



Illuster

March 2021

**How can we make sure
Utrecht stays accessible,
healthy and inclusive?**

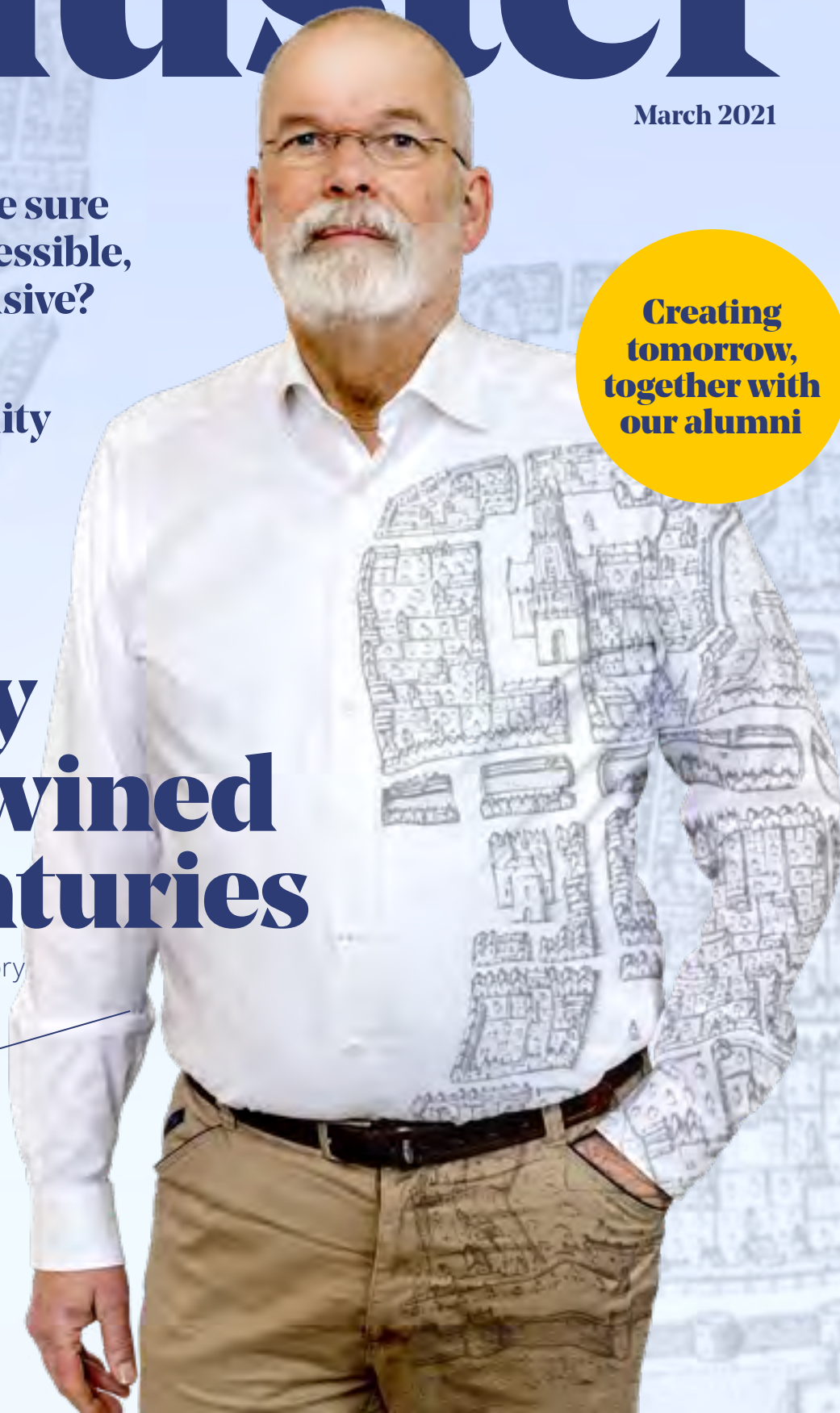
Mapping air quality

UNIVERSITY AND CITY

Closely intertwined for centuries

Professor of University History
Leen Dorsman explains

**Creating
tomorrow,
together with
our alumni**



FOREWORD

Anniversary during a pandemic

This year, Utrecht University (UU) and UMC Utrecht will be celebrating 385 years of science and academia in Utrecht. Due to COVID 19 all the get-togethers and celebrations will have to be held in an alternative manner or be postponed until later.

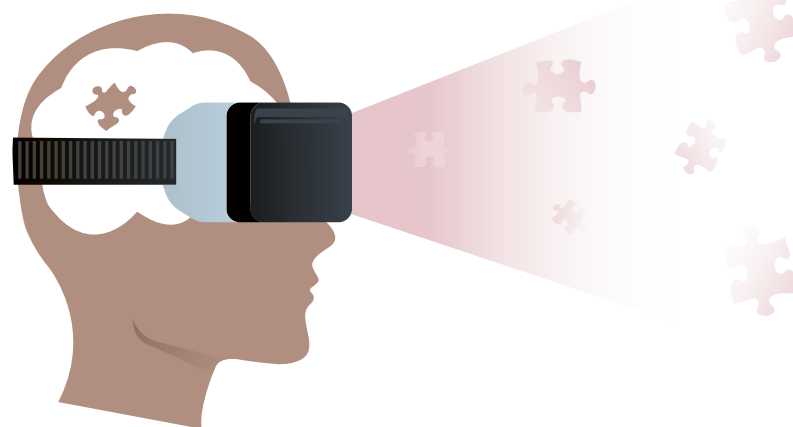
What a contrast to the festivities in 1986. It was my first ‘real’ job: organising the celebration of the 350th anniversary of our university. In addition to experienced staff and clever academics, young people nearing graduation — myself included — were asked to help with the organisation as well. I think of that period often. It was hard graft: a hectic schedule, deadlines, juggling multiple tasks and working late often. But there was also plenty of humour and a strong sense of camaraderie. I gained lifelong friendships during that time. At the opening, Queen Beatrix specifically wanted to meet the young employees. We were so very proud. When I look at the picture taken of us together, it always brings back happy memories.



Like then, the current anniversary year is all about the connection to society, with ‘Creating tomorrow together’ as its theme. Despite the limitations, we will pause to reflect on the anniversary on various occasions throughout the year. That includes this edition of Illuster, in which we devote special attention to the relationship between the University and the city of Utrecht. I wish you all an enjoyable and inspiring anniversary year!

Maaïke Wijnen

French Linguistics and Literature alumna, Special Collections account manager with the University Library and member of the 2021 anniversary organisation committee



10 VR headsets for patients with brain damage

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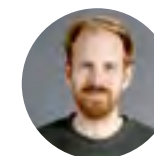


Contents

The inter-connected nature of University and city



22
‘I decided to only write things I understood myself’



Rutger Bregman
Alumnus of the Year

12 The Utrecht University Fund celebrates 135 years



36 Creating tomorrow together with our alumni



- 4 The big picture
- 6 Short
- 9 Hall of Fame
- 16 Double interview
- 20 Same degree ... different career
- 34 Continue your development at UU
- 40 Science
- 42 Life after graduation
- 44 Past and present
- 46 A message from ... Toronto
- 47 Tips
- 52 Jan's perspective

WALL FORMULAS IN UTRECHT

Scientific poetry

If you should happen to stroll from the Oosterkade to Ledig Erf, you'll find yourself face-to-face with Professor Leonard Ornstein, gazing down from the windowless side wall of the building at number 30. This blue mural relies on a cheerful, staggering fellow to illustrate the Ornstein-Uhlenbeck process: a stochastic process, or 'random walk', in which an object makes a series of random movements over time. The principle of random movement is still used today to describe things such as stock-market fluctuations and the elasticity of rubber.

Physicists Ingmar Swart and Sander Kempkes hope that these wall formulas will raise awareness of ground-breaking scientific discoveries made in Utrecht. Another one can be found in Burgemeester Reigerstraat. Ingmar: 'You might say that our murals are the physics equivalent of wall poems. The stories told by these formulas are every bit as interesting, relevant and important. They helped shape the society we live in today.' There is no shortage of discoveries made in Utrecht and if Ingmar has his way, artists' collective De Strakke Hand will paint several more of these murals before the year is out.

To learn more about the project, visit utrechtsemuurformules.nl (in Dutch).



Short



ANNIVERSARY

A single question can change the world

Starting in late March 2021, Utrecht University (UU) and UMC Utrecht will be celebrating 385 years of science and academia in Utrecht. The theme of this anniversary is ‘Creating tomorrow together’. One component of the programme involves the compilation of an Utrecht Science Agenda. What do Utrecht residents want to know? To find out, we will invite them to join us in discussing important issues. Input from the Utrecht population is invaluable — a single question can change the world.

For the full programme of the anniversary celebrations, including the lectures, round-table discussions, podcasts, city walking tours and an exhibition featuring alumni, please visit morgenmakenwesamen.nl.

Creating tomorrow together — with our alumni: starting on page 36 of this Illuster, you can read about our UU alumni, all working with others to make the world just a bit better.

COLLABORATION

Knowledge alliance between TU/e, WUR, UU and UMC Utrecht

Last December, Eindhoven University of Technology (TU/e), Wageningen University & Research (WUR), Utrecht University and UMC Utrecht formally launched their new knowledge alliance in the presence of Minister of Education Van Engelshoven. They are intensifying their collaboration and — over the next eight years — will be investing one hundred million euros in joint research and education projects aimed at resolving global issues concerning health, food, energy and sustainability.

For more information and to watch the video about this alliance, go to uu.nl/en/collaborate/utrecht-eindhoven-wageningen-alliance.



CITIZEN SCIENCE

City pigeons in Utrecht

City pigeons are a kind of dove. For many, doves symbolise peace and love — yet there is little love for city pigeons, often considered a nuisance and spreaders of disease. This makes pigeons an excellent case study to introduce young people to the concept of urban nature. This spring, Vivian Goerlich from UU’s Faculty of Veterinary Medicine will help junior pupils from the Academie Tien secondary school in Utrecht gain familiarity with urban nature through a citizen science project. By collecting data on the pigeon population, the pupils will contribute to ongoing research while also learning about scientific methods.

