“Students do not only learn from Professors, it also works the other way around.”

Bert van der Zwaan
Rector Magnificus
You’re never too old to learn

Antoine Steenkamer, winner of the 2016 student prize for special achievements, came to the conclusion that entertainment for the residents of retirement centres and nursing homes could be a bit more fun. Instead of listening to a men’s chorus every week they could be treated to the sounds of a talented violinist from the neighbourhood, or a lecture by an art history student. He established the national initiative Spelendergrijs (Playfully Grey) in order to match students in secondary and higher education with nursing homes.

“Mutilated porpoises are regularly found on Dutch beaches, and for a long time it was not clear what had caused the mutilations. Through joint research conducted by the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, IMARES (Institute for Marine Resources & Ecosystem Studies) and NIOZ (Royal Netherlands Institute for Sea Research), we discovered that they were in fact bite and laceration wounds. Results from DNA studies identified grey seals as the culprit,” according to Lonneke IJsseldijk, who is affiliated with the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine.

This is just one of the findings of her research. Each year, as many as 800 dead porpoises are washed ashore on the Dutch coast. The Ministry of Economic Affairs has asked the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine to determine whether the causes of death are related to human activity, for example through disturbance or noise, pollution, poisonous substances, hearing damage, collisions or by-catch.

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uu.nl/strandings
What’s the secret of successful governments’ policies for behavioural changes?

Why do some governments’ policies, that aim for attitude and behavioural changes of citizens on issues like smoking, drink driving and waste collection have more long-term success than others? Why do some crime prevention networks and urban regeneration partnerships achieve momentum, and deliver public value, whereas others don’t? With the Advanced Grant received from the European Research Council in 2016, public administration scholar Paul ‘t Hart will spend five years carrying out comparative research on such questions, together with an international team of post-doctoral researchers and PhD candidates located at the School of Governance.

uu.nl/ug

European Research Council (ERC) grants support individual researchers of any nationality and age who wish to pursue their frontier research. The ERC encourages in particular proposals that cross disciplinary boundaries, pioneering ideas that address new and emerging fields and applications that introduce unconventional, innovative approaches.

“Western market economy has had its time.”

Bas van Bavel
Professor Transitions of Economy and Society

Economic historian Professor Bas van Bavel’s new book, The Invisible Hand, shows that, throughout the ages, all market economies go through a cycle and decline or even disappear after a period of growth.

Historically, there is not a single instance of a market economy that managed to escape this cycle. In all cases, we see economic stagnation, increasing material inequality, political inequality and finally the disappearance of markets. It is unlikely that our current market economy will escape this fate. This makes it plausible that the end of the Western market economy is near.

uu.nl/institutions

“Terrorists are the fundamentalist scourges of modern times.”

Beatrice de Graaf
Professor of History of International Relations & Global Governance

On the invitation of De Wereld Draait Door, one of the most popular Dutch TV shows, Professor of History of International Relations & Global Governance Beatrice de Graaf has given a lecture on terrorism at DWDD University. The lecture was broadcast on national television and attracted three millions of spectators.

“The flame of resistance is of all times. Since the 20th century, however, the challenges posed by terrorism and extremism have dominated the attention of the modern state and liberal society. Terrorists are the fundamentalist scourges of modern times. How can we explain – and maybe even solve – the puzzle of radicalisation? Without historical awareness and understanding of the context, we will surely be unable to develop any grasp of the phenomenon”, argues De Graaf.

uu.nl/agenda/dwdd-university-met-beatrice-de-graaf-over-terrorisme

We must take time to listen to each other

Together with Professor of Pedagogy Micha de Winter, Professor Beatrice de Graaf has started a task force to advise the City of Utrecht with regard to sustainable solutions to the problem of radicalisation in young people.

In the coming four years, the academics will be providing recommendations on a variety of topics, beginning with education. According to De Winter, schools can play an important role in preventing radicalisation, “by assisting young people in their identity development and by teaching them to challenge injustice, while preserving the dignity of others.”

De Graaf advocates ‘slow counter-terrorism’. In this, she emphasises the importance of open debates in which radicals have a voice, but in which clear alternatives are offered.

uu.nl/nieuws/taskforce-radicalising
The Antarctica camp of a team of climate researchers from Utrecht University and TU Delft.

Utrecht climate research has the greatest impact worldwide

Utrecht University’s sustainability research in the field of climate change and ecosystems has the greatest impact worldwide. That is the conclusion of a study conducted by Times Higher Education. In the category ‘Environmental Sciences’ Utrecht achieves higher citation impact scores than universities such as Stanford and Harvard.

