The Dutch Consulate General, located amidst the financial district in San Francisco, was the meeting place for alumni of the University of Groningen on October 15, 2013. An inspiring atmosphere, with a beautiful view over San Francisco, for a walk down memory lane. Mr. Ard van der Vorst, Deputy Consul General of The Netherlands, opened the meeting. After that Jasper Smit, Economic Officer at the Consulate General and alumnus of the RUG, explained to the audience about the role of the Consulate General in this part of the US. The director of the Ubbo Emmius Fund of the RUG, Tienke Koning, talked about the ambitions of our university and the celebrations around its 400th anniversary. Around 25 alumni attended this first alumni meeting in San Francisco.

> Great opportunities in San Francisco <

For the majority of the attendants, many with a background in Artificial Intelligence and IT, the Bay Area is the center of new developments in their field of expertise. They are in San Francisco because of the inspiring influences of the well-known and highly ranked universities and businesses and the front running research that is done here. They are all very happy with their top class opportunities and experiences they have in the Silicon Valley and its surrounding area, but also cherish their memories of Groningen.

> The ambitions of the RUG <

Tienke Koning, director of the Ubbo Emmius Fund of our Alma Mater, explained about the ambitions to become a strong and well known institute in the academic world in the fields of Healthy Ageing, Energy and Sustainable Society. Multidisciplinary research is the key she said. Recently the RUG entered the top 100 positions on the three mayor ranking lists and is on the list of the 52 best universities in the world now. Three Dutch universities (Utrecht, Leiden and Groningen) are on this list. Next to outstanding and reputable results in research and education it is very important to stay in good contact with alumni all over the world. A résumé with academic results of the University of Groningen is worth money!

> Alumni Chapters <

The concept of the 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 members 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. Twice a year, or more, members of these chapters, now numbering five in the Netherlands 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.

> Alumni Chapter San Fransisco <

Tienke Koning checked the desire among alumni to see and meet alumni from Groningen available in the Bay Area on a regular basis. She talked individually with almost all attendees. The attendees who reside in the area for longer periods of time look forward to have an established Alumni Chapter. Seven of them are willing to help establish a chapter, they will become the founding members of the San Francisco Alumni Chapter.
The lustrum celebrations start May 15th in 2014. There will be many congresses, colloquia, exhibitions and cultural events (check: www.rug400.nl). The climax will come on the weekend of June 12-15, 2014. International alumni and all alumni from abroad will gather in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam where Princess Marilène and Wim Pijbes (director of the Rijksmuseum and alumnus of the year 2013-2014), both alumni, will be the hosts of this event. The rest of the weekend will be a big Home-Coming event!

The University of Groningen is proud to present a special alumni environment on www.rug400.nl, the website dedicated to news and information about the RUG400 anniversary festivities. This alumni environment will enable alumni to find and renew contacts with their former fellow students and help the University strengthen the bond with its alumni. The University of Groningen is currently in touch with 80,000 former students, and is hoping to increase this number.

Find your former classmates, flat mates, fellow debating club members with the alumni search engine, make appointments so that you can meet up during the anniversary alumni events, use the ‘Alumnistee’ to arrange an overnight stay at a student house or a fellow alumnus’s place, add photos and memories to the ‘Memories For Infinity’ photo book – alumni can do all this on www.rug400.nl once they have created an account. Wouldn’t it be great if everyone could meet their old friends at the alumni events during the festive month of RUG400 celebrations?

Important links:

- Crowdfunding site UEF: http://www.rugsteunt.nl/

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Attendees:
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Marieke van der Hart
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Arjen Meima
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Wiegert Tierie
Merrin Thompson
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