

Sept. 03, 2020

## Opening Academic Year 2020

A warm welcome to representatives of the province, the municipality, our HOAF partners, our president of the University, partners from living labs, friends of CF, our dear students and colleagues, and everyone who is joining in person and online.

Human society always found a way to adapt to changing circumstances, Climate Change and Global Pandemics are not new. We have faced them before, and we were successful. The global Flu pandemic of 1889-1890; the Spanish Flu: 1918-1920; H1N1 Swine Flu pandemic: 2009-2010. COVID-19 is another pandemic that human adaptability, our inventiveness and our solidarity will be able to overcome.

Any global crisis has multi-dimensional effects – the current crisis is as much a public health crisis, as it affects economics, local and global politics and society and its ethical and legal norms. How can we make sure that the fight against the pandemic does not have negative consequences for the climate and reduce our circular approaches (think of the single use cleaning tissues and mouth caps). During the beginning of the crisis, global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions drastically decreased. Now, countries in dire need to restart their economy are playing a catch up game.

These intricate and complex problems only interdisciplinary approaches can really tackle. Skills that help us to develop sustainable approaches to fight pandemics need to think beyond the one problem at hand. I needs new ideas of circular and holistic thinking. Economics, Health, Politics, need interdisciplinary

views. Interdisciplinary views need to get their validation from practice. Interdisciplinarity needs Transdisciplinary validation. **Scientific disciplines and practice; they are stronger together.**

We can have faith and confidence that with the right mindset, we will be able to face also these new and acute challenges of today - not alone but together. In academia, the University of the North, a consortium of Northern Knowledge Institutions coming together to create a new example of barrier free education and research is one example of this mindset. Together with our sister faculties (Arts, Spatial Science, and Law) we have been able to offer many innovative programmes. And with renewed commitment, to these programmes this year will also show how we can make them programmes of the University of the North.

This has also shown itself in Groningen's and Friesland's dedication to sustainability, circularity and climate adaptation. The collaboration between public, private and educational institutions has enabled us to bring the northern regions into the spotlight of international attention – the Global Centre on Adaptation has created one of its headquarters in Groningen, its CEO, Patrick Verkooijen, became a professor at Campus Fryslân and with many northern stakeholders we are building a Blue Delta Coalition. **The North is stronger together.**

In March our classes went online, which did cost us an incredible amount of energy, but also made new creative solutions possible. We managed to get nearly every student through the year. Right now we can proudly say that while faithfully following the governmental guidelines we can offer 70% of teaching is in class, and the rest in hybrid and online formats. This is a huge achievement

for a small faculty as ours, but it was possible because the dedication of our staff and the support of our students to make this transition is strong. We share experiences and best practices with each other, we support each other on a personal level; we have shown that **The Faculty is stronger together.**

This academic year, will be again full of many milestones with our partners in education and research and it will guide us further along the road we are on.

Let's have a look at the highlights along the road of 2020/21 academic year:

- Started with a growth in both the University College and the Master's in Sustainable Entrepreneurship, despite corona!
- Our first cohort of University College Fryslân students will graduate this year.
  
- New programmes have passed the first hurdle of the Ministry's Macro Efficiency test and are awaiting accreditation:
  - MSc Voice Technology – a master's that is at the cutting edge of how we interact with machines, how voice can give us insight into wellbeing and health and many more applications.
  - Bachelor's Programme in Data Science and Society: This programmes focus on the possibility of technology and data to create a more sustainable and fair society. It combines a data science education with legal, ethical and societal domains. Data Scientists of the Future will know much better how their innovations affect society.

The importance of having a new Bachelor at the foundation of Campus Fryslân cannot be overstated. It is at the foundation of our mission to educate young inspiring students from the region and abroad.

- In education, we will be working together even more closely with NHL Stenden and other knowledge institutions to create synergies between our new Programmes and existing ones such as Tourism and Cyber Governance.
- We are aiming for an educational framework where the artificial border between Applied Science education and scientific education can mutually support the growth of students *and the border can gradually transform into an open network of higher education in the Northern Netherlands*. Existing and new partnerships develop through living labs but also in research
- We welcome many new CF members: two new professional staff members, 2 new professors and a Rosalind Franklin Fellow and 3 new assistant professors, and quite a few phds:
- ... as tradition holds it, we will give everyone individually a special and personal welcome during our new year's reception
- Our all new Faculty Council is predominantly female and represents our faculty so well, where many female staff members take important roles in the shaping of the faculty.
- we will start with a new edition of the intercultural competences training.

- We are going to launch our advanced certificate course on Climate Adaptation Governance, and if all goes well, Ban Ki Moon will Visit CF in January,
- we will for the first time together with our partner Wetterskip Fryslân award the first citizen science price in climate adaptation.

The global pandemic will inspire new innovations in the north of the Netherlands and Globally. How we meet, how we integrate digital technology and virtual reality into our physical reality – these all are avenues for innovation that are starting to accelerate. And we are witnessing a change in practice of meetings, remote work and digitally enhanced education in a speed that was unthinkable in the years before.

Yes, the road we are on might sometimes be longer, but we are also faster than before. The road will take unexpected twists and turns, but we are more adaptable than before. We will have to steep climb hills and pass through dark valleys, but we also have more endurance endurance than before. We will follow this road in the confidence that **we are all stronger together.**