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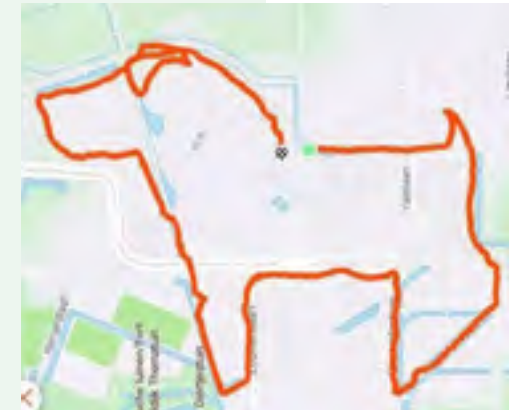
‘A good café is (...) a long-running narrative in which everyone who crosses the threshold is assigned a part’



Poet **Ingmar Heytze** (General Arts, 1995) in his essay about the café in *de Volkskrant* newspaper (27–12–2020)

CARTOON

Argibald



ON THE MOVE

Walking the dog

Recently, a four-kilometre dog-shaped route was mapped out at Utrecht Science Park. All you have to do is follow the street stickers. The route takes you past the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, the Administration Building, Wilhelmina Children’s Hospital and UMC Utrecht. Walking the dog route is part of the ‘Beating cancer together’ campaign of the Friends of Veterinary Medicine, one of the named funds in the Utrecht University Fund.

Interested in making a donation or downloading the route as a GPX file? All the information you need is available at uu.nl/nieuws/loop-een-rhondje-tegen-kanker-op-de-utrecht-science-park (in Dutch).



RESEARCH

Transcending borders

What can the *limes*, the Roman boundary that once bisected the Netherlands, teach us about the influence and function of borders? Archaeologist Saskia Stevens and her research team plan to explore this subject for the next five years. The National Science Agenda (NWA) project is unique in how it will integrate insights drawn from the humanities and the exact sciences with the use of new archaeological techniques. Stevens: ‘We will study not only how the border influenced migration and the import of products in antiquity, but also how this border is being rendered visible today as a piece of cultural heritage and how it colours our contemporary thinking with regard to borders.’



COVID-19

COVID-19 research at UU

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on all of us, and on our society. Utrecht University is working both to fight the virus itself and to develop solutions to societal issues associated with the virus. To that end, UU researchers are exploring questions such as: Where did this virus come from? What are the consequences for children and adolescents? How is the COVID-19 pandemic influencing our behaviour and affecting our rights and freedoms? How will viruses like this one impact our future? Visit the online COVID-19 dossier at uu.nl for the latest news.

Go to uu.nl/en/research/dossiers/coronavirus-research-in-utrecht.

ESSAY PRIZE

Science in uncertain times

Last year, alumnus Coen van der Kamp (Physics, 1976) won the Robbert Dijkgraaf Essay Prize for his essay *De verstoorde droom* (The disrupted dream). Van der Kamp is a retired physics teacher. The annual essay competition is open to alumni of Belgian and Dutch universities. This year’s writing prompt dealt with the role of science in uncertain times. The winning essay was published in the *Algemeen Dagblad* newspaper and on the New Scientist website.

To read Van der Kamp’s essay, visit the New Scientist online at <http://bit.ly/de-verstoorde-droom> (in Dutch).



Jeike Wallinga
MSc (1994) and PhD (1998)
in Physics

has been appointed Professor of the Energy Transition at Windesheim University of Applied Sciences.



Désirée Majoor
MA in Theatre, Film and
Television Studies (1998)

has bid farewell to Theater Kikker and is now the new Chair of the Executive Board at the Cibap Vocational College for the Creative Arts in Zwolle.



Joke Brandt
MSc in Social Geography
(1983)

has been appointed permanent representative to the United Nations for the Netherlands.



Annabelle Birnie
MA in General Arts (1993)

has been named director of the Nieuwe Kerk and the Hermitage in Amsterdam. She previously served as director of the Amsterdam Fund for the Arts (AFK).



Philippine Risch
Master’s degree in Dutch
Law (1996)

has been named partner at McKinsey & Company.



Selma de Mink
BSc in Physics and
Astronomy (2005) and
BSc in Mathematics (2005), MSc

Astrophysics and Space Research (2005) and PhD in Astronomy (2010) has been appointed scientific director of the Max Planck Institute for Astrophysics in Garching.



Susan te Pas
MSc in Physics (1992)
and PhD in Physics and
Astronomy (1996)

is the new dean of Utrecht University College.



Xander van der Wulp
MSc in Interdisciplinary
Social Sciences (1999)

is a political correspondent with the NOS and recently won the Podcast Award for his programme *De Stemming*.



Anneke Sipkens
BSc in Psychology (1983)

has been named Executive Director of ANBO. For the past four years, she has served as director of the Stichting DOEN foundation.



Michel Dückers
PhD in Social and
Behavioural Sciences

(2009) has been appointed endowed Professor of Crises, Safety and Health at the University of Groningen.

Want to be ‘famous’?

Email us your new position at alumni@uu.nl. Who knows? You could see yourself in the next edition of *Illuster*, or be named Alumnus of the Month. Every month we announce their identity on LinkedIn (Utrecht University), Facebook (Alumni Universiteit Utrecht), Instagram and Twitter (both @AlumniUU).

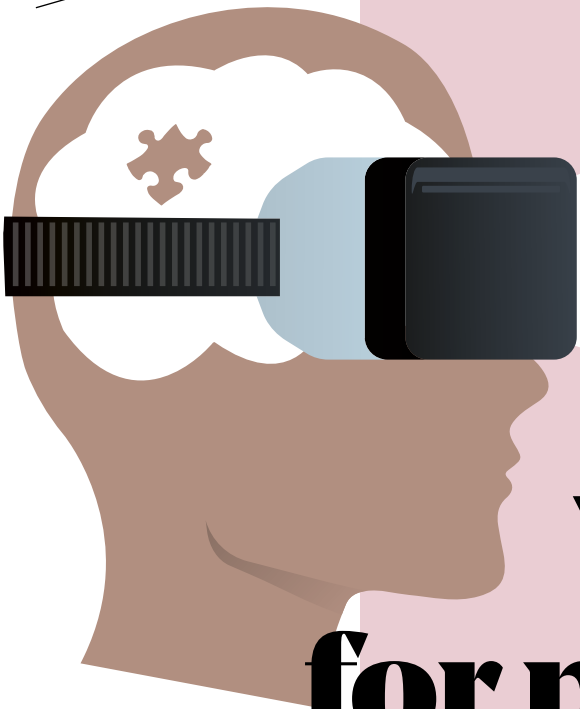
UU alumni earn spots on eminent rankings

Our University’s alumni are working for a better world in all manner of ways. Four of them can be found among the ‘Food100’ for 2020: a list of emerging talents and established leaders who strive each and every day to realise a better and more sustainable food system. Utrecht alumni are well represented on the list of the 200 most influential Dutch persons in 2020 created by *de Volkskrant* newspaper as well.

Food 100
Lizelore Vos MSc in Veterinary Medicine (2010)
Myrthe Frissen BA in UCR Liberal Arts and Sciences (2012) and Selective Utrecht Medical Master (2017)
Rianne Dolmans BSc in Medicine (2017) and **Hannah Geerse** BSc in Environmental and Natural Sciences (2018).

Most influential Dutch persons
Feike Sijbesma MSc in Biology (1994) and Alumnus of the Year 2016 – 3rd, **Marjan Minnesma** MA in Philosophy (1996) and Alumnus of the Year 2015 – 16th, **Femke Halsema** Interdisciplinary Social Sciences (1993) – 26th, **Marion Koopmans** MSc in Veterinary Medicine (1986) – 28th, **Ingrid Thijssen** Master’s degree in Dutch Law (1993) – 36th, **Robbert Dijkgraaf** MSc (1986) and PhD in Physics (1989) – 56th, **Sigrid van Aken** MA in French Linguistics and Literature (1996) – 59th, **Cathelijne Broers** MA in Art History and Archaeology (1994) and Alumnus of the Year 2018 – 77th, **Ed Nijpels** Master’s in Dutch Law (1977) – 92nd.

text **Ronnie van Veen**
image **Flowdesign.nl**



VR headsets for patients with brain damage



Tanja Nijboer is an associate professor and researcher at Utrecht University; she is also a senior researcher at the Utrecht Rehabilitative Medicine Knowledge Centre (UMCU and De Hoogstraat). Her research is aimed at quantifying and improving cognitive functions following brain damage. To that end, she makes use of new technologies such as virtual reality, augmented reality and serious gaming. The latter is particularly interesting because of its usefulness in training cognitive functions.

Patients with brain damage may struggle with cognitive functions such as paying attention and concentration. In order to gain a picture of the cognitive functions in such a patient, doctors currently conduct a neurological study involving pen-and-paper tests. For instance: the patient is asked to listen to a series of words and then reproduce these some while later. Neuropsychologist Tanja Nijboer wants to supplement this method using new technological possibilities: Nijboer has already deployed VR headsets to study cognitive function in patients with brain injuries. She hopes to use the headsets to train cognitive functions as well.

Nijboer, who won the prestigious Betto Deelman Award in 2019 for her exceptional merits as a neuropsychologist, says she is in no way in favour of eliminating the current pen-and-paper methodology.

‘Those tests are conducted in a laboratory setting which provides ideal, quiet circumstances. The method makes it possible to identify the maximum capacity of these patients’ brains.’

In the wild

However — and this is the bit that interests the UU neuropsychologist — such results typically do not offer much insight into how the patient will fare in everyday life. ‘Our day-to-day lives offer a setting that is far from optimal. At home or at work, we are constantly being distracted or doing multiple things at once. If your goal is to confirm the existence and/or extent of “cognitive functions in the wild”, the current method is not going to be terribly useful. That’s why, in cooperation with various businesses, we have developed a number of virtual reality environments.’

An example of this is ‘Koji’s Quest’, a VR game developed by NeuroReality. Nijboer:

‘As a player in the game, you have to try to get back home after an accident in outer space. A dog named Koji helps you by offering additional explanation and tips. The more successful you are at playing the game, the more difficult the tasks become. The tasks in the game require you to use different cognitive functions.’ By monitoring patients’ play behaviour, researchers are able to gauge which cognitive functions are working more or less as they should.

Open-heart surgery

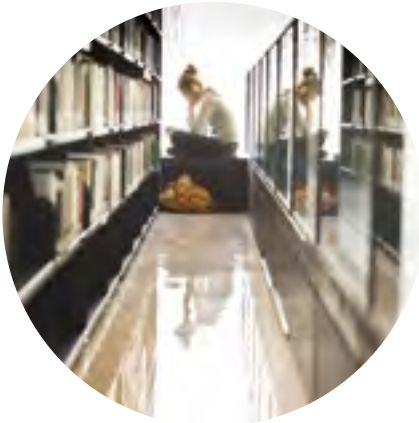
Nijboer and her colleagues currently have a VR configuration set up in the Wilhelmina Children’s Hospital (WKZ) in Utrecht. ‘We are examining children there who have undergone open-heart surgery in the past, at a very young age. Many of these children have symptoms relating to cognitive functions, which is no surprise, as a good blood supply is essential for the brain to work properly. When the heart is not doing so, this has consequences for the brain as well, and for things like cognitive functions and behaviour.’

For now, the first headset at the WKZ is intended for research into diagnostics. Nijboer: ‘Right now, we are at the stage where we are using the virtual reality game to determine the children’s cognitive function.’