“It is a shared success, based on Utrecht’s strong position in interdisciplinary research”, explains Detlef van Vuuren, author of the most-cited articles. “Often in cooperation with outside institutes, such as the Royal Netherlands Institute for Sea Research (NIOZ), the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (RIVM) and other universities.”

Maarten Hajer manages the Urban Futures Studio, devoted to the study of positive urban futures and of ways to get there. “We are intrigued by how the future is imagined,” says Hajer “and have coined the term Techniques of Futuring to open this domain of study. We are convinced that new thinking starts in crossovers and we actively initiate meet-ups of not-like-minded people.” Maarten Hajer has also been put forward as the next programme director for the strategic theme Sustainability.

Maarten Hajer
Distinguished Professor of Urban Futures

Mysterious ‘crater’ on Antarctica indication of vulnerable ice sheet

The East Antarctic ice sheet appears to be more vulnerable than expected, due to a strong wind that brings warm air and blows away the snow. That is the conclusion reached by a team of climate researchers led by Jan Lenaerts (Utrecht University) and Stef Lhermitte (TU Delft), based on a combination of climate models, satellite observations and on-site measurements. “Tens of metres of rising sea levels are locked away in Antarctica”, says Lenaerts. “And our research has shown that also East Antarctica is vulnerable to climate change.”

Wilfried van Sark
Associate Professor of Solar Energy

Solar energy is the cheapest and cleanest alternative to fossil fuels.

The positive effect of solar energy as a sustainable energy source offsets the negative impact of the production of solar panels. This applies to energy consumption as well as greenhouse gas emissions during the production process. “In our study we carefully examined important sustainability aspects of the production and yield of solar panels over the last 40 years. This revealed that solar energy is currently both the cheapest and the cleanest alternative to fossil fuels”, explains solar energy researcher Wilfried van Sark.

Mysterious ‘crater’ on Antarctica indication of vulnerable ice sheet


Solar energy is the cheapest and cleanest alternative to fossil fuels.

uu.nl/sustainability

Bright minds, better future

High-value knowledge and facilities on three continents

Utrecht University, the University of Toronto and the Chinese university of Hong Kong will be collaborating on a study of healthy living in the city. The study is expected to lead to new, sustainable solutions for the worldwide challenges associated with population growth in cities. The cooperation focuses on such topics as citizenship in the 21st century, rules for an open society, climate change, sustainability, diversity or creativity and leadership.

High-value knowledge and facilities on three continents

uu.nl/hul

uu.nl/hul
“Your outstanding Master’s programme prepares me perfectly.”

Cardoso Rebeca
UES alumna

A voice for the millions between black-and-white thinkers

The international prize-winning student campaign ‘Dare to be Grey’ fights the polarisation of society by promoting open debate, in which there is space for nuanced opinions, doubts and diversity, and in which people truly listen to each other. The campaign gives a voice to the millions between the small groups of black-and-white thinkers who usually determine the debate. The students presented their campaign in several locations, including the United States.

uu.nl/en/education/dare-to-be-grey

Once again in 2016, students from outside of Europe embarked upon a degree programme at Utrecht University with financial support from the donors of the Utrecht Excellence Scholarship programme of the Utrecht University Fund.

The scholarship programme enables these students to gain the knowledge and skills they need for their personal academic future and to benefit their home country. And Utrecht University also benefits, as these talented young students enrich the university in every respect: the mix of different cultures, views and experiences promote debate, mutual understanding and creativity.

“I am interested in the fight against cancer, which affected my family”, says UES alumna Cardoso Rebeca. “Your outstanding Master’s programme is preparing me perfectly for that goal.”

uu.nl/alumni-services

Less sugar, fewer deaths

Rick Vreman developed an economic model that can be used to make reliable predictions concerning the medical and economic consequences of a reduction in the consumption of added sugars. “If all Americans were to eat 20% less sugar, it would have an economic advantage of 10 billion dollars and result in 23,000 fewer deaths”, he concludes. In addition to making a strong contribution to his discipline, Pharmacy, his research will advance the approach to an important and current societal problem. He earned the university’s 2016 Master’s thesis prize.

uu.nl/studentawards

Echo Award 2016

Utrecht University pharmacy student Maryam Lyousoufi (in the photo on the left) is one of three winners of the national ECHO Awards 2016. She received the prize from Minister Jet Bussemaker of Education, Culture and Science for merits including her efforts as a board member and teacher at a weekend school for children from disadvantaged neighbourhoods. ECHO is a national centre of expertise on diversity policy in higher education. The winners are offered a summer course at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) in the United States.

uu.nl/en/news/utrecht-university-students-nominated-for-echo-awards

“Many women in science, but few at the top.”

