



Universiteit Utrecht

An overall Impression of 2014





Marjan J. Oudeman,
LLM, President of the Executive Board
Prof. Bert van der Zwaan, Rector Magnificus
Prof. Anton Pijpers, Vice-President

Bright minds, better future

Utrecht University can look back on 2014 as a good year, with some significant highlights. We continued to make great strides towards achieving our ambitions in the fields of education, research and valorisation. It is to these efforts that we owe our high position in the international university rankings, as well as a positive appraisal by the Dutch Ministry of Education.

We welcomed almost 6000 new students last year, and at the same time laid the foundations for a complete overhaul of our entire offering of Master's degrees. In terms of student success rates, Utrecht University has consistently topped the Dutch rankings since 2002.

The university invested substantially in its four strategic research themes in 2014, so as to reinforce our alignment with the Dutch government's *top sectors* policy and the European Societal Challenges programme. In addition, we selected eleven new focus areas for research. These are intended to serve as a breeding ground for academic renewal and interdisciplinary co-operation.

Internal partnerships and the ongoing commitment of our staff and students have made a significant contribution towards the quality of our education and research. Regionally, too, and within the Utrecht Science Park, our collaborative efforts have continued to bear fruit. And the same applies to our strategic partnerships at the national and international levels.

By focusing on a number of highlights from 2014, this Annual Review illustrates what Utrecht University stands for: quality, co-operation and a forward-looking attitude. In the years to come we shall continue to pursue and to invest in the quality of our knowledge. Not only for new generations of students, but for the whole of society.

ca 110.000

ca 12.000
Donors

JANUARY

Secondary school pupils head for Hong Kong

Six pupils won a trip to Hong Kong in the competition Utrecht University organises for secondary schools. The competition was for the best graduation projects, assignments pupils must complete as part of their final examination. The university's schools network organised the competition in cooperation with its strategic research theme Institutions. School students who took part attended a masterclass at the University. The theme of the winning project was 'The Dutch Collective Memory Regarding the History of Slavery'.

MARCH

Garden with a venerable history

Utrecht University's Botanical Gardens are among the world's oldest university gardens. In 1639, a hortus academicus was started with 600 varieties of plants. In 2014, its 375th anniversary was celebrated in style with a series of publications, lectures and guided tours. Today, it is a modern garden covering 90,000 m² and with almost 8,400 varieties, which contributes to sustainability and biodiversity research and attracts around 75,000 visitors annually. Mayor of Utrecht Jan van Zanen and President of the Executive Board Marjan Oudeman opened the official celebrations.

Utrecht University's Botanical Gardens are among the world's oldest university gardens

65.000
Visitors



University
Museum
Utrecht



APRIL

Burial vaults

During renovation work on a building in Janskerkhof occupied by the faculty of Law, Economics and Governance, construction workers stumbled on some mediaeval burial vaults painted with crosses. Expectations of valuable discoveries had already been raised when a skull was found in a former cesspit, but this find exceeded all expectations. The most fascinating things found included a tall man with a deformed spinal column and a young woman with a foetus, who probably died during childbirth. The Utrecht University Fund has now included the aim of making the vaults permanently visible in its existing campaign 'Door geven'

Outreach in the University Museum

The University Museum presented the family exhibition 'Tot op het bot' ('Down to the Bone'). It includes historic artefacts and current developments in research and education to illustrate the similarities between humans and animals. The exhibition shows, for example, how different disciplines work closely together within the Life Sciences and how the latest operating techniques from human medicine are being used to operate on dogs with lower back problems.

540.000.000
Government funding



ca € 770.000.000



230.000.000
Other funding and income
from work for third parties



MAY

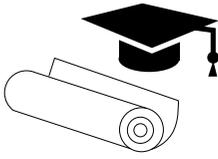
Heineken Prize

Prof Jaap Sinninghe Damsté won the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) Heineken Prize for Environmental Sciences for his entire scientific oeuvre. Winners of the prize receive funds of around 145,000 euros. Geoscientist Sinninghe Damsté explores ancient strata of the Earth, searching for molecules that can tell us something about the climate in prehistoric times or about the temperature of the sea then.