In the future, Nijboer and her colleagues want to offer the children — and adults with brain damage, too — a six-week home training course involving these VR simulations and the game. ‘The training course offers us a way to teach patients how to cope with the cognitive functions that have become impaired.’ But to achieve all this, of course, the researchers will need more VR headsets. ‘We’re hoping to be able to purchase these, thanks in part to the Utrecht University Fund’s Pay it Forward campaign. The headsets will enable us to more effectively diagnose young and older patients with brain damage — and aid their recovery as well.’ ◀

Donate a VR headset

Through the Utrecht University Fund, you can contribute to brain damage research. Nijboer’s project is among the causes selected for the annual Pay it Forward campaign. VR headsets and software enable children and adults with brain damage to work toward their recovery at home. Visit uu.nl/en/organisation/donate/pay-it-forward or donate directly:



DONATE

Help students disadvantaged by the COVID-19 crisis

The COVID-19 pandemic is changing our world and having a major impact on all of our daily lives. Students are experiencing difficulties due to the crisis as well. Many students are able to make use of the increased lending opportunities being offered by DUO. For those who do not qualify for this, or who cannot fall back on support from family or parents, the Utrecht University Fund has established an emergency fund.

The heart-warming responses from donors reveal a loyal and close-knit University community made up of students, staff, alumni, parents and other stakeholders. Thanks to the donations from many people, the fund has already been able to help dozens of students. Since the need is still strong, the emergency fund will remain in place.

Join us in helping students in need: steun.uu.nl/project/geef-om-studenten-in-nood?locale=en.

Utrecht University Fund celebrates its 135th anniversary

This year marks a anniversary not only for the University, but for the Utrecht University Fund as well. The 135th anniversary of the fund is a good reason to reflect on the history of the oldest university fund in the country. Ten years ago, Armand Heijnen wrote *125 jaar Utrechts Universiteitsfonds* (125 years of the Utrecht University Fund). In this Illuster, we will present a brief excerpt from it. We will also devote attention to more recent developments such as the growing number of named funds and Student Friends.

text Armand Heijnen and Floor Peeters
images The Utrecht Archives, Spaarnestad Photo, Utrecht University, Flow Design, Istockphoto.

Academy Fund

On the occasion of Utrecht University's 250th anniversary in 1886, a number of former students decided to raise money for an 'Academy Fund', with the idea that the University could use this fund to pay for expenses not covered by state funding. Some 700 'reunion participants' were involved in these efforts. Together, they managed to raise over 18,000 guilders, intended — as formulated in the memorandum of association — 'to promote the flourishing of the University'. Alumni could become members of the fund for the sum of five guilders per year — or 50 guilders for a lifetime membership. The 'president' of the fund was Natural Sciences alumnus Dr A. Vrolik. The fund's annual award for research with important social impact, which was established in 2018, was named in his honour.



Deed of formation of the 'Academy Fund'.

Gifts

At the start of the 20th century, the Academy Fund was looking for ways to expand its base beyond just former members of the Utrechtsch Studenten Corps (USC), as it wanted to become an organisation for the entire academic community. This desire took the form of various gifts offered to the University community during the anniversary celebrations by what had come to be known as the University Fund. At the third centennial in 1936, for instance, the University Fund bestowed on the University a set of tapestries made by Willem van Konijnenburg, which have been on display in the Auditorium ever since.



1936

Second World War

The University Fund was more or less inactive during the Second World War. While a small-scale University Day with the theme of 'Intellectual freedom' was organised in 1941, virtually all fund-related activities were suspended after that point, in part because all academic life had come to a standstill. Students, on the other hand, continued to make their voices heard — they were now free to use their time and energy to join the resistance, which they did, along with a number of alumni.



Monument to the University's war dead in the University Hall.

North Sea flood

In 1953, the University Fund established a committee which was to focus specifically on social care for students. The immediate reason for this was the disastrous North Sea Flood which took place in the province of Zeeland that year. Around 150 students and a handful of alumni from Zeeland received support. Fellow alumni were called on to donate books and instruments to help doctors, veterinarians and ministers (among others) affected by the flood. Joop van der Maas, a former professor of Chemistry who passed away

last year, was among those who experienced this natural disaster first-hand. The fear of drowning in the 1953 flood, evacuation and living with a host family in Hilversum shaped Van der Maas to a strong degree. As a result, in his later career at the University, he felt a kinship with disadvantaged students and ultimately named the University Fund as his sole heir. He left instructions that his legacy of one million euros was intended for students who — through no fault of their own — have encountered financial or emotional distress.



1953

1970

Its own building

Although the University Fund initially occupied only a single office in the University's Administration building (which was then still at Kromme Nieuwegracht 29), around 1970 it became clear that larger accommodations were needed. Every year in the building at Achter de Dom 20, Mrs Berthe van Middelkoop-Berkhoff, the University Fund director, would receive a visit from members of the social and study association boards.

After coffee and polite conversation, these visits transitioned into 'port-drinking parties' — which Van Middelkoop at times had to sternly end. Even then, there was an awareness that being an alumnus began the first moment a student arrived at their alma mater, and that the University Fund should therefore maintain contact not only with graduates but with current students as well. The trouble was that the students with whom the Fund was in contact were rather boisterous, in the way of traditional Dutch student societies. And the 'port-drinking parties' were not really in line with the spirit of the 1970s, as Van Middelkoop herself admitted. As a result, the Fund struggled during this period.



The building at Achter de Dom 20 in 1989.

Relationship management

Post lucundam Iuventutem was the title of the University Fund magazine founded in 1950. It translates loosely to 'After a happy youth', which is a line from the school song, *Gaudeamus Igitur*. The magazine was created to promote the ties to and within the academic community. In keeping with the motto 'First friend-raising, then fund-raising', former fund director Leneke Visser in particular placed a strong emphasis on relationship management. The idea was that alumni should be more emphatically involved with the University. To that end, the quar-

terly magazine *Illuster* was introduced in late 1995 (after *Post lucundam Iuventutem* ceased to exist in 1987). 'We wanted to take a journalistic approach to developing a stakeholder magazine,' explains editor-in-chief at the time Twan Geurts. 'We were dealing, after all, with a highly educated and critical group of readers who would be ill-served by jingoistic accounts of unmitigated triumphs. The tone was meant to be positive yet critical.' Regional and international alumni networks were established as well, with an annual alumni lecture in New York. Now that more and more alumni began to feel involved with their alma mater, the University Fund saw an increase in the number of Friends, donors and gifts.



1995

2014

present

Named funds

Since the beginning of the previous century, the University Fund has administered a variety of other funds which are also intended to support activities which would otherwise have no chance of success. Yet over the last decade, the number of named funds in the portfolio has also increased dramatically. There are now 29 such funds, with new ones being added each year. When a named fund is set up, the founder also designates the purpose of the fund. In other words: donors determine the impact of their gift. One example of such a named fund is the 'Hofvijverkring' established by alumni from The Hague. Since its founding in 2014, this fund has contributed over 150,000 euros to scientific research and education at UU.

Student Friends

The fact that the University Fund focuses on students as well as graduates is evident from the growing number of Student Friends of the Utrecht University Fund. Today, there are nearly 6,000 Student Friends. Some 1,500 new Student Friends sign up each year, thanks to the successful promotion at the start of each new academic year, in which every new Friend receives an Utrecht University hoodie as a welcome gift. In this way, current students help support equal opportunities for UU students and therefore the original goal as it has existed since the start of the University Fund: to contribute to the growth and flourishing of Utrecht University.



A longer version of this article is available at uu.nl/en/organisation/illuster



How can we make sure Utrecht stays accessible, healthy and inclusive?

Double interview

'The other day, someone joked that what they really wanted was to live on a farm on Neude, smack in the middle of the city ... so yeah, that won't happen.' So says alumnus **Lot van Hooijdonk**, Utrecht municipal alderman for mobility, energy and green space. The amount of space in the city is limited. This is why the city is working on the Mobility Plan for 2040, the goal of which is to ensure Utrecht remains accessible to everyone. How to ensure 'everyone' can continue to participate optimally in traffic is the subject of research being conducted by **Dick Ettema**, Professor of Urban Accessibility and Social Inclusion.

text **Armand Heijnen**
images **Bas van Hattum**

Municipal authorities want to preserve the city's accessibility in the cleanest, most sustainable way possible,' says Ettema. 'In doing so, we tend to assume that all the people are able to get around with ease, which is not the case. An e-vehicle may have low emissions, but it's expensive and therefore not an option for everyone. Bicycles are environmentally friendly too, but many older people are hesitant to ride them in a busy city. In other words, lack of suitable transport can present an obstacle to employment, education, participating in a sport or culture. This connection between mobility and inclusiveness is one of the topics my Geosciences research group is exploring.'

While bicycles may not be ideal for everyone, for many people in the city — certainly for students — they offer an

ideal means of transportation. Lot van Hooijdonk, once a History student at Utrecht University herself, is very enthusiastic, in any case. 'I think bicycles are absolutely wonderful things. Not only for getting you from A to B, but in terms of health and liveability as well. Bicycles make a city friendlier; you can see a person sitting on each one, whereas with a car, all you see is a machine. And we shouldn't underestimate the emancipating effect of a bicycle. Here, 11-year-olds ride to their sports clubs on their own — compare that to the freedom of movement among children in the US or Canada, for instance. What's more, a bicycle is a relatively inexpensive means of transport and therefore within reach of those with tighter budgets. And this particular success story has been going on since the late 19th century!'

Ettema couldn't agree more: 'The health benefits, for instance: research conducted by one of my colleagues has shown that, on average, Dutch people live six months longer than other Europeans. This can be attributed to cycling and walking. In addition, our research shows that the use of bicycles greatly reduces traffic congestion. In a crowded city like Utrecht, this is a tremendous advantage. Thanks to innovations that reduce car traffic and encourage walking and cycling, such as via shared mobility, Utrecht is a great place for a transport researcher to work: it's all happening right around the corner.'

Close collaboration between the University and the city is therefore only natural. Ettema: 'Our research group is involved in a quite a few municipal mobility projects. Projects involving e-mobility or shared mobility, for instance, a project that monitors mobility behaviour over a longer period, and explores how COVID-19 is ►►



Lot van Hooijdonk studied History/International Relations and Political Science in Utrecht, Florida and at the Clingendael Institute. She is a member of the GroenLinks party and has been alderman for mobility, energy, green space and animal welfare, as well as district alderman for the South and West city districts in Utrecht, since 2014. She is also closely involved in the Mobility Plan for 2040, over which the Municipal Council will take a decision. Prior to becoming an alderman, she served as senior adviser for the Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management for many years, after which she held the position of deputy director of the Nature and Environment Federation Utrecht (NMU).



» affecting mobility ... there are a great many contacts.' Van Hooijdonk: 'At the same time, the University is a major employer in the city and owns land in Utrecht Science Park. So the relationship is an intensive one in more areas than knowledge and research alone.'

