



Utrecht University

Utrecht
University Fund

2019 ANNUAL REPORT

For and with the university

The Utrecht University Fund provided financial support to a varied range of UU researchers and students over the course of 2019. Huda al Baker is currently studying in Utrecht thanks to a grant from the Rosanna Fund for Women. // **page 16**
The Agnites Vrolik Award has helped conduct research on the female heart. // **page 18**



FOREWORD

Solidarity in uncertain times

As I write this introduction, our country is in the midst of a nationwide ‘intelligent lockdown’. As you would expect, these measures also extend to our university. In addition to being extremely close-knit, our academic community has proven to be both innovative and decisive during these difficult times. These strengths are reflected in the #UUGotThis hashtag. The health and well-being of all those involved in Utrecht University are paramount in these exceptional circumstances.

This annual report offers a look back at 2019. It proved to be a good year for the Utrecht University Fund, which carried out numerous activities in support of our goal: helping the university to grow and flourish. This annual report highlights several of these activities. This includes an interview with Huda al Baker, who received support from the Rosanna Fund for Women (one of our named funds) and is currently studying Conflict Studies and Human Rights here in Utrecht. Although she eventually hopes to apply her academic knowledge and personal experience in practice, al Baker is also planning to obtain her doctoral degree. After all, she was taught from an early age that education is key. In another success story, three medicine students launched KoffieCo, a popular podcast featuring interviews with medical specialists. The initiative aims to bridge the gap between medical interns and the actual clinical specialist practice. KoffieCo received support from the Utrecht University Fund Student Committee.

Last year saw the second edition of the Agnites Vrolijk Banquet, during which the annual award was presented to Hester den Ruijter. This annual report features more details on her research on the female heart. The past year also marked the launch of Utrecht 1636, a network for donors seeking to give a little extra – membership is open from an annual five-year contribution of just 500 euros.

We are also eager to share our story in figures. We raised close to 2.4 million in funds in 2019. We achieved this wonderful amount thanks to the many generous donations of our individual donors. At the same time, our 29 named funds were also crucial to our fund-raising effort. More information on our named funds and their impact can be found on page 14.

As you would expect, we are also eager to look ahead despite the current uncertainties. The corona crisis will undoubtedly cast a large shadow over the rest of the year. All the more reason to keep feeling close to Utrecht University and communicating that sense of commitment to the outside world.

We must keep working towards our ambitions together, especially in these times of uncertainty.

Warmest regards,

Lodewijk Hijmans van den Bergh
Chair, Utrecht University Fund

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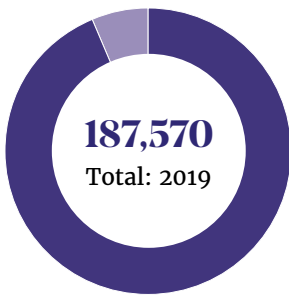
‘Obviously, you have to lead by example’

Utrecht 1636

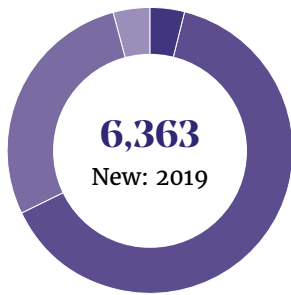
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What can the numbers tell us about 2019?

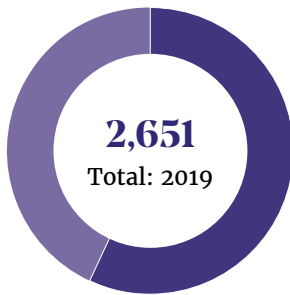
ALUMNI



- Registered alumni: 187,570
- Of which international alumni: 11,903



- New alumni in 2019
- PhDs: 4%
 - Bachelor's: 64%
 - Master's: 28%
 - Postgraduates and exchange alumni: 4%



- Attendance at alumni events
- Total no. of attendees: 2,651
 - Those attending an alumni event for the 1st time: 1,131

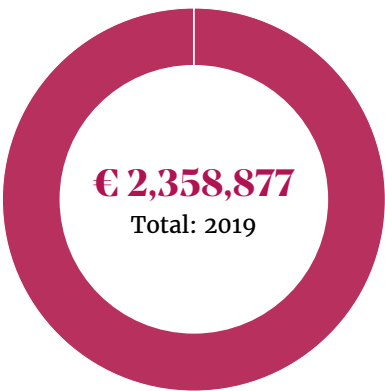
ALUMNI WORLDWIDE

Utrecht University alumni can be found in cities all across the globe. We have alumni networks in ten major global cities.

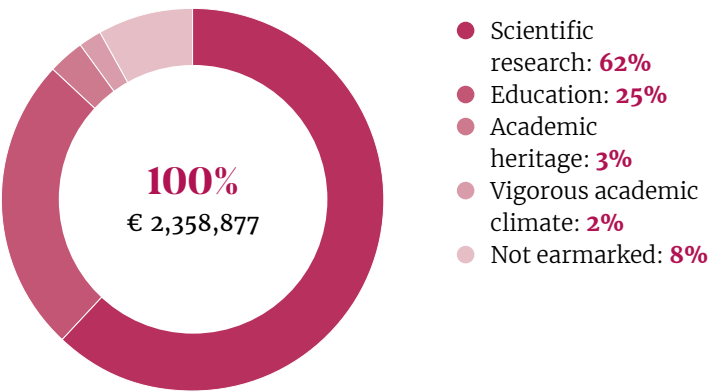


UTRECHT UNIVERSITY FUND

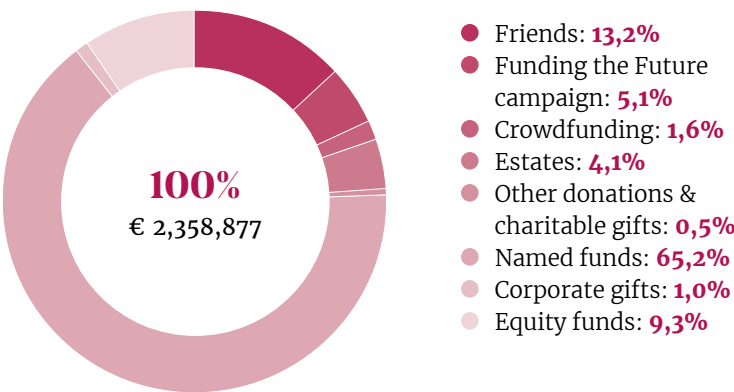
What is the total amount raised?



For what purpose are these funds intended?



Where have these donations come from?



