



university of
 groningen

campus fryslân

Opening Academic Year 2023-2024 September 2023 - Campus Fryslân, The Beurs, Leeuwarden

**Chiara Matarazzo -
Student assessor, GRL student**

My dear students, professors, colleagues, and friends,

I want to start by thanking you for being here by our side as we officially initiate the opening ceremony for this academic year. I am incredibly grateful to see both familiar faces that bring me comfort, as well as new faces that bring me the excitement of new people to get to know.

I would now like to take you back to this same time and place about a year ago. I was sitting in these same chairs, looking up at this podium. I specifically remember when my predecessor Esmé Johson spoke about our faculty and her ambitions towards it. As I sat there listening to her inspiring and strong words, I remember thinking to myself that I also wanted to contribute to this community in the best way I could. However I would have never believed you if you would have told me then, that I'd be doing, or at least trying my best, to do the exact same thing.

Over this first year at Campus Fryslân, I have been able to not only discover the campus but get to know incredibly talented and unique people. As an international student, I have felt at home at Campus Fryslân due to our strong interculturality and open-mindedness. No matter which class you find yourself in, you will always find someone that has experienced the same thing, or something similar, to what you have experienced. And that

is the beauty of Campus Fryslân. To this day, I find it astonishing how each one of us is capable of bringing a different perspective to the big table we all sit at as the future leading generation. With our interdisciplinary programs, this is only strengthened as we, students, learn about the overarching themes of our complicated yet beautiful world. From data science, to politics, to voice technology, and research, Campus Fryslân allows everyone to work on their purpose in order to sustain and brighten our future. As my first year came to an end, I was certain I wanted to give back to Campus Fryslân all that it had given me. In a year full of change, doubts, nerves and adaptation, Campus Fryslân was able to continuously make me feel included in our community. I am certain that Campus Fryslân will continue to do so for all the new faces, and maintain this feeling of home and community for the returning ones.

Nevertheless, ups come with downs, just like this past year also came with fruitful events. As difficult and complicated as these events might have been, they were, and still are, crucial to our community and the development of the campus. These events have brought a broader and stronger perspective to this table we sit at. Showing us how communication is key to understanding and taking action. As it allows one another to acknowledge where the other might be coming from with a certain thought or idea. Thus, these conversations need to happen and action needs to be taken. This year has showed us how everyone rightfully has a voice and is able to make a difference, fight for what is right and make this campus a place where everyone feels at home.

I am immensely honoured for the opportunity that is given to me and that I am able to represent the uniqueness of Campus Fryslân. As the new student assessor of this academic year, I want to ensure that everyone feels like they have a voice and are truly represented within our campus. I hope that I will be able to do so in order for us all to move forward as a campus community, so that we can all sit together and expand our values as Campus Fryslân.

Once again a huge thank you to all of you for being here with us, and online, and I truly am looking forward to this year! Thank you.