The city's Mobility Plan extends through 2040. Isn't that period a bit long? Won't the duration increase your risk of making choices you'll later come to regret? Van Hooijdonk: 'What we're talking about is a major master plan, but it's the only option. Take, for example, the development of a city district like Leidsche Rijn: we've been working on that for some 25 years and it's

'Bicycles are absolutely wonderful things'



still not finished. Developments like that take a long time, in other words. And while that doesn't mean you have to make sure everything is set in stone, you do have to pick an initial direction. In the coming years, over 60,000 new homes will be built in Utrecht. That is around a third more than we currently have — so we're talking about over 100,000 new individuals who will be moving around the city. This calls for a long-term mobility strategy that takes more than just bicycles and cars into account: it should also include walking, buses and trams. The development of a new tram line alone can take years, as the Uithof line showed us. That line took 15 years to complete.' 'That's what's known as transit-oriented development,' Ettema adds. 'It means the infrastructure informs your planning.'

And that is precisely the approach Utrecht intends to take with its Mobility Plan, according to Van Hooijdonk. 'We want to create a number of hubs concentrating public transport to and from the region — so more frequent intercity trains, for example — in order to relieve some of the pressure on the gigantic hub that is Utrecht CS. Next, we want to decrease the demand for mobility within the city by clustering

'We want to decrease the demand for mobility within the city by clustering living, working and shops close together'



Dick Ettema is Professor of Urban Accessibility and Social Inclusion at the Faculty of Geosciences and has been affiliated with Utrecht University since 2004. He studied architecture at Eindhoven University of Technology and worked for several consultancy firms after obtaining his doctoral degree. His research focuses on topics including the connection between accessibility, social inclusion and well-being. He is also involved in research into mobility during and after the COVID-19 lockdown.

living, working, shops, green areas and other facilities as close together as possible. Leidsche Rijn Centrum and Lunetten-Koningsweg are examples of this kind of hub. And Utrecht Science Park is part of the latter hub, too.'

'Soon, the new Merwedekanaalzone will be an example of a neighbourhood in which various facilities are concentrated,' Van Hooijdonk continues. 'But really, you can already see it happening in existing neighbourhoods. Roughly ten years ago, you had to come to the city centre to find shops, restaurants or cafés. Today, you can find more and more of such amenities in the outer neighbourhoods as well. Lombok, Rotsoord and Amsterdamsestraatweg all have their own cafés and restaurants now. The hotspots are getting closer to home.'

But is the bicycle's success (as Van Hooijdonk describes it) becoming too much for the city to handle? The hordes of cyclists do not seem to be improving the traffic safety situation, and despite having the largest bicycle parking facility in the world at Utrecht CS, there is still an enormous problem of where to store all those bikes. 'It's true that the use of bicycles has drastically increased,' Van Hooijdonk con-

firms. 'We have to spread out the flows of bicycle traffic by building more bridges and tunnels for cyclists. And don't forget: car traffic in the city has not increased at all. This has yielded an overall improvement in traffic safety in Utrecht, in contrast to a nationwide decline in safety. The number of traffic accident victims in Utrecht has decreased by half.'

Ettema: 'As regards that huge bicycle parking garage: the question is whether it was intended for storing unused bicycles for whole days or nights at a time. And what's totally unacceptable is parking bicycles in areas intended for pedestrians. In that sense, there might be some benefit to encouraging the use of shared bicycles or shared kick scooters. The public transport bikes (*OV-fietsen*) are already working really well. For a city, that is a much better solution than car traffic. Cars take up an incredible amount of space. Still, any effort to reduce the use of cars is likely to encounter resistance. Not everyone lives right around the corner from their job, sports club or favourite restaurant. So is the city going to force measures that mean cars are less welcome in the city centre?'

'We are focusing on walking, cycling, shared mobility and public transit. As a result, cars are going to be the rare exception rather than the rule in a growing number of places,' Van Hooijdonk says. 'By taking one step at a time, such as eliminating parking spaces — only one space per three homes — in favour of more greenery, playground facilities or bicycle parking. Or by closing off roads to through car traffic. Car ownership has decreased by a third in the city centre, even though the city is growing by leaps and bounds.' «



Same degree...

Judith Werkman (27)

Degree programme: Utrecht School of Governance
Work: Project coordinator and 'connector' for the City Academy

‘Our little city is growing like mad. This growth comes hand in hand with social issues from which students can learn a great deal. On behalf of the City Academy, I collect problems and requests from the municipalities, provinces and housing corporations and translate them into projects for students in Utrecht, including UU students. As an alumnus, it's quite special to be collaborating with my University — sometimes I find myself sitting across the table from the same professors who taught me! One great example of a UU project is the *Warme Wijken* (Warm neighbourhoods) initiative. At the behest of the city, Sociology students ask residents what they are doing to increase sustainability and whether they are interested in transitioning to a gas-free home in the future. For the students, it can be quite challenging to explain their complex research questions in plain language to the many different kinds of Utrecht residents they interview. Luckily, my university education taught me how the administrative landscape works. This helps me a lot.’

Daphne van Rhee (37)

Degree programme: Utrecht School of Governance
Work: Policy adviser for the COVID-19 programme of the Netherlands Municipal Health Service (GGD)

‘Luckily, it's not every day you have to deal with a pandemic. As the link between the GGD and the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, I am literally at the centre of the action. My colleagues and I are tasked with carrying out political wishes, such as widespread testing and mobile units for testing and vaccinating at the local level. Despite how busy it is, I think my job would qualify as a dream job for many School of Governance students and alums. I've been seconded to the GGD by the city of Utrecht, where I've been working since 2015. Initially, that work was in connection with my thesis, which was about sports participation among girls with an immigrant background, and then in a position as a policy adviser focusing on issue such as promoting sports among people with a disability, community participation, loneliness and social entrepreneurship.’ Looking back, complexity has always been a connective theme running through my career. Just put me somewhere there is a complicated to solve, and I'm happy. And of course Utrecht is a wonderful city to work in. It's always so friendly and cosy! I couldn't have achieved all of this without UU.

... different career



text Sabine de Lucht
images Ivar Pel

Rutger Bregman

2006

Starts History degree programme at UU



2012

Publishes book *Met de kennis van toen* (With the Knowledge of Back Then)



2013

Publishes book *De geschiedenis van de vooruitgang* (The History of Progress) and begins working at *De Correspondent*



2014

Publishes book *Gratis geld voor iedereen* (Utopia for Realists)

2015

Publishes book *Waarom vuilnismannen meer verdienen dan bankiers* (Why Dustmen Deserve More than Bankers)



2019

Speaks at the World Economic Forum in Davos and confronts Tucker Carlson during an interview with Fox News; both videos go viral. Publishes book *De meeste mensen deugen* (Humankind: A Hopeful History)

2020

Publishes book *Het water komt* (The Water is Coming)

2021

Utrecht University Alumnus of the Year



Between University and journalism

'I realised relatively early in my career that rejection is not such a big deal.' Rutger Bregman clearly isn't one to let other people opinions (or the fear thereof) hold him back. By the time he was just 32, the Alumnus of the Year has already published six books. And millions of people saw just how unafraid of confrontation he is during his appearance at the World Economic Forum in Davos and in an interview on Fox News.

Technically, Bregman has actually published seven books: 'As a student, I penned my magnum opus *How to pass an exam: 30 tips*.' He laughs: 'It's a real collector's item with two reviews on Bol.com. One review says "you should buy this right away" and the other says "worthless, no use to anyone". The latter is absolutely correct. Still, that little book was important to me, because I suddenly understood: wait a minute, I can actually do this. All you need is one publisher that says yes. And if they say, "Dude, are you crazy?" I haven't lost a thing. I sent it to thirteen publishers and the thirteenth one said yes.'

Embarrassing

As a secondary-school student, Rutger decided he was going to study History and become a teacher. But having arrived in Utrecht, he voraciously attended lectures on the most diverse

range of topics and developed an overwhelming urge to write. 'I used to write overly lengthy, rather mediocre articles for the magazine published by my student society, S.S.R.N.U. It's embarrassing to read things I wrote back then. But that period did help me gain writing — and other — experience and gave me a chance to explore what I truly thought and wanted. It was an important moment, for instance, when I realised that I wasn't cut out for a career in academia after all. At 22, I no longer wanted to be a teacher. Instead, my dream career consisted of earning a PhD, working as a researcher and ultimately ending up a full professor. But my perception changed. At the end of my Bachelor's, I reread one of my own papers and I could make absolutely no sense of what I had written. And yet I had earned a high mark for it. I thought "Man, the academic world (or maybe just the world) is really strange sometimes". I decided to only write things I understood myself. In that regard, Maarten van Rossem was a huge source of inspiration: I really loved his lectures. He has the ability to simplify complex things in an extremely clear, powerful and often humorous way that lets him reach a much wider audience.'

Intellectual home

After graduation, Bregman spent a year working at *de Volkskrant*. 'I learned a great deal from my time at the newspaper, but it was never really the place for me. I was incredibly lucky, because right around that time a new medium emerged and I got to work there: *de Correspondent*. It felt like I had found my intellectual home. A place somewhere between a university and

journalism, and for the most part, an uncharted territory.

I was given the space to do what I wanted. To ask academic questions, but without the pressure to publish or the academic jargon. It meant writing for a wider audience, but without that hectic aspect of journalism. That's where I wrote the first book I'm proud of, *Utopia for Realists*.'

'I decided to only write things I understood myself'

More books followed, as did countless media appearances and lectures, both in the Netherlands and abroad. *Humankind: A Hopeful History* — which was one of the best-selling books in 2020 and has been translated into 43 languages — won the NS Publieksprijs, a prize awarded by Dutch Railways. So what is this historian's recipe for success? 'People tend to think that success is determined entirely by individual choices, or that there are a few secret tricks to it. But the terribly dull bottom line is that you have to work hard and do your homework. And more importantly: in my case, I've just been extremely lucky.' ◀



Rutger Bregman (1988) completed his History degree programme at Utrecht University in 2012. As a student, he not only wrote two books, but also many articles and editorials for his student society's magazine, the *Digitaal Universiteitsblad* (Digital University Journal), and the Dutch daily newspapers *nrc.next* and *Trouw*. After graduation, Bregman worked at *de Volkskrant*, a medium he traded for the online journal *de Correspondent* after a year. He wrote a number of books, including *Utopia for realists* and *Humankind: A Hopeful History*. Bregman made international headlines at the World Economic Forum in 2019 for pointing out that the wealthy do not pay enough tax on a structural basis.

text
Hanneke Olivier
images
Roderik Rotting



University and city

Closely intertwined for centuries

In this year, with the get-togethers and celebrations for the University's anniversary being celebrated in alternative ways due to COVID-19, Illuster is pausing for a moment to reflect on the relationship between Utrecht University and the lovely city that so many of our alumni have lost their hearts to: Utrecht. The University has always been closely intertwined with the city of Utrecht.