Named funds

- Number of named funds: 29
- Capital appreciation of named funds in 2019: € 1,537,413

Steun.uu.nl

- Number of crowdfunding campaigns online at steun.uu.nl: 25
- Total revenue: € 37,853

Equity funds

- Number of university projects that secured funding from other equity funds with the help of the Utrecht University Fund: 20
- Financial support obtained from other equity funds: € 218,673

Funding the Future

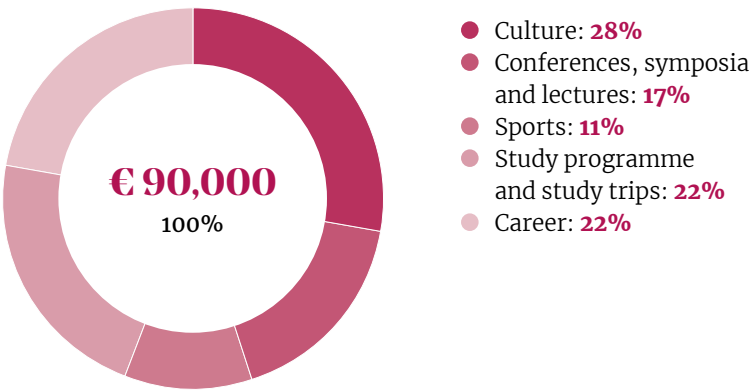
Total amount raised by the campaign
Funding the Future 2019: € 135,301

Earmarked for:

- BioClive: € 17,690
- Student talent: € 80,473
- Refugee students: € 23,536
- Butterfly house: € 7,727
- Three Faculty of Veterinary Medicine projects: € 5,875 (total)

Friends

Friends: 14,293
Student Friends: 5,852
Donated by these Friends: € 310,864
Amount of this sum to be spent on subsidies for students: € 90,000



Alumni are part of the UU community

Utrecht University is working for a better world. Cooperation will be crucial in achieving this goal. Utrecht University is actively working to reach, connect and involve our alumni in an effort to strengthen their ties to both one another and the university. The UU alumni programme underscores the mutual benefits of this lifelong relationship between alumni and their alma mater. The UU alumni community consists of over 187,000 registered alumni.

The activities organised as part of our national and local 2019 alumni programmes – including the annual University Day, specially-themed dinners and workshops for young alumni – were well-attended. An evening programme hosted by researchers conducting a study on parenting drew a large number of first-time attendees with young children. In addition to managing our alumni programme at a centralised level, we also help the various faculties and Utrecht University College develop and implement alumni policies by providing expertise and support. We also involve our alumni through various communication channels, including the Illuster alumni magazine, which also became available online this year. Our updates on social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn) are also reaching a growing audience.

This year, we have increased our focus on UU alumni abroad, establishing tight-knit, active alumni communities in Toronto, New York, London, Brussels, Singapore, Jakarta, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Beijing and Sydney with the help of local volunteers. This annual report showcases several UU alumni making remarkable contributions to society. Stand-up comedian and mathematician Jan Beuving was named Alumnus of the Year during the 2019 Anniversary Day celebrations. His shows help make the natural sciences entertaining and accessible for a broad audience.

Where to find us

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Twitter: twitter.com/AlumniUU
LinkedIn: linkedin.com/school/universiteit-utrecht

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*Director of the Utrecht University Fund
and head of Relationship Management*

UTRECHT UNIVERSITY FUND

For our growth & prosperity

The objective of our nation’s oldest university fund has remained unchanged since its inception in 1886: helping the university to grow and flourish. Our university strives to find solutions to the major challenges of today and tomorrow. Philanthropic donations play an increasingly important role in achieving this goal. In 2019, the Utrecht University Fund raised almost 2.4 million euros. This amount was allocated to various projects within the four key pillars: research, education, academic heritage and the academic climate.

RESEARCH

Some research projects need additional funding in order to get off the ground. The scientific insights developed at UU significantly contribute to the further development of our current and future society.

EDUCATION

Talent is not determined by someone’s country of origin or socio-economic background. Grants help to level the playing field for everyone, and create a more diverse and challenging academic climate.

ACADEMIC HERITAGE

We are eager to share the results of our scientific research with the wider society. Efforts to safeguard and democratise academic heritage will help make science and academia more accessible to all.

ACADEMIC CLIMATE

Studying does not stop at the acquisition of relevant knowledge. For many young people, their time at university is a formative period. The Utrecht University Fund provides student grants in an effort to promote a greater sense of community, equality and social engagement.

The aid from many volunteers and the financial support from over 15,000 friends and sponsors form an indispensable part of these efforts. Your contributions are what enables the Utrecht University Fund to make a difference, more and more each year. Thanks to your help, we are generating ever-growing impact. The stories in this annual report will tell you more about what we are working together to achieve.

The Utrecht University Fund is a registered foundation. Members of its Board of Directors serve on a voluntary basis and always include both a Utrecht University professor and a representative of the Executive Board of Utrecht University. Fenna Hanraets-van Charldorp is director of the Utrecht University Fund and head of Utrecht University’s Relationship Management department. The director and staff at the Utrecht University Fund office are employed by Utrecht University.

‘As we found,
doctors are only
human too’

MEDICAL INTERNS BOMBARD DOCTORS WITH QUESTIONS IN NEW PODCAST

STUDENT COMMITTEE

Do medical interns really get a clear picture of their chosen speciality during their residency? Medicine students **Doris van der Heijden** (1994), **Tiara Ringers** (1993) and **Tessa Dinger** (1995) didn't think so. They decided to interview medical specialists on their life and work as a part of the new KoffieCo podcast. The initiative aims to bridge the gap between medical interns and doctors.



Doris, Tiara and Tessa in the recording studio.

'Medical interns always get the same question at every birthday party: "What sort of doctor do you want to be?" We've noticed a lot of students – and that includes us – aren't really sure what career to choose. Medicine offers so many different options', Doris explains. Tessa adds: 'Lectures are almost always about theory and lecturers hardly ever discuss the actual clinical practice or working conditions. Hospitals are very hierarchical, so medical interns usually don't feel comfortable asking doctors a lot of questions. That means it can be hard to get a clear picture of a medical speciality.'

The three students decided to address the situation. Tiara: 'We were sitting on the couch sharing our residency experiences one evening, and one of us said: "I wish I could just go for a coffee with a doctor. It would be a great way to ask lots of questions."' Doris: 'We decided we should record those conversations for the benefit of our fellow students.'

Having come up with the concept for their KoffieCo podcast, they now had to figure out how to make it all happen. The students didn't have the right equipment or any money to rent what they needed.

GAINING CONFIDENCE

Tessa: 'The career officer at University Medical Centre Utrecht told us about the Utrecht University Fund Student Committee.' It proved to be a valuable tip, as Tiara explains: 'The board was immediately enthusiastic about our concept, and we eventually got a 1,250-euro grant.'