José van Dijck
Distinguished Professor of Utrecht University

Effective 1 January 2017, Professor José van Dijck (in the photo on the left) has been appointed Distinguished Professor of Utrecht University. Until mid-2018, José van Dijck will continue to serve as president of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences; the first-ever woman president. In Utrecht, José van Dijck’s research will focus primarily on questions concerning the digital society and media culture.

Last year, monthly magazine Opzij named her the most influential woman in the Netherlands. “In her position as the president of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, she is bringing science closer to the citizen, and she has a clear vision of the future of education and research”, notes Opzij.

José van Dijck (1960) studied Dutch and Comparative Literature at Utrecht University. After completing her doctorate, her positions have included dean of the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Amsterdam. Van Dijck: “In the Netherlands, I missed having a role model. I earned my PhD in the United States, and there were female professors there. Even today, only 18% of all professors are women. These figures are shocking, even though they will obviously change.”

uu.nl/nieuws/jose-van-dijck-wordt-universiteitshoogleraar-universiteit-utrecht

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uu.nl/nieuws/jose-van-dijck-wordt-universiteitshoogleraar-universiteit-utrecht
Gender diversity needs ambition and action

100 years after the appointment of the first female professor, gender diversity is still an important topic to Utrecht University. Where do we stand today and what is our ambition for the future?

Status quo
The ratio of female graduates in the Netherlands is above 50%. On every higher step of the scientific career ladder, the proportion of women decreases:

- 54% of PhD candidates
- 43% of Assistant Professors
- 39% of Associate Professors
- 26% of Professors
- 18% of Female professors in Utrecht University
- 22% of Female professors in the Netherlands

History
In 1917, Utrecht University appointed the first female professor in the Netherlands: the biologist and mycology expert Johanna Westerdijk. uu.nl/westerdijk

Prognosis
Based on the average growth in the past decade, it is predicted that universities in the Netherlands will achieve an equal gender balance in 2054.

Ambition and action
Utrecht University intends to reach the 50/50 ratio before the 2054 prognosis. Therefore the 2016 - 2020 Strategic Plan, strives to increase the number of female professors to 27% in 2020. Several initiatives throughout the institute aim to increase the number of female academic staff and diversity in general. The Utrecht University Taskforce Diversity, initiated in 2016, bundles these initiatives and boosts activities.
A cell is like a city with intersecting highways, secondary roads and sidewalks. Professor Anna Akhmanova is an expert in this infrastructure and focuses on what is needed to move information and materials throughout the cell. Knowledge of the interplay between architecture and intracellular transport pathways provides Akhmanova with valuable insight into how the shape of a cell is determined, and how cells are able to move and divide. Just as a car accident interrupts traffic flow, disruption inside a cell often lead to the development of disease.

In 2016, Akhmanova was awarded the prestigious Human Frontier Science Program grant (1.35 million USD) to advance her work. Mis-regulation of intracellular pathways crucial for cell adhesion can lead to catastrophic results, for example in the migration of tumor cells. This project will be done in collaboration with partners in the UK, Singapore and Canada, and their findings may contribute to our efforts in designing medical solutions to combat healthcare problems such as cancer, neurodegeneration and infectious diseases.

uu.nl/life-sciences

"Bioprinting holds the potential to revolutionise medical treatments."

Jos Malda
Bioprocess Technologist

Utrecht University has joined forces with Wageningen University and Research Centre and the university hospitals of Utrecht, Rotterdam, Leiden and Amsterdam to combine their research in the Netherlands Centre for One Health, which was opened by Minister Schippers of health, Welfare and Sport last year. One Health research concerns the health of both humans and animals, by studying human, veterinary, wildlife and environmental health in an integrated manner.

Scientists in the NCOH focus on four themes: Tackling Antimicrobial Resistance, Smart & Healthy Farming, Healthy Wildlife & Ecosystems, and Emerging Infectious diseases, including Zika, bird flu and Q fever (the 'zoonoses'); diseases of animals that are hazardous to humans.

“The establishment of the NCOH demonstrates our ability to join forces in the area of health research, animal health and the environment. This is an important step”, states Minister Schippers. The NCOH takes a preventive approach: don't wait until a problem arises, but prevent problems from occurring.

uu.nl/life-sciences

3DM is a partnership between the University Medical Center Utrecht, the HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht and ProtoSpace Foundation, complemented by a number of companies with expertise in 3D printing and medical imaging. This provides a unique foundation for the translation of 3D (bio)printing technology towards clinical application in the Netherlands.
Primary school De Malelande in Amersfoort is the first school participating in the large-scale YOUth study conducted by Utrecht University. The study is aimed at generating insight into the development of children.

