel in East-Friesland, which is the birthplace of Ubbo Emmius, and finished in Groningen city centre. Emmius, the first Rector Magnificus of the University of Groningen, wrote a historical standard work about Frisian countries.

3D projection extravaganza
This spectacular 3D projection extravaganza on the Academy Square took place against a backdrop of music by the North Netherlands Symphony Orchestra, dance by Club Guy and Roni, and images from video collection WERC and media artist Jan Klug. Using dance, music and lighting, they acted out the ‘Let old be gold’ theme in front of an enthusiastic audience of 1,500.

YOUTUBE
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YOUTUBE
May / June 2014

Lauwersloop
After fourteen years, the Lauwersloop race has now risen from the ashes. This year, 48 teams of students, alumni and professors took part in the relay race from Leeuwarden to Groningen via Lauwersoog. The total distance of 110.7 kilometres was split into 17 stages of 4 to 12 km. The Lauwersloop is now set to return as an annual tradition.

Biking for Infinity
The University of Groningen organized a cycle trip to the Lofar area in Drenthe. The student cycling club Tandje Hoger guided a peloton of 110 cyclists on this 150-kilometre tour.

Coimbra conference
This year, the three-day Coimbra Group Annual Conference 2014 opened in Groningen. The end of the conference coincided with the official 400th anniversary celebrations for the University of Groningen. The conference was attended by Rectores Magnifici, vice chancellors, presidents and other delegates from forty European academic universities.

Educational day for children at Eelde airfield
A special day for children was organized at the airfield in Eelde. It included demonstrations with birds of prey and sniffer dogs. Visitors attended mini-lectures about the weather, aircraft, the greenhouse effect and falsified documents. Between these educational events, they tried their hand at making their own parachute and folding paper aeroplanes, and were even allowed to take a look around the air traffic control tower.

Honorary doctorates
The afternoon kicked off with a cortège of professors, dressed in full academic attire, walking solemnly from the Academy Building to the Martinikerk to witness the presentation of ten honorary doctorates. A row of students bearing flags from their home nations led the procession. As they walked, strains of the Akademische Festouvertüre by Brahms, sung by the Bragi Mira student orchestras, issued forth from the church.

Bommen Boat Race
In the tradition of the British Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, rowing clubs Gys, Aegir and de Hunze and the University of Groningen Sports Centre organized a rowing race in which teams from Groningen took on teams from Münster in Germany. Two alumni teams from Oxford and Cambridge and the Olympic Dutch 8 teams from 1972, 1996 and 2008 also put in an appearance on the water.
Swinging final party in the city centre
The show on the Grote Markt included performances by the artists Ellen ten Damme, Bert Visscher, Sandra van Nieuwland and the duo Pé en Rinus. They were all accompanied by the Noordpool orchestra. The main acts were the bands Bløf and Splendid. Shows also took place elsewhere in the city, including on the Waagplein and the Vismarkt. Among the artists at these venues were Orange Skyline and de Jeugd van Tegenwoordig.

Student satisfaction grows
Student satisfaction with the University of Groningen has increased slightly. This is revealed by the results of the 2014 Dutch National Student Survey (NSE: Nationale Studenten Enquête). Compared with 2013, satisfaction has increased on virtually all fronts. On a scale of 1 to 5, the respondents awarded their degree programmes a 3.97 (score in 2013: 3.95). In response to the statement: ‘would you recommend your degree programme to friends, family or colleagues’, the University of Groningen scored 4.19 (2013: 4.16).

Alumniweekend
Thousands of alumni visited the city to attend the final weekend of the anniversary celebrations. On the evening of Friday 13 June, the first groups of former students arrived in Groningen to revisit their old student associations. Saturday saw 1,400 guests sitting at long tables in the city centre enjoying an open-air lunch, followed by an afternoon programme. A For Infinity menu was served at various restaurants that evening, while a benefit dinner for 250 alumni was held inside the Martinikerk. All proceeds went to the Gift for Infinity.

Opening of first 3D full-dome theatre in the Netherlands
King’s Commissioner Max van den Berg and the Mayor of Groningen, Ruud Vreeman, officially opened the Infoversum. The building, which resembles a spaceship that has landed on Earth, is the venue for scientific and artistic visualizations. This top-class attraction is unique in the Netherlands, and there are only 20 of its kind in the world. It is the brain-child of Edwin Valentijn, Professor in Astronomical Information Technology at the University of Groningen.
On 6 June, the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) announced that Theunis Piersma, Professor of Global Flyway Ecology at the University of Groningen, had been awarded a Spinoza Prize. The prize is worth €2.5 million, to be spent on research. The Spinoza Prize is the largest and most prestigious research prize in the Netherlands, and is commonly referred to as 'the Dutch Nobel Prize'. Piersma (1958) studied biology at the University of Groningen, where he was awarded a PhD in 1994. Since then, he has worked as a researcher in the Wadden Sea area for the Royal Netherlands Institute for Sea Research (NIOZ) on Texel. As from 2003, he has combined his work lecturing in Animal Ecology at the University of Groningen with research at the NIOZ. In 2012, he was appointed to a new chair in Global Flyway Ecology, which is funded by the University of Groningen, the Worldwide Fund for Nature and Vogelbescherming (Society for the Protection of Birds).