So did the doctors they wanted to interview share that enthusiasm? Doris: 'Definitely! The only problem was – and remains – the matter of time. Doctors often work up to sixty hours a week. Just try finding the time to record a podcast with a schedule like that.' The students ended up planning all their interviews around the busy specialists' schedules to make it all work. Once they'd finally arrived in the studio, the interviewees proved more than willing to open up and share. Tiara: 'As they spoke with us, the doctors started reflecting on their own fields and ended up telling us things they hadn't even realised before or had kept to themselves for years. For example, we discussed the importance of maintaining a healthy work-life balance, building relationships with your patients, and dealing with your own emotions. A haematologist told us an inspiring story about a boy who had been under treatment for years

and no longer wanted to live. What's the best way to help someone in that situation? Once he'd finished talking, the doctor realised he hadn't shared the story with anyone for years. That's obviously a shame, because it contains so many valuable lessons for younger doctors.'

BREAKING THE TABOO

In addition to their 'regular' podcasts, the students also produce specially-themed episodes. Tessa: 'Aspects of the job like mourning and burnouts are barely discussed during the Medicine programme or residencies. Our podcast aims to break those taboos by discussing the issues that affect doctors in every specialty.' The three students also regularly drag interviewees out of their comfort zones in recurring segments such as the 'residency hotline'. 'When the hotline phone rings, we ask a question sent in by one of our listeners. Just like real life, the phone never rings at a good time', Doris explains with a grin.

The recurring segments, incisive questions and spontaneous specialists have proven to be a winning combination. The KoffieCo podcasts have racked up over 70,000 plays, a result they couldn't have dreamt of when they first started. The three students aim to go 'mobile' in future in order to interview doctors on location.

For more information on the podcast and an overview of episodes, visit koffiecopodcast.nl. KoffieCo is also available on Spotify.

The Utrecht University Fund supports student life at our university by making 90,000 euros available for grants each year. This funding comes from donations made by Friends of our Fund. All applications are processed by the Utrecht University Fund Student Committee. Both student organisations and individual students can submit grant applications for extracurricular activities that promote personal and academic development. Over 200 grants were awarded in 2019. The highly varied list of recipients included an anniversary concert by female student choir Medusa, various study trips and lectures, and the aforementioned KoffieCo podcast.

Members of the 2019-2020 Board of the Utrecht University Fund Student Committee:



Derek te Veldhuis
Master's in Public
Administration & Policy



Teuntje van der Horst
Bachelor's in Communication
and Information Studies



Janneke Pruijsen
Master's in Sustainable
Business and Innovation



Leonie Schiphorst
Bachelor's in
Educational Sciences

By donating 10 euros per year, students can become a Friend of the Utrecht University Fund. In doing so, they will be contributing to grants that benefit student life at the university. Following a recruitment campaign in September 2019, the Fund acquired some 1950 new Student Friends.

uu.nl/stuf

‘Butterflies tell the story of biodiversity’



Orange-white, black-purple or translucent as a sheet of glass: dozens of butterfly species have been fluttering through the Botanical Garden’s new butterfly house since May of 2019. Prior to the construction of the current permanent garden, an existing greenhouse was converted into a butterfly paradise before the start of every summer.

As Wim Kersten – biologist and resident butterfly expert at the Botanical Gardens – explains, it was a lot of work to convert the greenhouse every year. ‘Building up and tearing down the butterfly garden took us eight weeks in all.’ However, the temporary butterfly garden had another more serious drawback. It didn’t offer the necessary capacity to raise permanent butterfly populations. Wim: ‘We couldn’t raise all the various species in a sustainable way. That’s unfortunate, especially in terms of education. You can’t show visitors the entire life-cycle from egg to butterfly.’

A temporary butterfly garden just wasn’t an option anymore, in other words. The Botanical Gardens finally decided to raise money for an actual butterfly paradise in 2018. They did so with the support of the Utrecht University Fund, which incorporated the project in the annual Funding the Future campaign. The result? 185 donors raised a total of 7,726.96 euros. The K.F. Hein Fund, an equity fund allied with the Utrecht University Fund, also donated 6,000 euros to the project. These contributions, together with other generous donations, helped make the butterfly house a reality in no time.

OUR VERY OWN BUTTERFLY POPULATION

The butterfly garden has been one of the Botanical Garden’s most popular attractions since its official opening. In fact, half the Garden’s visitors travel to Utrecht to see the butterflies. The butterfly house also attracts regular visits from schools and has become a hotspot for butterfly photographers. Wim and the other volunteers also love the new butterfly garden. ‘I’m really grateful. We’re getting weekly shipments of between 50 to 100 pupae from the Philippines, Kenya and Costa Rica, which means we can now raise our own populations.’

Mail-order butterflies? ‘Definitely! We get our butterflies from butterfly farms. They’re usually located in villages near the forests where the butterflies live. The locals occasionally catch female butterflies, which can easily lay up to 200 eggs. They wait till the eggs have grown into caterpillars and pupated, and ship them over here. In addition to helping us and all other butterfly gardens in the Netherlands, this trade also offers an economic incentive to conserve the local forests. And, perhaps even more importantly: butterflies, with their wealth of colours and patterns, tell the story of biodiversity and its crucial value. Every part of our ecosystem plays its own key role. That also goes for butterflies. Butterflies pollinate flowers and plants, and the females’ eggs and caterpillars that hatch from them are an important source of food for other species.’

Unfortunately, biodiversity is declining at a startling rate in both the Netherlands and wider world. Wim: ‘That’s bad news: like us, butterflies are also dependent on biodiversity. Butterfly caterpillars are picky eaters and usually only eat one or a handful of plant species: their host plant. Butterflies specifically seek out these plants in order to lay their eggs. If these plants go extinct, the butterfly species that depends on them is likely to follow. That’s why it’s so important to get our visitors – and, more importantly, children – interested in biodiversity and encourage

them to help build a more diverse environment. For example, I offer tips on making their own garden more butterfly-friendly.’

LIVING PROJECT

There are twelve butterfly gardens in the Netherlands. So what makes the Botanical Gardens butterfly garden so unique? Wim: ‘The personal interaction. The butterfly gardens in major zoos are really large. Visitors tend to walk through them and think: well, that was nice. We regularly have volunteers that can explain and show you all sorts of interesting things. Our butterflies are also very active. The pupae hatch right in front of our visitors’ eyes, and the butterflies flutter from plant to plant. It’s a perfect opportunity to see them from up close and take some great pictures.’

Although the butterfly house is now finished and the net has been installed, there’s still more work to do, Wim explains. ‘The butterfly house is a living project. The caterpillars eat the leaves, so we’re constantly putting in new plants and farming new butterflies.’ So what’s Wim’s biggest wish? ‘I’d love to import a rare species like the birdwing butterfly and grow our own population here in Utrecht.’

Visit uu.nl/botanischetuinen for visitor information.