Many buildings in the city have been used by the University at one time or another, whether for teaching purposes or as accommodations for students and professors. But the University population has played a major role as well, in terms of the social life, urban healthcare and economy of the city. Professor of University History Leen Dorsman explains the intimate connection between the University and the city.

text Armand Heijnen *images* Ed van Rijswijk and Special Collections of the Utrecht University Library

'At first, most of the space occupied by the University came from religious buildings seized from the Roman Catholic Church during the Reformation'



‘Various professors joined in efforts to get the deadly threat of cholera under control’

In the first two centuries after the University’s founding in 1636, very few new structures were built for the young institution. Most of the space occupied by the University came from religious buildings seized from the Roman Catholic Church during the Reformation. The principle underlying this reuse was *ad pios usus*, meaning that the former churches, convents or chapter houses should be used for new, pious ends, such as a hospital or educational institution. The University’s first building was the *Groot Kapittelhuis*, the large chapter house of the Dom Cathedral, which is now the Auditorium in the University Hall. An interior wall was added, dividing the space to create two lecture halls.

But former church-owned buildings elsewhere in the city were adapted for use in academic education as well. The choir space of the Janskerk church, for instance, was turned into a library. Most of the books in the University’s collection likewise came from convents and abbeys. A *Nosocomium* was established in the Catharijneconvent on Lange Nieuwstraat. This was a kind

of pre-academic hospital for teaching students of medicine to provide hands-on care for the sick. In the church belonging to the former Ursuline convent, now a Lutheran church, an anatomical theatre was set up for teaching anatomy lessons.

That goal of *ad pios usus* was the source of considerable tension in the 17th century. Private citizens attempted to gain ownership of the religious buildings, too, with the goal of real estate speculation in mind. The first Professor of Theology, Gisbertus Voetius, was particularly active in combating those efforts. He recognised this as an opportunity to mobilise the people against the reigning elite. Voetius, a strict Calvinist, was eager to establish a kind of theocracy — a civil authority informed and bound by religious laws — in Utrecht. The actual city government was rather displeased with this development. And so the University was drawn into the social conflict taking place in the city at that time.

At first, the University mostly renovated existing structures. It was not until the 19th century that it began to commission



Leen Dorsman was appointed Professor of University History in 2001. He came to Utrecht in 1974 to study at the School of Journalism. After completing that degree, he enrolled as a History student at what was then still called *Rijksuniversiteit Utrecht*. He took a position as lecturer in the History department of the Faculty of History in 1984. In 1990, he earned his doctorate for research into the historian Prof. G.W. Kernkamp, who published an extensive history of Utrecht University in 1936. Dorsman has many publications on university history, and the history of UU in particular, to his name.

buildings of its own. By that point, it was no longer a city university — one administered by the city government — but a state university, a *Rijksuniversiteit*. Yet even then, it continued to take up residence in existing buildings. These included the Leeuwenberghgasthuis, where a chemistry lab was set up for Prof. Gerrit Jan Mulder, or the Statenkamer on Janskerkhof, which is now the law faculty but was then where Anatomy was taught. Sonnenborgh was prepared to accommodate the Meteorology and Astronomy scholar, Professor Buys Ballot. And let us not forget the former palace of King Louis I (brother to Napoleon) on Wittevrouwenstraat, to which the library was relocated when the collection outgrew the choir of the Janskerk.

Yet at the same time, the University also began to break ground on its own new construction. This is particularly noteworthy because of the shift toward the edges of the city. The 19th century was an era of professionalisation in the sciences and of growing specialisation. There was a need for new and modern buildings, especially laboratories. The renowned ophthalmologist Prof. F. Donders was given a physiology

laboratory located on Van Asch van Wijckkade, while a chemistry laboratory and the City and Academic Hospital (the predecessor of today’s UMCU) were established on Catharijnesingel. A new physics lab arose on Bijlhouwerstraat; today, this building houses the Utrecht School of Governance.

This shift away from the city centre continued in the 20th century, for instance with Dentistry on Jutfaseweg or the Rudolf Magnus Institute on Vondellaan, the latter of which was renovated after the First World War using money from the Rockefeller Foundation. And then of

‘Until the late 18th century, students and professors were very rarely involved in city politics’

course, there was still Veterinary Medicine on Biltstraat: an entire complex of fine structures such as the Anatomy building and the *Paardenkathedraal* (Equine Cathedral). The final step in the migration to the edges of the city was, of course, De Uithof — now known as Utrecht Science Park.

That same outward shift can be seen in the homes of professors over the years. At first, they lived throughout the city centre. ►

‘Municipal officials were afraid the city centre would die out if the University abandoned it in favour of De Uithof’

» But in the late 19th century, and the first half of the 20th century, professors began to prefer the neighbourhoods in Utrecht-Oost, near the Wilhelminapark and Rijnsweerd.

And quite a few professors did indeed move out of the city following the Second World War, with most of them settling in Bilthoven. The same trend applied to student housing: from buildings in the city centre to the IBB flats or those on Van Lieflandlaan, and from there even further out of the city, all the way to the Science Park.

The University and city have been closely intertwined in other ways as well. Take healthcare, for instance. We already mentioned the *Nosocomium*. The patients in this hospital, along with those in the later City and Academic Hospital, were residents of the city. The same was true of the patients in Donders' eye hospital, the *Ooglijdersgasthuis*. In addition to such direct medical care, the University was also active in countless health committees during the 19th century, such as the one in connection with the city's drinking water supply. Until the 19th century, people generally got their water directly from the canals. It is therefore unsurprising that Utrecht was struck by several cholera epidemics in succession, which between them claimed thousands of lives. Various professors joined in efforts to this deadly threat under control.

In short: the University was a highly visible presence in the city. This visibility was quite literal, as it was possible to distinguish students from the rest of the citizenry by their clothing, while

‘An unprecedented theatrical performance, perfect in its historical accuracy’

professors also regularly appeared in public in their academic gowns. There was a tradition that after their inaugural lecture, newly appointed professors would be escorted home in full academic regalia by a procession of students. On occasion, the students also made their presence known through bad behaviour. A common prank was to startle citizens on the street by unexpectedly clanging a sword against the paving stones. Less harmless antics included throwing rocks through the windows of the bourgeoisie and getting into fistfights with one another. In the University's earliest years, a predecessor of today's social societies existed in the form of the *nationes*, which were made up of students from the same region. These nationes — from Gelderland or Overijssel, for instance — were rather inclined to physical altercations: so much so, in fact, that they were eventually outlawed.

The University was especially and extravagantly visible in the city when celebrating its anniversaries. At first, only a 50th or 100th anniversary was reason for festivities, but in the course of the 19th century, it became customary to celebrate each five-year anniversary (referred to as a *lustrum* in Dutch) with allegorical processions depicting themes from antiquity or mythology. These processions later evolved into large-scale masquerade balls orchestrated by the students. »





‘There is no longer any need to build for education and research, but rather a need to concentrate what already exists’

» In addition to a procession, such a celebration usually included a fireworks display, too, along with entertainment in the form of recitations and songs.

At the second centennial in 1836 — and entirely in keeping with the 19th century nationalistic tradition — Prince Maurice of Orange’s ride to Oostende was recreated. Over 700 people took part, more than the total population of the University. And so the garrison was called on to participate as well — and to provide the hundreds of horses involved.

The procession set out from Achter de Dom at half past ten in the evening, illuminated by torches, and returned to this starting location at six a.m. the following morning — after a leisurely meal at the Vredenburg

which began at four a.m. It was, in other words, an unprecedented theatrical performance, perfect in its historical accuracy. The entire population of the city would come out to watch spectacles of this nature. *Leporellos* — accordion-folded booklets — were sold to cover the costs.

The University’s involvement in city politics, on the other hand, was quite minimal. Until the late 18th century, in fact, students paid no or very little attention to politics. This did not truly catch on until the *Patriottentijd* (Patriot Era) in the Dutch Republic of the 1780s, with the most provocative exponent in Utrecht being the student Quint Ondaatje. Another high-water mark in nationalist sentiment occurred in the 1830s, during the Belgian Revolution, when students established a company of volunteer infantrymen — known as *Vrijwillige Jagers* — to support King William I. Where economics were concerned, however, the University exerted an tremendous influence on life in the city. Students and

professors sometimes hired staff and the University itself employed many people. Landladies, lodging-houses and societies benefited from the presence of the University population, as did local bakers and greengrocers.

Around halfway through the 20th century, that population became less elitist. The University began to grow exponentially, which around 1950 led to a buildings decree calling for a partial relocation to what was then still known as the Johannapolder. As it developed this area became known as De Uithof, now Utrecht Science Park. The big move began in the 1960s. Increased enrolment, but also the fact that many of the labs no longer met current standards, created a need for new construction at a major scale.

At that point, there was some discussion as to whether the entire University should be relocated to De Uithof. This, of course, did not happen: Humanities and Law, Economics and Governance remained in the city centre. Municipal officials were afraid the city centre would die out if the University abandoned it entirely. The buildings alone were a potential problem: what would become of all that space? Conversion to offices seemed to be the only possibility for the buildings. And the city worried about traffic problems as well: bus lines 11 and 12 were already having trouble accommodating the enormous volumes of students.

At first, construction at De Uithof was primarily functional in nature. The Van Unnik building had to be erected in short order to house as many students as possible. The Kruyt building was intended to hold the laboratories and therefore needed to be quite sturdy. Its aesthetic appearance was of little concern. That changed several years later, however, when the idea emerged that Utrecht University should become a kind of ‘Harvard on the Kromme Rijn’, an image that also placed a high value on prestigious new buildings. To that end, renowned architects such as Rem Koolhaas, Wiel Arets and Willem Jan Neutelings were commissioned to build iconic structures. This was incredibly expensive. Today, the University is no longer pursuing that goal. In fact: there is no longer any need to build for education and research, but rather a need to concentrate what already exists.’ «

HISTORY

Anniversary celebrations

While the University initially only celebrated its 50th and 100th anniversaries, in the course of the 19th century — under the influence of nationalist sentiment — it became customary to organise festivities every five years (referred to as a *lustrum* in Dutch), typically centred on a nationalistic theme. In the 20th century, those themes became broader and a variety of subjects which speak to the imagination were chosen: François Villon, Akhenaten or Germanicus, for example. The Board of the University delegated the organisation of those festivities to a student society, the Utrechtsch Studenten Corps (USC).