Students play host to Stephen Hawking

The launch symposium for the international physics competition PLANCKS, organised by the Utrecht study society A-Eskwadraat, was not only graced by the presence of the University's Nobel Prize winner Prof Gerard 't Hooft, but by Stephen Hawking himself. Hawking's arrival met with overwhelming interest from the general public and media. On the day after the opening, Hawking emailed the organisers to find out who had won. A total of 31 teams of 3 to 4 students from 13 countries competed in PLANCKS.

Hawking's arrival met with overwhelming interest from the general public and media

ca 9.000
Diplomas

ca 30.000

ca 6.000
First year bachelors

JULY

Dekoor student choir named world champion

The University attaches great importance to nurturing cultural talent. In this way, it contributes to students' wider development and brings together the academic community. For example, Parnassos Cultural Centre hosts student music societies. In 2014, student choir Dekoor Close Harmony again secured first prize in the Jazz and Pop categories at the World Choir Games. Another highlight of 2014 was their performance with The Rolling Stones.

Junior Summer School

The Junior Summer School was organised by the Utrecht University Science Education Hub (Wetenschapsknooppunt Universiteit Utrecht) in partnership with the University Museum and the faculties. The Summer School is aimed at students in the upper years of primary school and the lower years of secondary school. For four days, the University played host to 300 children who joined academics and students in exploring how science works through experiments and excursions. The Junior Summer School enables children and their parents to become acquainted with the research and education at Utrecht University and develop a positive view of science and further education.

171.000
Lectures viewed online



AUGUST

Visiting delegation from China

Within the Life Sciences & Health domain China and the Netherlands face the same global challenges. These range from the prevention and control of communicable infectious diseases to elderly care and the overarching challenge of providing high-quality, affordable and labour-efficient healthcare for everyone. In July, a delegation of the China Pharmaceutical Industry Research and Development Association (SINO-PhIRDA) visited Utrecht Science Park to discuss further collaboration. By building bridges and working together in public-private partnerships between academia and industry, Utrecht University plays its part in finding answers to the world's grand challenges.

Science for society

Utrecht University shares knowledge with society and showcases the impact research has on society for the general public. Stodium Generale encourages critical reflection and debate about society by organising interdisciplinary symposia, lectures and debates. This is done in partnership with scientists and academics, external knowledge partners, students and teachers. In 2014, the Stodium Generale curriculum was further developed and the online offering and use of new media for online learning, academic development and communities were further expanded. This included the launch of a new app for students who have missed lectures (Lezing Gemist). It features hundreds of videos and the lectures can be viewed at any time.

ca 550



OCTOBER

New centre for research into child development

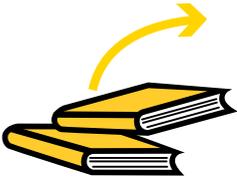
Utrecht University and University Medical Center Utrecht opened a prestigious new centre for child research. Why is it that one child finds his or her place in society relatively easily whereas for another this is very difficult indeed? To explore this issue in depth, an extensive research team – including educational experts and psychologists, doctors and linguists – will be monitoring 6,000 children over the next ten years. The centre is part of one of Utrecht University's four strategic research themes: Dynamics of Youth.

Sustainable 100

Utrecht University brings together expertise in geosciences, sciences, economics, law, public administration, social sciences and humanities to find integrated solutions to sustainability issues. This combination of knowledge and disciplines enables a multidisciplinary approach to be taken. In this context, Studium Generale joined forces with Trouw newspaper to organise the Sustainable 100, a ranking of people who have contributed to making the Netherlands more sustainable. Scientists and innovators came together to discuss a new generation of sustainable solutions.

