Pursuit of ecological society through environmental sustainability in Holland

University of Groningen strives for greener world and encourages participation from students and faculty members

Ever since the Industrial Revolution in the 18th century, much of modern society has taken on the general characteristics of industrialization and urbanization, accompanied by acts of independent exploitation and consumption. Nowadays, the impacts of environmental pollution and climate change are drawing upon even more attention than ever, which drives the need to pursue an ecological society, a society that is in harmony with nature. One of the ways to pursue this goal is through environmental sustainability. As one of the developed countries in the world, Korea has the duty to actively participate in working for environmental sustainability and join the ranks of advanced countries in foreign countries. With the purpose of researching excellent precedents that only Korea and its university to become more eco-friendly campuses, a CampusNet project comprising the Ewha Voice, the Ewha Weekly and the Ewha University Broadcasting System conducted environmental research in the Netherlands.

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Students in the northern part of the Netherlands, the University of Groningen (RUG) has been providing high-quality research and education for 400 years with its wife in Groningen. In 2012, RUG ranked 53 in the US News ranking of World Universities, which was the highest among the five Dutch universities in the ranking program that year. As one of the most sustainable universities in Holland, RUG is constantly in efforts to make the campus more sustainable by organizing and participating in various initiatives and projects to work on the topic of environmental sustainability. The students and faculties of RUG have been facing the future for environmental sustainability, even though universities have to focus on sustainability.

Within my Ph.D., I experience there are a lot of things to explore rather than just the core question,” Laugs observed. “There is the slow research or perhaps the broader research question, which is the impact of RUG’s efforts for green campus. The importance of this topic regarding environmental sustainability is that RUG will be a leading university in terms of sustainability. As a university, we began collecting all the figures related to the field such as energy, waste and water. The measurements and numbers allow RUG to keep track of its work and see if it is doing a good job. For instance, while the number of students grows 62 percent compared to 1990, the energy usage increased less than 30 percent, showing good

energy management in terms of energy consumption. RUG has numerous environmental-friendliness on campus as well. The university separates its waste into 28 different categories, uses energy-saving LED lights and utilizes weather-dependent heating and cooling systems.

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