By the 1950s, however, a large portion of the student body no longer joined the USC, making it untenable to place sole responsibility for organising the anniversary activities with the USC. At that point, the University assumed the organisational duties once more — which also put an end to the big masquerade balls. Those processions and large-scale performances had also become somewhat ill-suited to the spirit of the times, as well as being virtually impossible to afford. They were paid for by private contributions, mostly from USC students. These were boys from elite families, to be sure, but even so the sums were enormous. This did generate a great deal of income for the city: every hotel was fully booked, down to the last room. Still, it brought financial ruin for some, as people bankrupted themselves to pay for the anniversary celebrations.



Masquerade procession in the Schoutenstraat during the 295th anniversary (59th lustrum). Image: The Utrecht Archives

A stroll back in time

All around Utrecht this anniversary year, historical knowledge abounds, accessible to all. Tiles with QR codes will be installed at thirty locations where the University and city come together. When you scan one of these codes, you will see stories, photos and video clips from the past, all having to do with that location. Not all of the history at these locations has left traces we can still see today, like the former site of the livestock veterinary clinic on Biltstraat.

Did you know, for instance, that excavation work at the site of the Princess Máxima Centre unearthed signs of human habitation dating from before 10,000 BC?

This project is part of the Utrecht Time Machine (UTM) a linked data platform that Prof. Toine Pieters launched three years ago with the goal of bringing the history of Utrecht to life. Pieters is proud to report that the Utrecht Archives will be taking over the management of the Utrecht Time Machine. ‘This project was never meant to be confined to the University; it is all about the world beyond its walls.’ The UTM platform com-

bines data from various museums, the historical association Vereniging Oud Utrecht, the city, the municipal land registry, the Utrecht Archives and other digital historic source files and databases. Alumni are welcome to contribute historic input as well. In the coming years, Pieters will work with students and the Utrecht Archives to further develop the platform and apps that make use of its data.

Over the course of this year, the tiles with QR codes will be ‘connected’ with one another to create walking routes. More information will be made available on the anniversary website morgenmakenwesamen.nl once the tiles have been installed.



The Sputnik Watcher on the Servaas Bulwark

A remarkable statue stands near the Sonnenborgh Museum and Observatory: The Sputnik Watcher. This bronze sculpture was made by Oswald Wenckebach in 1957, shortly after the Soviet Union shocked and amazed the world by launching the first satellite, Sputnik 1, during the Cold War.

David Baneke, UU History and Philosophy of the Sciences, sheds light on the context of this sculpture. According to him, the true winner of the Cold War was the field of astronomy. Also in Utrecht, where Professor Kees de Jager founded the ‘Working Group on Outer Space Exploration of the Sun and Stars’ in 1961. Within ten years, this working group had a staff of more than one hundred people. De Jager, who

even lived at Sonnenborgh until 2003, also played a role in what you might call an early form of crowdsourcing. Both the United States and the Soviet Union made use of amateur astronomers all around the world. Using these amateurs’ observations, it was possible to accurately chart the path of a satellite orbiting the Earth. De Jager shared the data collected by Dutch ‘Sputnik watchers’ with colleagues in both countries.

Would you like to know more? David Baneke also discussed the satellite observations in the radio documentary *Het Spoor Terug: de Spoetnikkijker* (The Trail Back: the Sputnik Watcher), which alumnus Nienke Zoetbrood (Language and Cultural studies, 2014) created for the OVT programme: bit.ly/ovt-spoetnikkijker (in Dutch).



‘The best part-time job for students in Utrecht’

The Dom Tower is the most iconic structure in Utrecht. Practically every UU student has climbed the 465 steps at one point or another. But there are also alumni who have done so hundreds of times. This is because almost all the Dom Tower guides are UU students. Master’s student Dorine van de Klashorst has been working as a guide for five years: ‘This is the best part-time job in Utrecht. I earn money by telling people about this impressive building and promoting enthusiasm for its history. I don’t plan to quit until I take a full-time job after graduation.’

Jitte Roosendaal is a Social Geography alumnus and, as an employee of Utrecht Marketing, has been ‘head guide’ at the tower for over 25 years. He has seen hundreds of students come and go and trained them all to be Dom Tower guides. ‘Many first-year students have come a long way from home to attend UU. Buildings like the tower appeal to their imagination. It is the pride of the city.’ Recruiting guides has never been a problem: ‘When there’s an opening, the students pass it on. It’s also a really fun group of guides who really look out for each other. In all these years, that has never changed.’

Dorine’s own experience confirmed this: ‘I have a group of “tower friends” I met through this job. We have dinner together regularly. Although not a student society, for a lot of the guides it feels like one. Both the tower and the University have played a big role in my life in the past few years. Both places make me feel comfortable, like I’m at home.’

Visit domtoren.nl to find plenty of other fun do-at-home activities created by the Tower Guides, including the Big Dom Tower Podcast Show.

Why don’t USC members use the passageway under the tower?

The tower is associated with hundreds of fantastic stories, some of which also feature the University. For instance: once upon a time, a USC member walked through the passageway under the tower just as a student from another society was attempting to commit suicide by jumping from the tower, landing on top of the USC member. The jumper survived, while the USC student unfortunately did not. At least, that’s how the story goes. In any case, it was a long-standing tradition among USC members to walk around the tower rather than through it.

New knowledge is developing at a phenomenal rate. Your job undoubtedly requires knowledge that was not covered during your studies. Utrecht University's Continuing Education programme provides the up-to-date knowledge and skills you need to remain permanently employable on the labour market, all based on the latest academic insights. 'From short courses to Master's degrees to diplomas, Utrecht University offers a wealth of opportunities for lifelong learning.

text Sabine de Lucht
image Aad Goudappel



Dimphy Schreurs (43)
Academic education: Maastricht Academy of Fine Arts followed by Art History at Utrecht University
Position: Head of Visitors and Education at Museum Catharijneconvent
Continuing Education programme: Leadership in Culture (LinC), 2014 – 2015, 14 months

‘Self-examination’

Dimphy Schreurs had been working at Museum Catharijneconvent for a few months when her manager learned about UU’s LinC programme and encouraged her to apply.

‘LinC stands for Leadership in Culture. I remember thinking: but I’m not a “leader” am I? So is this really right for me? Still, my manager’s enthusiasm was contagious and I decided to visit the website. I found out that LinC focuses on activating organisations based on an organisation’s own clear vision rather than on classical leadership skills and things like staff management. Self-reflection is a crucial first step in that process, and makes up an important part of the programme along with academic knowledge and networking skills. That combination really appealed to me. The fact that LinC was a UU programme also really reassured me about its quality.’

Six years on, Dimphy is still grateful for the insights LinC provided. ‘It was really a great gift. A mentor helped me to reflect on my qualities and weaknesses, and figure out what I really want and — more importantly — what I don’t want. Those insights give me focus, peace of mind and direction. UU also helps you apply those new skills in the professional practice. All the knowledge we acquired was linked immediately to our actual work situations. That’s incredibly valuable in terms of lifelong learning, since you need to keep developing if you want to remain relevant to the labour market and keep up with current social developments. I would encourage everyone to check out their range of courses and programmes. Working on your personal development can really help you advance your career.’

Leadership in Culture (LinC)

START: April
DURATION: 14 months

For more information on LinC, visit: uu.nl/en/executive-education-law-economics-and-governance/executive-programmes. Various programmes are set to start in April.

Redesign your teaching activities in the days of COVID-19

START: 26 May 2021
DURATION: four 90-minute meetings
COST: € 420

This training course will help you to redesign your distance learning courses under the guidance of Education Consultation & Training advisers. The programme comprises four sessions and is suitable for higher education lecturers from across the Netherlands and anyone working to train professionals (either within their own organisation or on a freelance basis).

uu.nl/herontwerp-je-onderwijs-coronatijd (in Dutch)

Masterclass in Social Intrapreneurship

START: May 2021
REGISTRATION: 23 April 2021
DURATION: 6 days
COST: € 2,450

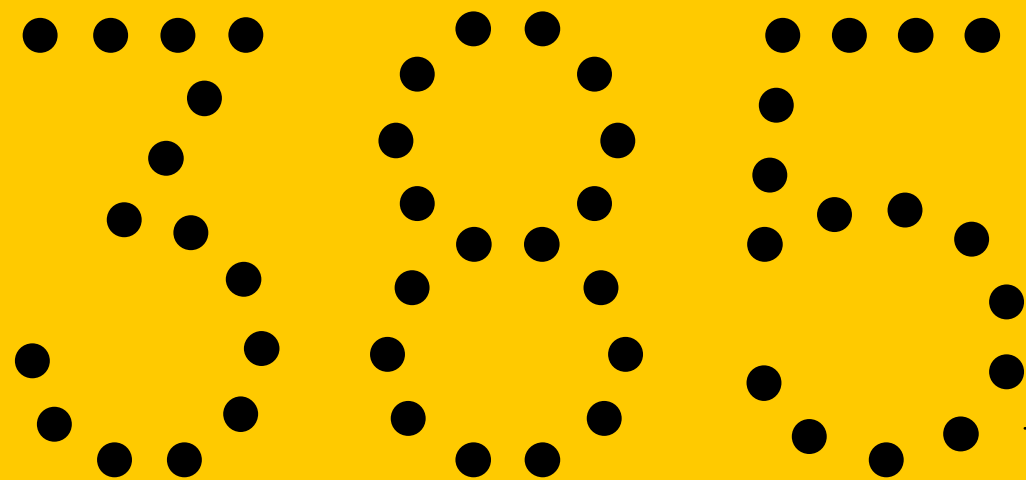
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uu.nl/social-intrapreneurship (in Dutch)

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CREATING TOMORROW TOGETHER



YEARS OF SCIENCE AND ACADEMIA UTRECHT

This year, Utrecht University and UMC Utrecht are celebrating 385 years of science and academia. The event is themed 'Creating tomorrow together'. Sounds logical, right? After all, we will need to join forces and work together if we truly aim to build a better world. As it turns out, our UU alumni have a particular talent for collaboration. Over the course of this anniversary year, we will be talking to a number of alumni to discuss their future plans and who they are working hard on this with. The first three of these stories feature in the following pages. Lots of other portraits and videos will be published over the course of the anniversary year on uu.nl/alumni-morgen.

text Hanneke Olivier, Jurgen Sijbrandij and Sabine de Lucht
images Roderik Rotting and Bas Huissen

Hanneke Schreuders (Sociology, 2007; Urban Geography, 2009) and **Thekla Teunis** (Language and Cultural Studies, 2009; Mathematics, 2010) form the driving forces behind Stichting Move, along with Michiel.



Children and students combine their talents

Connecting people from entirely different walks of life and making sure they understand each other a little better. This ambition has inspired Michiel Bodt ever since he returned to lead the foundation he founded with fellow students in 2009: Stichting Move.

The foundation brings together children and students with the aim of improving their living environment in cooperation with civil society organisations. It all started with a single project in Utrecht's Hoograven neighbourhood; today, Move is active in eleven cities and offers several programmes aimed at developing children's talents and improving their prospects in society. 'Children are the creative minds behind all our projects. They're the ones that make it all happen. However, it's also a genuine exchange,' Michiel emphasises, 'students also learn a lot from the children.'