‘Funding the Future’ is the name of the annual fundraising campaign organised by the Utrecht University Fund. Each year, friends, alumni, staff and students give generously to the projects selected by the Fund.

In 2019, you raised the wonderful amount of 135,301 euros which was divided over four promising projects. In addition to the permanent butterfly house, the Utrecht University Fund also provided support to talented students through the university’s grant programme, the Inclusion programme for refugee students and the BioClIVE experiment, in which UU biologists are working to determine how grassland biodiversity affects global food supplies and exploring its impact on carbon storage in our future climate. The Utrecht University Fund will also be raising funds for four wonderful Funding the Future projects in 2020.

uu.nl/pay-it-forward

The impact of named funds

Named funds are designed to let the founder determine what their donations will be spent on. The Utrecht University Fund managed a total of 29 named funds in 2019. These funds contribute to a broad range of academic goals, from encouraging the broad academic development of our students to facilitating fundamental research in the field of geochemistry, and from realising educational projects in the Botanical Gardens to supporting patient-oriented research in the field of internal medicine.

Named funds are built on major donations from their founders. Some named funds actively raise funds from other donors, while others do not. Despite these differences, all named funds have one thing in common: they make a difference by providing much-needed financial support.

So what did donations from our named funds go to in 2019? We have highlighted some inspiring examples below.



The Utrecht University Model United Nations delegation on its way to Harvard University.



Biofabrication enables us to repair or replace damaged organs.



UU researchers are working to develop a vaccine and treatment for a lethal virus affecting Asian elephants.



The Centre for Complex Systems Studies tackles social issues such as climate change on the basis of models and theories from the Natural Sciences.

‘I had opportunities to study abroad, which really helped boost my career. I want to make sure the current generation gets to enjoy those same experiences and benefits. It’s also important that students can orient themselves broadly rather than merely gaining in-depth knowledge of their chosen field.’
Yvonne van Rooy, LLM, founder of the Yvoor Fund

MINDERHOUD FUND AND USC SCHOLARSHIP FUND

UVSV/VVSNU and USC alumni often request that their donations to the Utrecht University Fund are designated to the Minderhoud Fund or USC Scholarship Fund. These named funds award grants to society members seeking to undertake a prestigious work placement or study project. For example, the Minderhoud Fund helped students Manouk Alderliesten and Frederiek van Welden Rengers take part in this year’s Model United Nations conference at Harvard University. Participants train diligently for this prestigious competition, in which students simulate UN conferences and apply their well-honed collaboration, negotiation and speaking skills.

HOFVIJVERKRING FELLOWSHIP

One of the six Hofvijverkring Fellowship scholarships made available to talented young researchers in 2019 went to Dr Riccardo Levato. Levato is researching 3D bioprinting at University Medical Centre Utrecht and studying stem cell printing technologies. He hopes to develop specific parts of the knee joint in the laboratory in order to treat wounds or degeneration. The grant enabled him to visit a Japanese research group that has developed a unique nano technology application in this field. The specific knowledge and insights gained during his visit will be of great use during Riccardo’s further research.

FRIENDS OF VETERINARY MEDICINE

The Asian elephant is currently in danger of becoming extinct. Elephant Endotheliotropic Herpes Virus (EEHV), which causes a highly complex disease, is the leading cause of death among young elephants. ‘Unfortunately, we still don’t have an effective treatment or vaccine at the moment. We need more research to develop a rapid diagnosis method and effective vaccine,’ explains Prof. Victor Rutten. Friends of Veterinary Medicine helped raise funds for his research project with Dr Tabitha Hoornweg and Dr Xander de Haan in 2019. The fundraising campaign generated a great deal of media attention in outlets such as de Telegraaf and Algemeen Dagblad newspapers, Jeugdjournaal children’s news programme and RTV Utrecht and RTL Nieuws.

SWAANTJE MONDT FUND

The Swaantje Mondt Fund supports PhD candidates specialising in Law and Complex Systems. In 2019, the fund facilitated a fellowship for Italian PhD candidate Marta Magnani. Magnani is studying ecosystems under extreme conditions. She is working to predict the resilience of ecosystems and their reactions to climate change using simplified empirical models based on large data sets. As a part of her research at the UU Centre of Complex Systems Studies, she has developed a new dynamic model based around various ecological factors. The model should help us gain greater insight into the causes of natural fires in Southern Europe.

NAMED FUNDS

The Utrecht University Fund managed a total of 29 named funds in 2019, which are listed below. Visit uu.nl/namedfunds for links to the various funds’ web pages and their specific objectives. You can also make donations via this page.

Named funds that actively solicit donations. (donors may also contribute):

- A.F. Monna Fund
- BINF Fund
- Hofvijverkring
- Veterinary Medicine Anniversary Fund
- Minderhoud Fund
- Olaf Schuiling Fund
- Professor A.R. de Bruijn Fund
- RechtOpLeren Fund
- Ronald van Kempen Fund
- Rosanna Fund
- UCU Scholarship Fund
- USC Scholarship Fund
- Friends of the Botanical Gardens
- Friends of Veterinary Medicine
- Friends of Humanities
- Yvoor Fund

Named funds that do not engage in active fundraising:

- Aurelius Fund
- Christiane Seidel Fund
- Complex Systems Fund
- Cor en Tine Drooger Fund
- Familie van Leerzem Fund
- International Economic Law Fund
- Godard Van Reede Fund
- Maria Naundorf van Gorkum Fund
- Martijn Zwart Fund
- Scrinierius Fund
- Swaantje Mondt Fund
- Trappeniers-Wols Fund
- Truida Schok Fund

'We need to pass on the message of solidarity together'



'Who is this?' Huda Al Baker was in the train when she got a call to inform her she would receive a grant from the Rosanna Fund for Women. She laughs: 'I didn't believe it at first. I'd never won anything in my life! I was one of four women to receive a grant in 2019. We all come from different backgrounds: Dutch, Iraqi, Palestinian. Two of us are refugees. Rosanna represents the values of participation and solidarity, and helps disadvantaged women – regardless of their background – to pursue careers in higher education.'

Before coming to the Netherlands in 2015, Huda lived in Syria as a Palestinian refugee. 'Getting a good education has always been my most important goal. I remember my grandmother saying after forcibly being evicted out her land: 'It doesn't matter whether you leave your family, your home, your possessions and your country behind; you'll be fine as long as you get an education. That will protect you anywhere in the world.'

A DIFFERENT CULTURE

'Trying to find a university here was quite overwhelming. Without any guidance, I browsed through all the websites comparing one university to another and visited open days to find out more about the differences. At the same time, I tried to build a life here, learn Dutch and improve my academic English. It was quite a challenge, since I come from a different culture, with different social norms. For instance, I still have trouble addressing teachers by their first name.'