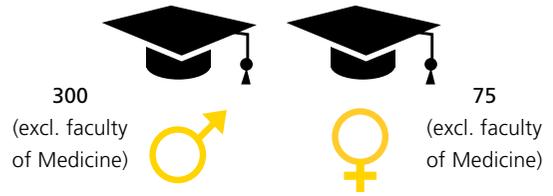
*To explore this issue in depth,
an extensive research team will be monitoring
6,000 children over the next ten years*

ca 8.000



ca 650

(incl. faculty of Medicine)



Utrecht Psalter nominated for UNESCO list

The Utrecht Psalter has been nominated for the UNESCO Memory of the World Register. The organisation will decide in mid-2015 whether this nine-centuries-old manuscript deserves a place on the register for documentary heritage. The Utrecht Psalter is one of the most valuable manuscripts in Dutch collections. It contains 150 psalms and 16 canticles illustrated with 166 pen drawings that were revolutionary for the time. The book was created in or near Reims in France and ended up in Utrecht via the UK. In 1716, it was donated to Utrecht University Library, where it has been kept ever since. The Psalter can be viewed via www.utrechtspalter.nl.

Revolutionary stem cell research

Prof Hans Clevers' research group has succeeded in developing a system for growing human stem cells from the liver and pancreas. In the future, cultivated stem cells could replace donor organs. Their articles in the journal *Cell* reveal that it is possible to grow the equivalent of a complete liver from a single liver stem cell in just four months. In November 2014, Clevers' stem cell research was described as a 'national icon'. In the presence of King Willem-Alexander, the four most impressive and innovative projects in the Netherlands were announced. The Dutch government will help these National Icons achieve their ambitions and give them an international platform. They will each be given a tailored support programme and allocated a minister or state secretary as their ambassador. Clevers will have the support of Minister E. Schippers of Public Health, Welfare and Sport.

ca 6.500

(excl. faculty of Medicine)



DECEMBER

China Light

Mr Qingchao Fang, the Chinese embassy's education attaché, the Mayor of Utrecht Jan van Zanen and Marjan Oudeman, President of the Executive Board of Utrecht University, together opened the China Light exhibition in the Botanical Gardens in Utrecht Science Park. Oudeman pointed out that the University has been collaborating with Chinese knowledge institutions for 25 years, for example in the form of the Netherlands-Asia Summer School and the visit by a delegation from the University and University Hospital in December 2013. This spectacle of light was open to the public for almost two months. It is an ancient Chinese tradition intended to gain the favour of Taiyi, the god of the heavens, with lanterns and other types of light.

Citizen science

In 2014, the University Museum launched the pilot programme SchedelLAB (SkullLAB) in alliance with brain surgeon Dr Bon Verweij and maxillofacial surgeon Dr Marvick Muradin from UMC Utrecht. It enabled visitors to become acquainted with the research behind a pioneering operation. For the first time anywhere in the world, a skull was replaced by a plastic model, created using 3D technology. Researchers from UMC Utrecht enlisted the help of museum visitors to collect data for research into facial dimensions. It was a prime example of citizen science.

3.076
Participants
Cultural Centre Parnassos



Cultural Centre celebrates 20th anniversary

Cultural Centre Parnassos is a breeding ground for creative talent and plays host to successful student music societies in Utrecht. In 2014 the Parnassos Culture Centre reached its 20th anniversary. The celebration was marked by a spectacular show. Four sell-out performances ensured that the anniversary was a resounding success.

Innovative education

The Executive Board has decided to make a further 6 million euros available for the Utrecht Education Incentive Fund (Utrechts Stimuleringsfonds Onderwijs). Education in Utrecht has an outstanding reputation for being innovative and influential. Many of the new educational ideas developed in Utrecht are now being applied nationwide. The Executive Board aims to ensure this continues, for example in terms of teaching methods and assessment, active learning, selection, honours education and the renewal of graduate studies. Examples of such innovations include the incentives provided for the development of educational games that enable students to practice on complex problems in simulated real-life scenarios.

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