'Thekla, Hanneke and I started out as friends, and we still are today. We were young and inexperienced, but we complemented each other well. Hanneke was focused on community participation and development. As a former School of Governance student, I knew a thing or two about getting government and private sector parties on board. And Thekla has an amazing entrepreneurial mindset. Our can-do mentality really stood out in the welfare sector.

Paul Verweel was one of my greatest sources of inspiration. Paul had a formative influence on me and really contributed to the Move Foundation by acting as a sparring partner and ambassador. He was always building connections. In fact, the theme "Creating tomorrow together" would really suit him.

Michiel Bodt
(Governance, 2009; Sports Policy and Sports Management, 2012) established the Stichting Move foundation with fellow students during his degree programme.



Sam en Mats
Children's creativity is the driving force behind all Stichting Move projects.

'It's a genuine exchange: students also learn a lot from the children.'



Paul Verweel was Professor of Management and Organisation from a Multicultural Perspective. He was one of the foundation's main ambassadors until he passed away in 2018.



Lineke Maat
(Interdisciplinary Social Sciences, 1995) is managing director of Taal Doet Meer. She previously worked for various social organisations, including the Dutch Council for Refugees and CNV Jongeren.



Micha de Winter
(Psychology, 1975) is professor of Pedagogy at Utrecht University. According to his notion of a 'pedagogical civil society', all the adults involved in a child's life are responsible for its upbringing.

'We connect Utrecht residents that normally wouldn't interact'

Building a more social Utrecht together

Lineke Maat wants to inspire Utrecht's residents to be more curious about each other. As director of the Taal Doet Meer foundation, she works to help Utrecht's non-native speakers improve their language skills. She does so in collaboration with various partners and some 1000 volunteers, who act as language buddies and organise language cafes and other activities.

Professor Micha de Winter inspired Lineke to study Interdisciplinary Social Science when she attended an information evening in the early 1990s. As a student, she focused on equal opportunities in education and employment, an issue that has remained a constant factor throughout her career.

Taal Doet Meer has helped a great many people improve their language skills over the course of her ten years as director. 'However,' she explains, 'our efforts to

build a more social Utrecht by connecting people who normally wouldn't interact are just as important. I hope these sort of connections emerge across the entire city, spreading everywhere. We've already been pretty successful within Utrecht University.'

The many students doing work placements at Taal Doet Meer are also helping to spread such connections. Lineke: 'There's this preconception that university students have a lot of theoretical knowledge but no hands-on mentality. We always give students doing work placements assignments that combine both theory and practice.' Her colleague Dirkje van den Berg also started on a work placement. Lineke admires her ability to set up partnerships. 'Dirkje always keeps our interests in mind, but she never forgets the needs of our partners. You have to set your own course, but you also need to build support.'



Dirkje van den Berg
(Interdisciplinary Social Sciences, 2015) is a project leader at Taal Doet Meer. Among others, she is responsible for organising in-person and online language cafés.

Making art accessible to all the people of Utrecht

In his younger days, Appie Alferink would cheer himself up by making music whenever he was feeling ill, angry or sad. 'Art makes our lives happier and healthier. Unfortunately, some people don't necessarily have access to art. I want everyone living in Utrecht to have the opportunity to create and experience art, be it music, theatre, literature or painting. The ZIMIHC Foundation is trying to achieve this through community theatres and art initiatives.

ZIMIHC stands for 'Zat Ik maar In Hoog Catharijne' (I Wish I was in Hoog Catherijne). They took the name from a billboard slogan in Hoog Catharijne shopping centre: Appie and fellow-alumni Frans-Willem Korsten, Rob Bekker and Roland Kip did an impromptu performance under the billboard after a cloudburst disrupted their outdoor concert. They jokingly decided the slogan should become their new band name, and the moniker stuck.

Over time, the student band eventually evolved into the ZIMIHC foundation. Under the leadership of its new managing director Appie, ZIMIHC eventually opened three theatres in Utrecht, offering artists from various cultures a space to develop their creativity. 'The communal experience of enjoying each other's art can bridge cultural differences. Art also improves our health and brain function. It's a good fit for our city: Utrecht is committed to Healthy Urban Living.

To Appie's despair, the theatres were forced to close due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Fortunately, ZIMIHC staff member and fellow alumnus Susan Hermanussen came to the rescue with some innovative solutions. 'She came up with the idea of one-on-one sessions, in which people go on a walking tour past six performances which they can then watch at a safe distance. You need young people like Susan around to stay in touch and make good decisions. They're the future, after all.'



Frans-Willem Korsten
(Dutch Language and Literature, 1984) is Professor in Leiden and Rotterdam and one of the founders of the original ZIMIHC band. He has always been a source of inspiration for Appie.



Susan Hermanussen
(Art Policy and Management, 2017) is coordinator at ZIMIHC theatre Zuilen and has become even more creative than usual during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Appie Alferink
(Dutch Language and Literature, 1984; Theatre Studies, 1988) director of the ZIMIHC foundation.

'Art is good for our health'

'A healthy urban living environment for all'

When it comes to health, we tend to focus on genetics. However, some 70 – 80 per cent of our health is actually determined by environmental factors. Professor Roel Vermeulen and his Utrecht colleagues, along with various Dutch and international research groups, are currently studying the aggregate of all these factors: the exposome.

text Marta Jiménez Cantabrana and Martje Ebberink
illustration Silvia Celiberti

Vermeulen and his colleagues agree that in order to understand how environmental factors affect our health, we need to examine the molecules around us and the fingerprints they leave in our bodies. The researchers have set themselves the ambitious task of systematically charting the thousands of chemicals and countless other factors we are exposed to on a daily basis. An understanding of what makes us sick and of what does not do so will help them determine which environmental factors are harmful to us and to what extent. They especially aim to figure out which combinations of these environmental factors are harmful and whether we are especially vulnerable to them at certain stages of our lives.

So how do you measure the invisible?

'It's far harder to "measure" someone's exposome than it would be to sequence their genome,' Vermeulen explains. 'We don't have a universal method to measure every single factor like geneticists do. Unlike the genome, the



Roel Vermeulen (1970) is professor of Environmental Epidemiology and Exposome Analysis, and serves as director of the Institute for Risk Assessment Sciences (IRAS). Vermeulen studied environmental protection in Wageningen and obtained his doctorate in 2001 with a study on health risks in the rubber industry. He spent six years researching the relationship between environmental factors, molecular changes and the development of cancer at the US National Cancer Institute. In 2006, he returned to Utrecht University where he currently oversees various national and international exposome research programmes. Roel Vermeulen will be holding Utrecht University's annual Anniversary Address this year.

'Air pollution is a silent killer'

exposome also varies over time. The research requires a multidisciplinary approach in which we combine new technological developments from multiple research fields — such as sensors and spatial models — to study the influence of the entire exposome on a cell, tissue or organ.'

What's in the air we breathe?

The researchers believe they have now managed to accurately pinpoint one of these factors — air quality. 'We have a growing number of sensors at our disposal that provide detailed information about air pollution. It's helping us to gain a better understanding of the health effects,' Vermeulen says. 'And that's important, because air pollution is a silent killer. An estimated four to nine million people die prematurely every year as a result of air pollution. In other words, the number of deaths caused by air pollution equals the number of smoking deaths.'

Cities generally determine air quality on the basis of a limited number of measuring points. However, air quality — and thus the degree of air pollution — can vary from street to street and from day to day. In many cases, the measurements only include substances that are legally required to be monitored. That obviously distorts the results. For example, ultrafine dust and nano-sized particles (with a diameter of less than 0.1 micron) from car exhausts are not included in the standard measurements. However, these particles can penetrate deep into the lungs and bloodstream, increasing the risk of respiratory and cardiovascular disease.

Vermeulen wanted to find a way of monitoring air quality in cities around the world. 'We entered into a unique partnership with Google where we fitted some of their street view cars with sensors that could measure the amount of nitrogen oxides, particulate matter, soot and ultrafine dust in the air.' The team started in Oakland and subsequently expanded its runs to Copenhagen and Amsterdam. 'Our partnership with Google gave us daily access to dozens of hours of air quality data. The result: a "map" at street level that tells us which cycling routes to work will help us avoid the worst of the traffic fumes.'

Healthy urban living

This data can help urban planners identify and target areas with poor air quality. Together with architects and designers, Copenhagen is now using the maps to rethink its vision for a healthy and liveable future.

Utrecht University, the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM) and the Economic Board Utrecht have established a Healthy Urban Living Data and Knowledge Hub in an effort to improve the usability of measurement data and disseminate the resulting knowledge more effectively. 'The open platform allows us to collaborate on solutions for a healthy urban environment with over ten partners from the public and private sectors. The Google Air View cars — without the familiar roof-mounted cameras, of course — were recently donated to the hub, much to the delight of the partners. 'Both UU and RIVM are really excited to have the cars up and running in other cities and regions in the near future.' ◀

Want to know more about the exposome?
Check out the longread at uu.nl/en/organisation/in-depth/decoding-the-exposome-the-biggest-influencer-on-health.

Science and academia in Utrecht city centre



Niels Tjoonk studied Biomedical Sciences from 2014 to 2018 followed by a Master's degree in Cancer, Stem Cells & Developmental Biology at Utrecht University. He gives academic tours of the city centre and has been working as a programme officer at Studium Generale since early 2021.

text **Inge Oosterhoff**
images **Robin Alysha Clemens**

As a programme officer at Studium Generale and guide at Utrecht Free Tours, Niels Tjoonk (24) connects the past and future of science and academia at Utrecht University. 'The city really comes to life when you start exploring its history.'

So how did you end up choosing your degree programme? 'I must say moving to this city was a more conscious choice than my actual degree programme. I love the University buildings in the city centre, but I switched from English Language and Culture to Biomedical Sciences after six months and all my lectures were at De Uithof. I liked the degree programme, but I must say the surroundings were less impressive.'

What do you enjoy most about working life? 'I get to apply all the things I'm interested in at work. Although I'm fascinated by the world of cells and the human body, I don't like lab work. I'm much more interested in the history and the stories behind it. I get to share that passion with others in a more relatable way at Studium Generale and in my role as tour guide.'

Can you describe your relationship with the University? 'I really explored the University's history from its early beginnings to today to prepare for my scientific tours. That research really brought the University and the city to life for me. There are amazing stories everywhere, if you only know where to look. The home of the first Dutch female student or Louk Roëll's galaxy, which connects the entire city of Utrecht with the Domplein.'

How did you build your network? 'I spent a year at Veritas, and made some great friends among my fellow students. We still keep in regular touch. I'm not very active on LinkedIn, but I enjoy going to lectures and asking lots of questions. If there's one thing academics love, it's answering questions. If you show genuine interest, you'll build up a network in no time.'