'Finding out that my Syrian diploma is not recognised as a Bachelor's degree over here, was devastating. Luckily, I found out about Inclusion. They help status holders to follow courses at Utrecht University. Finding them was an important step in the right direction, as they helped me to take the preparatory courses that got me admitted to the Conflict Studies and Human Rights Master's programme. Inclusion also enriched my understanding of Dutch society and the educational system here.'

TALENTED FEMALE ACADEMICS

It was also Inclusion that advised Huda to apply to the Rosanna Fund. The idea behind the fund immediately struck a chord with Huda. 'Two female professors who set up their own organisation aimed at talented female academics from disadvantaged backgrounds. Providing them with financial support during their academic education to help them make the next career move. No matter their background, status or religion. They're creating a sense of solidarity between women, which is wonderful. I've got so much respect for what they're doing, and I'm glad I can be a part of this and pass it on to the next generations of women.'

'The grant is helping me in different ways. The financial support allows me to do my field work, covering the cost for travel and accommodation and telephone interviews. But Rosanna also offers moral support. I've become friends with the "Rosanna women". We meet every so often to share our experiences, which

helps us to understand each other's situations better. This understanding will not only benefit us, as a "Rosanna family", I'm confident it will also have an impact on generations of women to come. It also reflects the diversity within and outside our university in ways you can't express in percentages and figures. It's mainly about understanding and empathy rather than sympathy, since people's sympathy is only momentarily.'

ACADEMIC AND PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

'Where do I see myself in a few years? I'd rather take it one step at a time. That's something I learned through my experiences in Syria. I never would have imagined I'd be here in the Netherlands now, and I still don't know where I'll be going in future. First, I'd like to continue my research on the interactions and identity of a Palestinian faction, a military group that's been fighting alongside the Syrian regime since the start of the revolution. Once I get my Master's, it would be great to have the opportunity to work in the field, preferably in conflict zones. And I would I definitely like to obtain my doctorate as well.'

'I think my own personal experiences can be valuable. Growing up in an educated and politically engaged family, I was constantly aware of the Palestinian issues, national issues in Syria and the surrounding region. This naturally influenced me as a child, and it now helps me to see conflict zones in a broader context. It's also motivated me to explore how we can reduce the impact of conflict on people's daily lives. And now, along with my own life experience, I can use the research methods, theories and philosophies I was introduced to at Utrecht University.'

'I believe every change starts with education. Funding can be an obstacle, particularly for women in higher education. That's why it's so important to pass on Rosanna's message of solidarity.'

In many cases, donors who contribute larger amounts decide for themselves which purpose they would like their gift to serve. To do this, they set up what is called a named fund. The founder gives the fund a name and determines its objective. The Rosanna Fund for Women was founded by Rosi Braidotti (professor at Utrecht University) and Anneke Smelik (Utrecht University alumnus) in order to help talented women pursue an academic education. The Utrecht University Fund manages the administration of these named funds. See page 15 of this annual report for an overview of our various named funds.

uu.nl/namedfunds

There is a great need for specific research on the female heart.



Every year, cardiovascular disease kills more women than men. However, most scientific studies are largely focused on men or barely explore the differences between men and women. UU researcher **Hester den Ruijter** (Experimental cardiology) is hoping to change all that.

Hester den Ruijter was presented with the Agnites Vrolik Award on 31 January 2019 in recognition of her research on the differences between men and women in the development of cardiovascular diseases. The Utrecht University Fund presents the award – made possible by a bequest from alumnus Cobi de Bree – to talented UU researchers in support of their work. Hester’s research is driven by a personal ambition. ‘Every woman should be able to rely on the fact that their cardiological care is rooted in solid scientific knowledge.’

STIFFENED HEART MUSCLE

Amongst other conditions, Hester and her colleagues are studying heart failure caused by stiffening of the heart muscle. This condition is more common in women. The researchers are trying to find out which women and men are more likely to experience stiffening of the heart muscle.

‘How often does the condition occur before people develop any symptoms, and what are the characteristics of people actually developing heart failure at a later stage? Obviously, we’re also assessing whether there are differences between men and women.’

Hester: ‘We’ve already carried out a thorough literature review. As we found, studies on heart failure barely focus on the differences between men and women. We saw the same phenomenon when we analysed studies on the side effects of heart failure medication. Researchers barely made an effort to distinguish between the effects on men and women even though we know women are more sensitive to side effects. Side effects are also a major factor in decisions to discontinue medication, which obviously negate any positive effects.’ Distinguishing between men and women will help us gain a more comprehensive picture. The research team is working to gain insight into the risks and trajectories towards heart failure in both men and women. The results should offer a solid basis for further research on the treatment of heart failures caused by a stiffened heart muscle.

IMPACT

Hester has always been driven by a sense of curiosity. ‘I’ve always viewed scientific research as the best way to get to the truth, which is what motivates me. I want to figure out how things work.’ At the same time, our research is also driven by its potential social impact. ‘We’re doing urgently-needed work here. After all, this form of heart failure has a very bad prognosis. We still don’t have any effective medication, and less than half of all patients are still alive after five years. It would be wonderful to make a real difference in their lives.’

JINEK

In addition to medical research, education also plays an important role in preventing cardiovascular diseases amongst women. Amongst other dignitaries, Hester managed to bring in former EU commissioner Neelie Kroes as an ambassador for the research project. The two women appeared on Eva Jinek’s talkshow in an effort to highlight the need for scientific research and greater awareness.

The Agnites Vrolik Award will enable Hester to invest in high-risk research. ‘The resulting data will improve my chances of obtaining larger grants. I secured a Consolidator Grant – a major grant provided by the European Research Council – in late 2019. I wouldn’t have managed that if I hadn’t had the opportunity to do this type of research.’

The Utrecht University Fund has been awarding the Agnites Vrolik Award to talented UU researchers working on relevant social issues since 2018. The award, consisting of a 25,000 euro cash prize and a medal, was made possible by a bequest from alumnus Cobi de Bree.

uu.nl/agnites-vrolik

Private contributions to academic education and research are becoming increasingly vital in today’s radically changing society. More frequently than ever, alumni, current and former staff and other stakeholders are choosing to designate a portion of their estate or entire legacy to benefit an academic purpose. The Utrecht University Fund facilitates such donations.

uu.nl/bequests

‘The elections are about our future’



A mere 30 percent of all young people in the 18-27 age group voted during the 2014 European elections. **Lisette Mijnen (1994)** felt that number was far too low. She joined forces with fifteen other students to encourage higher youth turnout during the 2019 European elections.

So how do you get young people to the voting booth? Lisette (a Biomedical Sciences alumnus and Health Sciences Master's student) and other members of AEGEE Utrecht (a local chapter of the interdisciplinary AEGEE Europe student network) joined forces to explore this important question. Together, they developed Y Vote Utrecht. The initiative, which started as a pie-in-the-sky idea, soon evolved into an international festival and youth movement centred around the European elections: the Speak Europe Festival.