Marga Oudesluys, Internal Mentor at De Malelande: “The study is not restricted to the here and now. It also aims to understand, over time, why some children develop behavioural problems and others do not. As a school, this will help us contribute to the more harmonious development of children.”

The cooperation with this primary school marks the start of the YOUth study amongst children aged 8, 9 and 10 years at the ChildResearchCenter. These children will be surveyed again when they are around 12 and 15 years old. “We conduct a wide range of interesting tests”, explains the principal investigator Chantal Kemner. “What drives us is the question of why some children develop well and can find their place in society without much trouble, while others barely manage it or cannot do it at all.”

uu.nl/doy

Louk Vanderschuren is a Professor of Neurobiology of Behaviour in the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine. He is investigating the role of the brain in drug addiction, social behaviour and impulsiveness. Within the strategic theme Dynamics of Youth, Louk Vanderschuren is collaborating with research colleague Corette Wierenga to explore the question of why playing with age peers is so important.

Vanderschuren: “By conducting research on rats, we are trying to understand how play contributes to the development of the brain and behaviour. Through play, children and young animals learn how they should behave in variable and unpredictable situations. The great thing about the strategic theme Dynamics of Youth is that it makes it much easier to link my research on rats to research on children, as well as to other research, including detailed studies of brain functioning. Dynamics of Youth offers a context which promotes spontaneous collaboration between researchers from different areas of expertise.”

uu.nl/en/news/how-important-is-playing-for-the-development-of-the-brain
Jan Haarhuis received one of the first SURF Teaching Awards. He won the Change Maker Award in the category of ICT and teaching professionals for his role as a programme manager for the Educate-it educational innovation programme at Utrecht University.

Educate-it helps teachers make their teaching innovative and blended.

Jan Haarhuis
Programme Manager

Utrecht University has launched the world’s first MOOC (a Massive Open Online Course) on human rights. The course – Human Rights for Open Societies - An Introduction to the European Convention on Human Rights was developed by Institutions for Open Societies scholars Antoine Buyse, Janneke Gerards and Paulien de Morree. It provides insight into one of the most complex human rights systems: the European Convention on Human Rights. In the coming time, MOOCs will be developed for all four of the strategic research themes.

World’s first MOOC on human rights

A massive open online course is aimed at unlimited participation and open access via the web. In addition to traditional course materials such as filmed lectures, readings, and problem sets, many MOOCs provide interactive user forums to support community interactions among students, professors, and teaching assistants.

“A place for encouraging and testing innovations in education.”

Toine Pieters
Head of the Freudenthal Institute

Students from all over the world are applying for the new Bachelor’s programme in Sustainability

Utrecht University’s Bachelor’s programme in Global Sustainability Science was launched in September 2016. The programme, which is taught in English, offers an outstanding balance between natural and social subjects. Students will look at the interaction between man and nature at local, regional and global levels.

Students from all over the world are applying for the new Bachelor’s programme in Sustainability

uu.nl/bachelors/gss

Lecturers who inspire enthusiasm

“I think doing research is really boring, but my lecturer’s enthusiasm made me enthusiastic too.” This is according to one of the students of Marleen Rijkeboer (second from the right in the photograph). Marleen won the Outstanding Teacher Award for 2016. The winner of the Teaching Talent Award was Haza Rahim. Her goal is “to take a personal and enthusiastic approach to helping students develop a critical, scientific attitude”. According to their students, both teachers have succeeded in this with a great deal of passion.

Lecturers who inspire enthusiasm

uu.nl/education

Bright minds, better future

uu.nl/education
Students parade through Utrecht city centre

On Saturday 21 May 2016 there was a costumed parade of students, accompanied by 27 carriages and wagons, in the city centre of Utrecht. The parade was organised by Utrecht University, the 200-year-old Utrechtsch Studenten Corps (USC) and students from the Diergeneeskundige Studentenkring (Veterinary Student Circle), which organises an annual Dag van het Aangespannen Paard (Carriage Horse Day).

The theme of the costumed parade was Don Quixote and his faithful companion Sancho Panza. Until the late 1960s, the Masked Parade was part of the anniversary celebrations of Utrecht University and the USC, which attracted masses of Utrecht residents. The tradition was restored in 2006 (on the occasion of the university’s 370th anniversary), albeit on a smaller scale.

380 Years of Utrecht University

From 29 March to 20 May 2016, the university celebrated its 380th anniversary with a wide range of activities. Under the motto Create, Connect & Celebrate, the whole university community came together in Tivoli/Vredenburg for the UUnited Music Festival, there were special anniversary dinners in which lecturers were invited to dine in student houses, there was a costume parade, a Science Park marathon, and much, much more.

