



# University council year report 2023-2024

The University Council is the University of Groningen's central participation body and works on policy together with the Board of the University. The UC has the rights of consent and advice on important changes and can also give unsolicited advice. Here is an overview of the most important points that passed last year.

## Work pressure and wellbeing



- €3 million was made available for the Lessen the Work program to reduce the workload for staff.
- Within Recognition & Rewards, a framework was established for educational careers.
- €1.2 million was made available for the four-year program on social safety.
- The UC consented to the action plan on student wellbeing, which includes counselor training, more inclusive education, and improved mentoring programs.

## Education



- More undergraduate programs are moving to unweighted lottery procedures to promote equity of opportunity.
- Frameworks for the use of AI in education were established.
- The pilot of the Smarter Academic Year was discussed; the BoU was urged to involve more staff and students in the pilots.
- The Centre for Teaching and Learning was launched to connect educational innovations.

## Diversity & Inclusion (D&I)

- The D&I office will work on recommendations made by SOG in their D&I memo.
- The personnel faction submitted a memo on inclusive (e.g. gender-neutral) restrooms; gender-neutral restrooms will be included as standard in new construction.
- The Accessibility Project, focusing on physical, digital and social accessibility, is in the implementation phase.
- Input from the personnel faction's D&I memo will be included in the evaluation of the D&I program.



## Sustainability



- The greenery memo from SOG was approved: the UG is getting greener.
- The two-week Christmas shutdown saved more than €200,000 in energy costs and will be repeated.
- A framework policy was drafted on cooperation with the fossil industry: the UC urged to broaden the definition of the fossil industry to encompass more companies.
- A €500k investment was approved for a Smart Buildings program proposal that will lead to energy savings.

## Geopolitical conflicts

The UC and the BoU have regularly exchanged views on geopolitical issues, such as the Israel/Gaza conflict and the war in Ukraine, and how the UG should position themselves in these conflicts. This topic will undoubtedly come back next year as well.



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## Participation

- The turnout for the UC elections was higher than last year; the same holds true for many FC elections.
- At the urging of the UC, the electoral regulations were revised to make PhD students from the Phd experiment eligible for election.
- The participation coordinator gave an interim evaluation; the UC called for more support.
- Critical discussions took place about demonstration rules at the UG.



## Internationalization

- The proposed Internationalization in Balance Act has constantly remained on the radar; the UC and the BoU both remain committed to stressing the importance of internationalization.
- The UG's Language and Culture Policy was updated; the UC advised to aim for bilingualism in co-determination bodies and to start offering more exhaustive Dutch courses for internationals as soon as possible.



## Research

- The visibility of the Sustainable Development Goals increased through the addition of SDG badges to Pure.
- An investment of €1.2 million was approved for the University Library's Open Science program.
- Assistant professors (UD's) may be granted ius promovendi and the right to wear a formal gown starting in 2024.



## IT, data and digitization

- The use of AI in research, education and business has been discussed several times and remains high on the agenda.
- A temporary committee for student data was set up to advise on safe and secure use of student data.
- At the UC's initiative, a physical pause button and On Air signs will be added to lecture halls with ceiling microphones to protect student privacy when recording lectures.
- The project Learning Analytics was approved by the UC on the condition of adding an ethics expert, amongst other experts.



## Outreach

- The UC website was revamped to be more accessible and clear.
- The UC started hosting a weekly drop-in hour for students and staff.
- Next year, the UC will launch "Break & Cake," in which it will partner with a faculty council or service council each month to spar with students and staff.