COMMUNICATING THE EU'S IMPORTANCE

So why are young people less likely to vote in EU elections? Lisette: 'European elections don't make the news much and tend to be overshadowed by other events. As a result, most young people aren't really aware of them. More importantly: you need to know the issues before you can actually go and vote. We set up Y Vote Utrecht to make young people more aware of what the EU actually does.'

You can achieve that by making the issues a bit more relatable, as Lisette explains. 'A lot of young people have no idea just how much influence the EU really has on our daily lives. For example, if it weren't for the EU, your internet bundle would only work in the Netherlands. The EU also makes sure there's no fipronil in your fried eggs. All our communications and events are designed to strike a chord with young people. We closely monitor all EU-related news and explain the issues in clear terms. All the activities at our festival were designed to be accessible and relatable. For example, we organised theatre performances, a mini lecture on lobbying, lectures on the millennium targets and democracy, a pub quiz and boy band concert. We closed the festival with a debate highlighting the various parties' positions and motivations.'

NOT REINVENTING THE WHEEL

AEGEE called in the help of other student societies, fifty volunteers and various organisations to get Y Vote Utrecht and the festival up and running. 'We tied in the events with other student activities where possible. That helped us draw attention to the elections at lots of events around the country without having to organise everything ourselves.' However, they also needed funding to pay for the festival site, catering and other expenses. 'I heard about the Utrecht University Fund's steun.uu.nl crowdfunding platform. We thought that would be a good way to raise money. Thankfully, we didn't have to reinvent the wheel. The fundraisers at the Utrecht University Fund were extremely helpful. They advised us to get our ideas down on paper first so we could clearly communicate our message and project targets to potential donors. The fund even had a useful template which was really helpful. In addition to making the crowdfunding process easier, having a clear narrative also helped us communicate the project and recruit volunteers more effectively. In the end, we raised almost 1,600 euros!'

So did Y Vote Utrecht achieve its objective and get more young people to vote? 'The number of young voters actually doubled in the Netherlands. Obviously, we have no way of telling whether that was because of our efforts. Still, I think the festival and Y Vote Utrecht were definitely successful. We brought together over 400 young people and showed them how the EU can contribute to their lives. It also sparked my own passion for politics. I've been talking to young people in other European countries, and it's clear we have a lot in common. Elections are about our future. We're all Europeans, so we need to make our voices heard. In the end, I hope Y Vote Utrecht and AEGEE Europe help us chart a new course for young people.'

Our crowdfunding platform steun.uu.nl exists for the benefit of our entire academic community. Scientists and student organisations can use this platform to set up crowdfunding campaigns of their own. This is a way for benefactors to assist in carrying out scientific research and to support student initiatives in Utrecht and our education in general. By leaving a message, they can tell others about their donation and involvement in our cause. Y Vote wasn't the only initiative to raise funds through our crowdfunding platform in 2019. DUB (the Digital U-blad university newsletter) celebrated its 50th anniversary last year. The publication used crowdfunding to finance its specially-themed anniversary edition on 50 years of student life. Departing UU staff members also used the platform to raise money for the RechtOpLeren Fund and other initiatives.

steun.uu.nl

Performing with Spinvis

STUDENT DAUWE LENTZ ORGANISES AND PERFORMS AT UU MUSIC FESTIVAL





The UUnited Music Festival offers Utrecht University students an opportunity to perform with a famous artist in TivoliVredenburg. Cellist and Interdisciplinary Social Science student **Dauwe Lentz** (23) helped to organise the festival and performed seven songs with Spinvis in the Grote Zaal on 28 March 2019. Dauwe: 'I spoke with him a few times before the concert. We're very different people.'



As a committee member and co-organisier of the upcoming UUnited Music Festival, Dauwe suddenly faced a dream question: who would you perform with if you had the choice? Dauwe, who plays cello in the one hundred-strong Utrechtsch Studenten Concert, created a poll on his orchestra's Facebook page. 'Some really interesting names came up. I started approaching the artists on the list, but some couldn't make it on the day and others felt we weren't paying enough.'

THE WRONG DATE

As the other eight participating student music societies (made up of around 450 student musicians) gradually secured the participation of a broad range of artists, Dauwe – and thus the USC – still hadn't found a musician willing to share the stage at Vredenburg. 'But then, out of nowhere, harpist Remy van Kesteren agreed to take part. It was so cool! He was a great fit for the orchestra.' A few months later, Dauwe was shocked to hear that Remy had mixed up his schedule and wouldn't be able to play with the USC after all. 'That was horrible, of course. It took me a while to get over it.'

CLASSICAL MUSIC ONLY

At that point, there wasn't much time left to find a suitable guest artist for the USC. Marieke van Merriënboer, director of the Parnassos cultural centre co-organising the festival, suggested a collaboration with Spinvis. 'I wouldn't even have dared to suggest him', the UU student explains.

'I basically only listen to classical music. The only pop musician I really listen to is Spinvis. In fact, I'd recently been to one of his concerts. The USC featuring Spinvis: it sounded like a dream billing.'

A BIT NERVOUS

It didn't take long to get in touch. A few days later, Dauwe was scheduled to meet the pop musician with Marieke van Merriënboer and Parnassos staff member Rosa Falkenburg. 'We were waiting in Marieke's office, feeling a bit nervous. The office isn't exactly soundproof, and is located right next to a rehearsal room. Someone was playing piano next door, and they weren't exactly great. We could hear everything through the wall.'

Still, the meeting with Spinvis – the stage name of Erik de Jong – went more smoothly than they could have expected. 'We thought it was going to be an exploratory meeting. Within ten minutes, we realised Erik had already decided to perform with us. We even managed to put together a setlist in half an hour. Marieke, Rosa and I each suggested a song, and he agreed on the spot.'

A BIT MUCH

The meeting was followed by a series of rehearsals with the orchestra. Dauwe also met with Erik on several occasions to discuss the details of their concert on the 28th. 'The conversation went smoothly as long as we stuck to practical matters. When things got a bit more

personal, it turned out we didn't really click. We're very different people.' The performance proved to be a success: the Grote Zaal was packed. Despite having fond memories of the festival, Dauwe would do things differently next time. 'I was performing with our orchestra, and doubling as festival production assistant. That was really a bit much.'

THE SAME TWO CENTURIES

As Dauwe emphasises, this edition of the UUnited Music Festival in TivoliVredenburg was a wonderful opportunity for both the 2500 visitors and participating student music societies. 'You don't get to perform on a big stage in a venue like that every day.' The festival also challenged USC to try something out of its comfort zone. 'We're a classical orchestra, so we're pretty much stuck in the same two centuries of musical history. Getting to play Spinvis' music with the artist himself was really something else.'

