On November 22, around 40 guests joined the first University of Groningen alumni meeting at the magnificent residence of Consul General Wilfred Mohr.

The alumni, representing more than 4 nationalities (including guests from the Netherlands, France, China and Hong Kong), were warmly welcomed by RUG alumnus Mr. Mohr with a kind invitation to gather yearly on 28 August at the residence. Mr. Mohr, currently the Consul General of the Netherlands to Hong Kong, studied Business Economics at Groningen. Following Mr. Mohr’s welcoming remarks, Mr. Tjalling Halbertsma, incoming Chair for East Asian Studies at the University of Groningen, informed the alumni of recent success stories in Groningen.

China, Japan, Korea and, interestingly, Mongolia, and the introduction of an East Asian Studies masters. He further drew attention to the popular exchange programmes with partners in East Asia, including the summer school program organized with the Chinese University of Hong Kong and various Netherlands companies in the East Asian region. These initiatives indicate the innovative approaches of the University and an increased engagement between Groningen and its counterparts in East Asia.

Touching upon the tremendous advancement of the University in international rankings, including those on employability, he invited alumni to continually engage with the University wherever they are in the world. He specifically invited alumni to come forward as founding members of a permanent alumni chapter in Hong Kong. A number of participants, including Consul General Mohr, kindly expressed their interest to do so, indicating their willingness to reconnect to their alma mater and to generously share their time with the University’s efforts to establish active and committed alumni chapters around the world.

He told the alumni that they are part of around 110,000 active alumni scattered around the world, with around 28,000 students currently enrolled at the University’s 9 faculties. Though covering all academic disciplines, the University increasingly endeavors to become known for three interfaculty themes: energy, healthy aging and sustainable society. Among these new initiatives are the launch of a new East Asia Institute focusing on current developments in
Most old students from the University of Groningen have fond memories of their time as a student in Groningen. The university has played a large part in the career of her alumni. To give alumni the chance to give back to their Alma mater, the Ubbo Emmius Fund started Alumni Chapters in four different cities and regions in the Netherlands. Twice a year, or more, members of these chapters come together for a trip down memory lane. At the same time special networks are built through supporting a research project by a scientist of international distinction.

The concept of Alumni Chapters was first adopted by the Gooische Groningers: old students of the university who now live in ’t Gooi. A small group of founding alumni started the chapter by inviting their study friends to join the chapter and to support a special project or research from the RUG. These invitees, in turn, ask their alumni friends to join the chapter and subsequently the chapter grows. In this way, each meeting presents an opportunity for new members to join the network and for both younger and veteran alumni to mingle.

Because of the tremendous enthusiasm and success of the Dutch chapters, the university would now like to expand this concept and provide the same opportunity for our international alumni. Currently, our international chapters include New York city and Washington DC. Yearly, all members would donate through a specific scheme to a scientific project and pay a small fee to cover for catering expenses. There will be a few different ways to donate, customized to different tax laws. What could be better than supporting a talented scientist or special project, while reminiscing about your time as a student in the presence of old and new friends? Meanwhile a network of people that can support and coach each other broadens. An opportunity you don’t want to miss!

We have created an LinkedIn group for alumni. You can click the icon on the right. And be sure to listen to our Alumni song, just click the image below!