The story of Campus Fryslân can be traced back to 1585, the year in which the University of Franeker was founded. For the first 30 years of its existence, it was the only university in the Netherlands apart from the University of Leiden. In 1811, however, Napoleon signed a document ordering the closure of the University of Franeker. Almost two centuries later, the foundation and closure of the institution were still engraved into the collective memory of the inhabitants of the province of Fryslân. So, in 2010, plans were laid to fuel this smouldering academic fire – by establishing University Campus Fryslân! In the period from 2011 to 2015, Campus Fryslân in Leeuwarden established a number of new Master’s degree programmes and a research school catering to 55 PhD students, in addition to staging various public events. We will take you on a journey into the young history of the University of Groningen/Campus Fryslân.

University Campus Fryslân: teaching partnerships
The Province of Fryslân and the Municipality of Leeuwarden agreed to fund University Campus Fryslân (UCF) for 10 years (2010-2020). UCF cooperates with the University of Groningen (UG), Wetsus (Netherlands Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Water Technology) and the University of Twente (UT) and Wageningen University (WU), and together they offer three Master’s degree programmes in Leeuwarden:• Multidisciplinary (UG/Faculty of Arts)• Water Technology (UG Faculty of Science & Engineering)• Environment Energy (UT/Department of Energy)

From the outset, University Campus Fryslân has worked closely with regional authorities, knowledge institutions and the business community. As a network organization itself, UCF fully appreciates the power of cooperation and the value of the networks in which organizations are embedded. People are still very much aware of this, both emotionally and perceptually.

"Even now – in 2019 – scarcely a month goes by without the Leeuwarder Courant making some reference to the University of Franeker."

Anouk Walthaus, journalist

University Campus Fryslân becomes UG/Campus Fryslân in 2016, the duties of the Stichting Universiteit Campus Fryslân (University Campus Fryslân Foundation) were transferred to the University of Groningen. The Campus became part of the University of Groningen, and was re-named the University of Groningen/Campus Fryslân (UG/CFT). In the ensuing years, the following Master’s degree programmes were launched, in cooperation with other UG/faculties:

• Cultural Geography, with a Tourism & Planning track (2017, UG/Faculty of Spatial Sciences)• Governance and Law in the Digital Society (2018, UG Faculty of Law)

The number of students and PhD students continues to climb, and enrolments are good at even this new Faculty building ‘de Beurs’ (former trade centre). This makes it a natural platform to inspire students, staff, scientists and international students, attracting many from the province and abroad. At the same time, however, it remains visible and accessible to the general public. For instance, Campus Fryslân endeavors to stimulate the academic climate in the province by staging public events to introduce people – both young and old – to the world of academia. In this context, it presents lectures on academic topics at schools, Studium Generale, the quarterly Museum Generale, the Science Week at the renowned Science Callens.

The story behind UG/Campus Fryslân
The story behind UG/Campus Fryslân is one of discovery, ambition and curiosity. It is a chronicle of community building that involves caring for one another and our environment, yet it is also a story of perseverance and of exploring new avenues. This history is imbued with a sense of pride because – after a long absence – the University has finally come back home.

The University has Returned to Friesland

"It’s great that the de Beurs building is being repurposed in this way. Really amazing that the University of Groningen will be moving in, and that the building will retain its public function. University teaching and research are so incredibly important for the region."

A visitor

University Campus Fryslân, University College Fryslân and University Foundation Fryslân
30 December 2019

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