SECOND EDITION

The UUnited Muziekfestival's second edition in 2019 just as easily might not have happened. The first edition was organised in 2016 as part of Utrecht University's anniversary celebrations. The event proved a huge success. Parnassos called in the assistance of Utrecht University Fund fundraisers to help organise another edition in 2019. Marieke van den Merriënboer: 'They helped us write – successful – grant applications to various equity funds, including the K.F. Hein Fund.'

EQUITY FUND

The Utrecht University Fund also has ties with other equity funds, including the VSB Fund, Prins Bernhard Cultural Fund, the Herason foundation, Elise Mathilde Fund, Carel Nengerman Fund, Fentener van Vlissingen Fund and municipality of Utrecht. The UUF has a special relationship with the K.F. Hein Fund. This fund supports projects in the Utrecht region that have to do with culture, social work, the performing arts, public health, nature conservation and the preservation of monuments and historic buildings. The Utrecht University Fund submits special projects from Utrecht University to the K.F. Hein Fund, in cases when these projects reflect the latter's objectives. For example, the fund supported events including the Parnassos anniversary celebrations, Festival Europa and UUnited Music Festival in 2019.

uu.nl/organisatie/alumni/goed-besteeld/kf-hein-fonds



‘I started recognising characters on the street after a few days’



Linguistics student **Myrthe Buckens** wanted to learn a new language and immerse herself in a foreign culture. She spent three weeks studying Chinese in Hong Kong this past summer. At the time of our interview, she was finishing her Bachelor’s in Linguistics. Myrthe will be starting a Master’s programme in Text Mining in Amsterdam this coming academic year.

The structure of language, language development in children, language disorders: Myrthe is basically interested in every aspect of her degree programme. ‘Our lecturers regularly discussed the Chinese language’, she explains.

‘I was always fascinated by Chinese because it’s based on an entirely different system than Dutch and other Western languages. For example, it’s a tonal language. The way you pronounce a word determines its meaning. The context in which a specific character is used can also affect its meaning. I thought it would be fascinating to explore that in more depth.’

SUMMER SCHOOL

She first heard about the summer school in Hong Kong through a fellow student. Utrecht University has partnerships with universities around the

world, enabling UU students to take part in summer study programmes abroad at a reduced rate. That sounded ideal to Myrthe. ‘I’d thought about studying abroad before, but the right opportunity had never come up yet. I decided a summer school would be the perfect alternative.’

Myrthe planned to spend three weeks learning Chinese at the University of Hong Kong. She financed most of her plane ticket, accommodation costs and excursions from her own savings, and her parents also chipped in. She successfully applied to the Utrecht University Fund, which helped with the remaining costs. ‘I think it’s wonderful the university also contributes to students’ development through the fund.’

INTENSIVE WEEKS

Those three weeks in Hong Kong were pretty intensive, as Myrthe explains. ‘Six hours of classes a day is pretty demanding, but I obviously learned a lot. I started recognising characters on the street after a few days. For example, I could read some of the signs at the metro station. Being there and observing people’s behaviour also helped me understand why Chinese is structured the way it is. The opportunity to live

over there for a while and learn the language was really valuable.’ Although the cultural differences were vast, Myrthe found the experience very instructive. ‘We had to raise our hand in class and wait our turn, and always addressed our teachers formally with “dear madam” in Chinese.’

DEMONSTRATIONS

Myrthe’s stay in Hong Kong coincided with a period of intensive anti-government demonstrations. ‘When the subject came up during a lesson, the teacher immediately shut down the discussion and told us he wasn’t allowed to talk about it. I ended up in the middle of a protest once with a classmate, but I didn’t feel I was in any danger.’ Tai O, a fishing village Myrthe visited during a weekend excursion, made a big impression. ‘There’s a lot of poverty in Hong Kong, and you could really see it there. It smelled terrible, and there were lots of tiny self-built shacks. It was such a contrast with the kind of luxury we’re used to here in the Netherlands.’

DRAWINGS

So what was the most fascinating insight she gained over the course of her stay? ‘There’s no connection between a word’s shape and its meaning in our language, but there is in Chinese. A lot of their characters are derived from ancient drawings. For example, the character for woman can be traced back to a stick figure of a woman, and the character for office represents a little roof with a floor and air currents. I love that.’

Donations from Friends – consisting of alumni, students and staff of Utrecht University – provide the basis for the Utrecht University Fund’s activities. Through an annual donation of at least 30 euros, Friends contribute to a flourishing university community. Their donations make it possible to provide student grants, scholarships and special projects, among other things. The Utrecht University Fund supports students’ personal development by providing small grants. Myrthe’s story is a great case in point.

uu.nl/friend

‘Obviously, you have to lead by example’



Historian **Joost Dankers** has been affiliated with Utrecht University for the majority of his working life. He studied and obtained his doctoral degree here, and worked as contract research manager and researcher at the Faculty of Humanities. ‘Utrecht University has given me so much. I think it’s only fair to give something back to your alma mater. I help the university organise activities, and offer financial support.’

Joost has certainly contributed a lot to the university: he serves on the editorial staff at our alumni magazine *Illuster* and helps organise alumni events such as the annual University Day. ‘I’ve also been a regular donor to the Utrecht University Fund for years now. I learnt about the Utrecht 1636 initiative at an early stage. The idea of a club for committed and loyal donors really appealed to me. I’m also closely involved in other general and cultural funds as a part of my work, so I know how important it is to have a broad circle of donors. In addition to serving as ambassadors, they also convince people in their immediate network to join. Obviously, you have to lead by example and embody the values of your own fund. That’s why I immediately decided to join Utrecht 1636.’

ACADEMIC HERITAGE

Utrecht 1636 members contribute to the general objectives of the Utrecht University Fund or one of the various named funds. Joost: ‘I do make donations with a specific intention. As a historian, I’m mainly passionate about our academic heritage. Conserving that heritage – which includes the University Museum – is one of the four main pillars of the Utrecht University Fund. That’s where I want my contributions to go.’

CANDY STORE

Dankers loves talking about the museum and Old Garden: ‘The general public gets to enjoy our wonderful collection, but many people don’t realise there’s a whole other treasure trove in the museum depository. It’s really wonderful. For anyone interested in biology, dentistry and history: there’s a whole collection of skeletons, preserved animals and historic dentists’ chairs and instruments. It’s a real candy store. They’re preserving the entire collection without any regular funding, so I’m more than happy to contribute.’