“Who knows just how much the children can be touched by such a visit.”

Marjan Oudeman
President of the Executive Board

The highlight of the celebrations was Meet the professor. “For this, around 140 professors in gowns cycled to primary schools in the region to tell the children about their work and their research”, explained President of the Executive Board Marjan Oudeman. “It was a fantastic experience for everyone involved. The children were enthusiastic, and the professors were smiling from ear to ear. This was a great way to make an impact.”

Pre-incubator The Garage

In June UtrechtInc opened the Garage, with the support of the city of Utrecht. In this ‘pre-incubator’ of ‘creative hub’ startups, researchers, companies and students can experiment in the early stages of innovative startup concepts which support the development of a healthy society. “In the Garage, solutions are found to creating a healthier way of working, eating, learning, traveling, relaxing and consuming in big cities”, says Marcellien Breedveld, Ideation Manager at UtrechtInc. Alumni, employees and researchers who establish a start-up can use the services of UtrechtInc, which is linked to Utrecht University, the UMC Utrecht, and HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht. Via UtrechtInc, young entrepreneurs gain access to funding, office space, and coaching from experts.

Exclusive alumni event at the Holy Scriptures exhibition

In October 2016, Museum Catharijneconvent opened its doors exclusively to alumni of Utrecht University. Up to three hundred alumni attended various lectures, workshops, discussions and musical performances connected to the impressive Holy Scriptures exhibition. The ancient religious manuscripts and bindings on display in the museum turned out to be the perfect setting for lively and insightful conversations. This inspiring evening was organised by the University Library and the Alumni Office. It is only one highlight in a series of national and international alumni events that aim to (re)connect and involve Utrecht alumni with the university and with each other.

Utrecht University hopes to be carbon neutral by 2030

In March 2016, Lot van Hooijdonk, alderperson for the City of Utrecht, and Anton Pijpers, Vice-President of the Utrecht University Executive Board gave the green light for the installation of 4,600 solar panels on roofs at Utrecht University. This has since been accomplished for nine of the university’s buildings. Together, these solar panels generate 1 million kWh of electricity per year, which is equivalent to the annual electricity usage of 320 households.

Pijpers: “Sustainability is an important issue for our university. We are aiming to become a carbon neutral university, and we hope to be halfway to this goal by 2020.”

Utrecht Incubator

In June 2016, Utrecht Inc opened its doors to the Garage, with the support of the City of Utrecht. In this ‘pre-incubator’ of creative hub startups, researchers, companies and students can experiment with innovative startup concepts that support the development of a healthier society. “In the Garage, solutions are found to creating a healthier way of working, eating, learning, traveling, relaxing and consuming in big cities”, says Marcellien Breedveld, Ideation Manager at Utrecht Inc. Alumni, employees and researchers who establish a start-up can use the services of Utrecht Inc, which is linked to Utrecht University, the UMC Utrecht, and HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht. Via Utrecht Inc, young entrepreneurs gain access to funding, office space, and coaching from experts.

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AGENDA

TUESDAY 4 MAY
Studium Generale
Lecture to mark National Remembrance Day
Human curiosity has given way to fear of that which is different; our own viewpoint rules. The writer Abdelkader Benali examines the meaning of resistance in today’s world.
University Hall auditorium, 8.30 to 9.30 pm
sg.uu.nl/agenda

TUESDAY 16 MAY
Inaugural lecture for the Prince Claus Chair of Development and Equity
Professor Fatima Suleman, Associate Professor in the discipline of Pharmaceutical Sciences at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa, will be fulfilling a two-year visiting professor position in Utrecht, within the strategic research topic of Life Sciences.
University Hall auditorium, 4 pm
Information and registration: University Protocol Affairs: tel. (030) 253 36 11 or 253 30 68
princeclauschair.nl

10–13 JULY & 17–20 JULY
Summer School Junior
Children from primary school groups 5–8 will be doing research within the university. Rector Bert van der Zwaan describes an earlier edition on the Jeugdjournaal.
At various sites in the city centre and at the Utrecht Science Park.
Registration and information: summerschooljunior@uu.nl
uu.nl/summerschool-junior

WEDNESDAY 30 AUGUST
Public Symposium on Citizen Science
Leading Women in Fungal Biology
The symposium consists of seven sessions e.g. covering fungal applications, medical mycology. Each session consists of talks with leading female speakers.
Westerdijk Fungal Biodiversity Institute, Utrecht Science Park
More information
uu.nl/en/organisation/westerdijk-anniversary

“The Science Café poses thought-provoking questions beyond the borders of disciplines.”