JUNE

Presentation of Wubbo Ockels Prize 2014
Campus Winschoten won the Wubbo Ockels Prize 2.0. The prize is awarded to the most sustainable school in the Northern Netherlands. The winning school receives €10,000, made available by NHL University of Applied Sciences, Hanze University of Applied Sciences, Stenden University and the University of Groningen. The prize was named after Wubbo Ockels (1946–2014), alumnus of the University of Groningen and the first Dutch astronaut.

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JUNE

Founding of centre for ‘exascale computing’
IBM, the Netherlands Institute for Radio Astronomy ASTRON and the University of Groningen are to work together in the field of research using big data. Subjects include energy, healthcare and water management. This will take the northern Netherlands a step closer to becoming the ‘Data Industry Valley’.

JUNE

The Genome of the Netherlands
Researchers from five Dutch universities have been working together under Prof. Cisca Wijmenga from the the University Medical Centre Groningen to compile a genetic profile of the Netherlands. Their findings have been published in the scientific journal ‘Nature Genetics’. The researchers mapped the DNA sequences of 250 family trios comprising two parents and a child from all around the Netherlands.

JUNE

Ranking
On 15 August, the University of Groningen heard that it had moved up 10 places in the Academic Ranking of World Universities (also known as the Shanghai ranking), from 92nd to 82nd position. The ARWU, which is generally considered the most reliable quality measurement of universities worldwide, is published by Shanghai Jiao Tong University. In October 2013, it was announced that Groningen held the 98th position in the global Times Higher Education (THE) ranking. The University also attained a top 100 position in the QS Ranking (97). This makes the University of Groningen one of a select company of some 60 universities laying claim to the extraordinary achievement of being in the top 100 in these three rankings.

JULY

Summer ceremony closes the academic year
The GUF100 prizes were presented to the best students from each of the nine faculties during the summer ceremony. The ceremony was also attended by 150 international graduates of 34 different nationalities. A selected group of international Alumni Ambassadors will represent the University of Groningen when they return to their home countries.
University of Groningen remembers victims MH17

On this day of national mourning the University of Groningen remembers the victims of the MH17. On board the flight was a first year medical student and her family. One of the staff members and one student lost their immediate family. The flags of the university buildings have been lowered to half-mast and this afternoon at 4pm a minute of silence has been observed.

Nine Veni grants awarded

Nine researchers from the University of Groningen and the University Medical Center Groningen have been awarded a Veni grant as part of the Innovational Research Incentives Scheme. The personal Veni grants are worth up to a maximum of €250,000, valid for a period of three years. They enable talented researchers who have just completed a PhD to conduct research of their own choice.

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Dies

As the clock struck 12, Rector Magnificus Elmer Sterken brought out a toast to 400 years of the University of Groningen. This was followed by a huge firework display. Gifts were exchanged, including a publication about the history of the University, written by the municipal historian Beno Hofman. It was presented by the Mayor, Ruud Vreeman, and King’s Commissioner, Max van den Berg.

Television recording with Arjen Robben in Groningen

Twan Huijs interviewed Dutch footballer Arjen Robben in the Willem Alexander Sports Centre on the Zernike Campus for the NTR television programme College Tour. Robben, who was born in Bedum (close to Groningen), helped the Netherlands to a third place in the 2014 World Cup in Brazil.
The University of Groningen

The University of Groningen is an international research university whose history spans four centuries. It offers an stimulating academic environment for students and researchers with a passion for knowledge and a drive to achieve. The University is based in Groningen, the City of Talent, in the north of the Netherlands.

Scouting and nourishing talent
The University of Groningen scouts talent and offers students and staff the opportunity and space they need to excel. Researchers with excellent credentials are offered grants to invest in equipment or talented research assistants. The University favours small-scale teaching situations, special attention to the quality of teaching and testing, coaching students and encouraging them to gain international experience. For outstanding and ambitious students, the University of Groningen Honours College provides additional intensive programmes with in-depth and interdisciplinary course units. The University College Groningen is a new faculty for especially talented students, who are given the chance to follow course units that take inspiration and creativity as sources of learning.

Research priorities
The University of Groningen is a global top 100 university, with world-leading research groups, such as the Zernike Institute for Advanced Materials. It is proud to be an innovative and reliable partner in answering the major questions of the twenty-first century. The themes it focuses on include sustainability, energy and water, medicine, food, carbohydrates, sensor technology, nanotechnology, new materials, social efficacy, law and administration, and cultural heritage. It cooperates with partner universities worldwide, including in developing countries. Research within the University of Groningen pays special attention to three research priorities: Healthy Ageing, Energy, and Sustainable Society.

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