CONTRIBUTING TO SOCIETY

The museum serves as a bridge between science and academia and the general public, which is also the essence of Joost’s job as a contract research manager: generating visibility for scientific research projects by interesting funds, government agencies and businesses in the subject of history. In short: ‘Raising awareness of historians’ contribution to society.’ For example, historians are helping us gain a clearer understanding of the current crisis. He mentions a recent article in which Beatrice de Graaf compares the coronavirus with other historic pandemics such as the Spanish flu. ‘Do you know why they call it the Spanish flu? The pandemic didn’t originate in Spain. The flu broke out towards the end of WWI, when most countries had restricted freedom of the press. Spain was one of a handful of countries that still allowed objective reporting on the pandemic, resulting in the name we know today. As this example

also highlights, a free press and open exchange of knowledge are crucial when fighting a pandemic on this scale. The disease could spread rapidly because people weren’t being accurately informed and scientific research had been restricted.’

FIRST MEETING

Joost is looking forward to the Utrecht 1636 network’s first meeting: ‘These people are all potential ambassadors for our university. An event that gets them all together – like the Agnites Vrolijk Banquet marking the launch of Utrecht 1636 in January 2019 – is obviously really motivating in that regard.’

Utrecht 1636 members

Drs. I.J. Aalfs
Drs. A. Basha
Prof. dr. R. Braidotti
Mr. A.H. den Breems
Drs. H.M. de Bruijn-Franken
M. Bunge
Drs. F.F. van Charldorp-Hanraets
Dr. J.J. Dankers
Dr. F. Driedonks
R.K. Dunn PhD
Drs. L. Gaarenstroom
Mr. H. Gajentaan MA
Dr. P.M.B. van Genuchten MBA
Dr. D.G. Groothuis
Mr. L.J. Hijmans van den Bergh
Drs. C.H. Hindaal
Dr. ir. P. Koeze
Drs. P. Kraaijenhagen
Dr. R.R. Kuijten MBA
Dr. E.M. de Lange
Mr. J.J.J. van Lanschot
Mr. H. van Manen
Drs. A. Miedema
Prof. dr. J.C. Mondt

Mr. M.A.A. Mondt
Dr. A.D.A. Monna
Drs. M.J.M. Mourits
Mr. T.L. Nagel
Mr. A. Oostra
Mr. Y.C.M.T. van Rooy
Dr. C.E. Seidel
Jhr. mr. D.W. Sickinghe
Prof. dr. A.M. Smelik
Dr. A. Smit
M. Smit-Antons
Drs. P.H. Stamsnijder
Jason Tan
Dr. mr. T.G. Tan
Mr. drs. K.K. Troost
Drs. A.E. Troost-Staal
Mr. M.B. Unck
Dr. J.G.F. Veldhuis
M.M.H. Veldhuis-Thier
Mr. E.J. Verloop
Drs. H.A.M. Vriens
Dr. W. Wessels
Drs. M.J.H. Willinge
Prof. dr. G.J. van der Zwaan

Utrecht 1636 is a network of loyal and committed donors. The members support Utrecht University. Utrecht 1636 helps to further UU students’ academic and personal development. Members can also choose to designate their donations to one of our named funds. Members donate a minimum annual amount of 500 euros for a period of at least 5 years. Utrecht 1636 was founded in January 2019 and has been steadily gaining new members. Some members have chosen to remain anonymous, and are not listed in the overview on page 29.

uu.nl/utrecht1636

Where impact gets rewarded

Associate Professor Hester den Ruijter (UMC Utrecht) was presented with the second Agnites Vrolik Award during a ceremony in the University Hall Auditorium on Thursday, 31 January 2019. According to the jury report, her research has helped draw attention to the broader theme of gender in research while highlighting patient-participation and applying new research methods.

The award was presented during the Agnites Vrolik Banquet. In addition to the award ceremony, the event in the University Hall Auditorium (spectacularly decorated with greenery by Botanical Garden plant shop How are you growing?) also offered the various guests – UU alumni, donors, staff and researchers – an opportunity to mingle and catch up. The highly successful evening programme was further enlivened by a performance from DeKoor Close Harmony choir.

The Utrecht University Fund finances the annual Agnites Vrolik Award from a bequest by Dentistry alumnus Cobi de Bree. The 25,000 cash prize is awarded to a talented scientist affiliated with our university who is conducting research that contributes to finding solutions to current challenges faced by society.

See pages 18–19 for more on Hester den Ruijter’s research.

2019 ANNUAL GIVING FOR KNOWLEDGE MEETING

Friends and donors of the Utrecht University Fund attended the Annual General Meeting in the midst of Science Week on Sunday, 6 October. The festive morning event was themed ‘Giving for Knowledge’. Panel members Dr Hester den Ruijter, Prof. George Kowalchuk and Boris Albrecht (honorary USC senator for ’18–’19) and audience members discussed the added value of donations in an open debate led by alumnus Marcel Bamberg.

The Utrecht University Fund organised an exhibition showcasing nine projects that would not have been possible without donations. For more information on the projects, visit bit.ly/projecten-2019

Fund chair Lodewijk Hijmans van den Bergh announced the results of the four Funding the Future projects during the Annual General Meeting. At the time of the announcement, over 133,000 euros had been donated to the university’s grant programme, biodiversity research, refugee students and educational programmes in the butterfly house. Donations for 2019 ultimately totalled 135,301 euros.



UNIVERSITY DAY THEMED AROUND ‘THE CITY’

So what do our alumni feel most connected to when they look back on their student days? No matter how interesting their degree programme or how close their friendships with fellow students may have been, we keep getting the same answer: ‘the city of Utrecht’. That’s why this year’s University Day – the annual reunion for UU alumni – was themed ‘the city’. University Day took place on 30 March 2019.

The guided tours and lectures focused on issues such as the success of cities, urban nature, the visible remnants of historical events and efforts to involve urban residents in scientific projects. The festive day culminated in the presentation of the Vliegenthart Thesis Award to this year’s winner Felix Kümmerer (Master’s in Molecular and Cellular Life Sciences).



ENDOWED CHAIR FACILITATES CROSS-POLLINATION

If we aim to understand when and where crimes are committed, we need to know where people are spending their time – especially outside of their own living environment. The study being conducted by Prof. Stijn Ruiter, who has held an endowed chair at the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences since 2014, is focused on those spatial and social aspects. He also works as a senior researcher at the Netherlands Institute for the Study of Crime and Law Enforcement (NSCR). ‘Crime research has much to gain from a cross-pollination between those two institutions’, Stijn explains. UU’s empirically-driven research tradition feeds his geographical approach at NSCR, and vice versa. As Stijn points out, the endowed chair has also been helpful when submitting grant applications for doctoral tracks. ‘I supervised my first doctoral candidate in 2020, and more are set to follow in the coming years.’ Prof Stijn Ruiter’s endowed chair was extended by another five years in 2019. The Utrecht University Fund aims to support more endowed chairs in future.

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