So what's next?

'I want to make science more accessible to a wider audience. I can obviously keep doing that through my current work, but maybe I could also try podcasting or some other format. The medium doesn't really matter as long as the message comes through.' «

A longer version of this interview will also be published on DUB, Utrecht University's independent news site. Visit dub.uu.nl for all the latest news and background information on our academic community.

'I must say moving to this city was a more conscious choice than my actual degree programme'



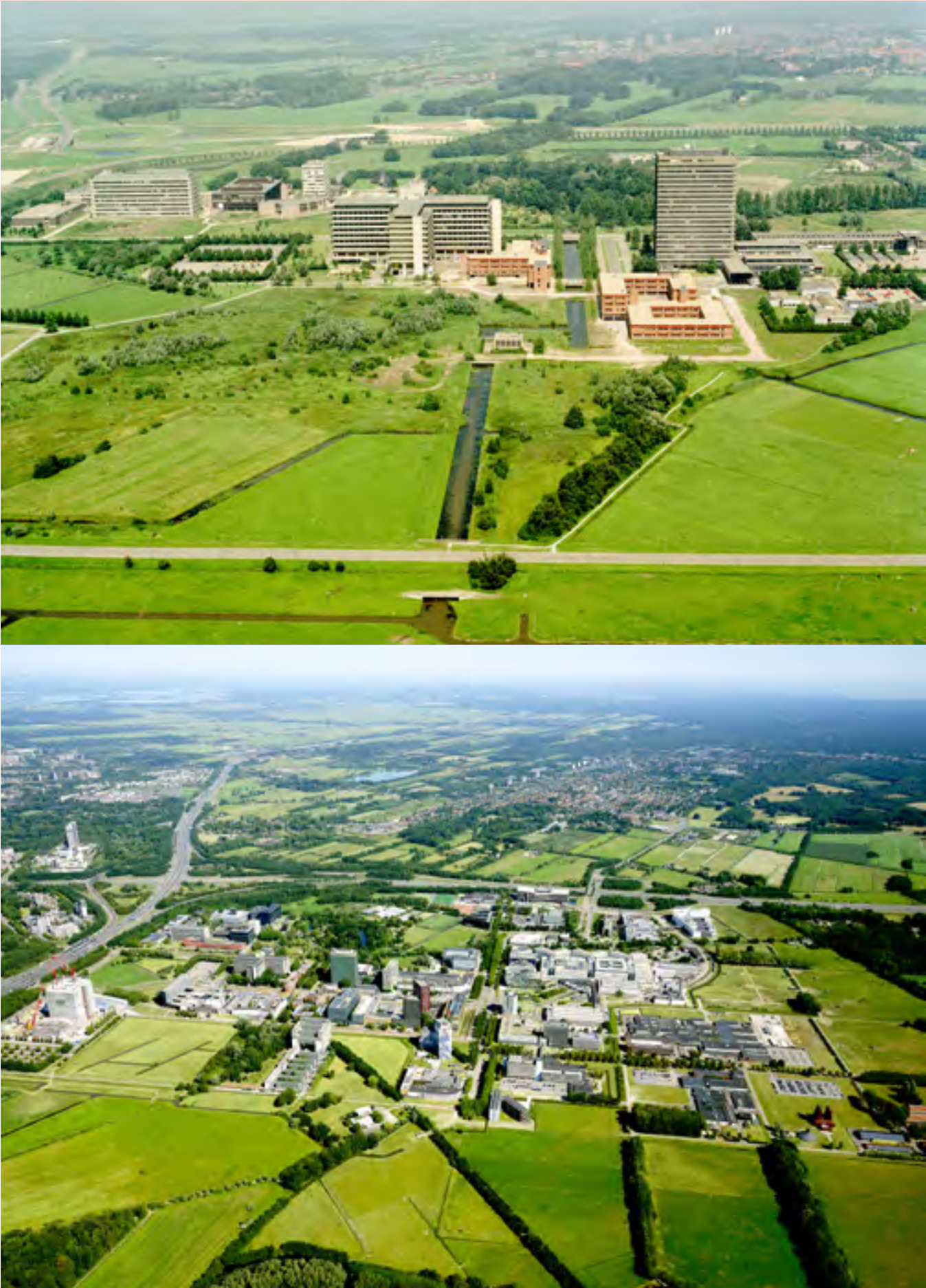
DEVELOPMENT

From Johanna- polder to Utrecht Science Park

1980 Compared to today’s Utrecht Science Park (USP), De Uithof still looks very unimposing in this aerial photograph. Some twenty years earlier, the area was still known as the Johannapolder and was deserted except for a few farms. And yet this photograph was taken during a period of stagnation, as Faculty of Geosciences researcher Egbert van der Zee explains. There wasn’t much money available in the 1970s and 1980s, and a clear vision for the area was yet to be developed. Some of the temporary structures built at the time, such as the Langeveld building, are still in place today. For a clear example of this ‘planning standstill’, look no further than the dead-end air bridge at the Sjoerd Groenman building. Despite the original intention of protecting staff and students from the elements, this idea was quickly abandoned in favour of healthy outdoor air.

2020 From the 1990s onwards, there was no shortage of plans as many new buildings, businesses and finally also housing units started to spring up on campus. The tram line was also eventually realised. These days, the Utrecht Science Park is certainly far from at a standstill. Still, the new era has its own challenges: for example, older buildings need to be adapted to the sustainability requirements of the future, and getting to USP remains an ongoing issue in view of future student numbers. The various parties at Utrecht Science Park have also expressed their ambition to lend the area more character and atmosphere. It makes you wonder what an aerial photograph of the area will look like in 2060.

text **Jurgen Sijbrandij**
images **Het Utrechts
Archief, Utrecht Science
Park**



A message from ... Toronto

Utrecht is more like a village

text Jurgen Sijbrandij

I never expected I'd end up in Canada. After finishing my Master's research in Malaysia, I decided to travel through Australia. I was planning to go back to the Netherlands afterwards. It all turned out differently: I met my Canadian girlfriend there, and live in Toronto these days.



Jesse Terhorst
(BSc in Human Geography and Planning, 2015; Economic Geography, 2016) is a data analyst at Environics Analytics, a Canadian survey and market research company.

When I got my work permit, I took a job at Environics Analytics. We use our demographic, financial and socioeconomic databases and a national segmentation system to help companies and government agencies in Canada and the United States understand the characteristics, motivations and values of their customers, target demographics or residents. The outcomes of those analyses are used to develop marketing strategies, campaigns and policies. I'm working out of my little flat in downtown Toronto at the moment because of the COVID-19 measures.

The pandemic is also affecting my work in other ways. We use anonymised mobile phone data to map the movements of groups of people in busy locations, such as parks and shopping malls. For example, we learned that many residents started using shopping malls just outside the city during the city of Toronto's regional lockdown. As a result, the number of COVID-19 infections went up despite the measures.

'The COVID-19 pandemic is having an impact on my work'

We've also noticed that people from poorer neighbourhoods go out more often than those in wealthier areas because they tend to work in retail, for example, and can't work from home.

I apply the knowledge I learned at Utrecht University in my work. For example, I use some geographical information systems that I learned about when I was doing my Bachelor's degree. Still, you mainly learn things in practice, on the job, especially in terms of quantitative data analysis.

I was born and raised in Utrecht. I have to say it's a bit like a village in comparison with Toronto. Toronto is bigger, and more car-oriented. People are used to long commutes, and a three-hour drive for a short visit isn't unusual here. That wouldn't really happen in the Netherlands. It's just on a different scale.' «

Tips



UNIVERSITY MUSEUM

Doing research from home

Children are having to find ways to entertain themselves at home during this pandemic. The University Museum, which is currently closed for renovation, is offering support in the form of its new 'We Research' video series. The series teaches children how to measure reaction speeds, explains the workings of an illusion and shows them how plants process water. Like real researchers, they can come up with all kinds of variations in order to explore the subject in more depth. All activities can be carried out with household items and are suitable for children aged 8 and up.

Visit umu.nl/museum-online, where you will also find quizzes, stories about the collection, children's lectures and an actual construction kit. The website is regularly updated with new activities.



PODCAST SERIES

WWII in Utrecht

What sort of historical questions would interest Utrecht residents? This question formed the starting point for a new podcast by twelve history students, under the name DOMCast. Local residents’ questions about the wartime history of two houses in Utrecht inspired a research project and accompanying podcast series about the Second World War in Utrecht. Besides the seven episodes on the war, there are also several bonus episodes on other history-related questions.

Interested? Visit domcast.nl (in Dutch) to learn more and listen to the episodes.

UU PORCELAIN

Looking for a special gift?

Utrecht University is a real treasure trove of extraordinary stories. Every plate and cup from our ‘Science x Porcelain’ collection tells one of those unique tales. Many of the stories involve a specific pattern, chart or graph that has been used to create a series of beautiful porcelain gifts. The series is available through the University’s online store, where you will also find lots of other great gifts: cufflinks, hoodies and rompers, a ‘Graduation Bear’ and much more.

Visit uu.nl/en/organisation/corporate-identity/science-x-porcelain for an overview of the various porcelain designs. You can find the store at utrechtuniversitystore.nl.



WEBSITE

Take part in research

Utrecht University has launched the ‘Take part in research’ website for all the University’s research involving human subjects. As the name suggests, ‘human subject research’ is a form of research involving human

trial subjects. Children and adults provide the necessary data for the studies. The website features an overview of all current research projects at Utrecht University. The required trial subjects (adults, children, adolescents) will vary depending on the type of study.

If you would like to take part and contribute to science, visit uu.nl/meedoeaanonderzoek (in Dutch).



CLIMATE HELPDESK

An answer to your questions

Can we save the Netherlands from the rising seas? Will there ever be another Elfstedentocht, the famous skating race along eleven Frisian cities? How do I go about convincing ‘climate deniers’? While there’s a lot of information out there about climate change, it isn’t all helpful. The Utrecht Young Academy, a group of young UU researchers, teamed up with ScientistsForFuture NL to set up the KlimaatHelpdesk (Climate Helpdesk) that people can turn to with such questions. Participating experts include many UU researchers, such as Erik van Sebille, Peter Kuipers Munneke and Sanne Akerboom.

Follow the Climate Helpdesk on social media: [@klimaathelpdesk](https://twitter.com/klimaathelpdesk) or send your question to klimaathelpdesk.org.

PRIZE GIVEAWAY

Hidden buildings

Kromhoutkazerne, Drift 21 and Veeartsenijterrein. Alumnus Arjan den Boer visits and describes current and former UU locations in his anthology *Vergeten Gebouwen in Utrecht 1850 – 1940* (Utrecht’s Forgotten Buildings 1850 – 1940). De Boer is particularly interested in the less familiar stories hidden behind some of the city’s more ordinary façades, sourcing fascinating details from Utrecht’s historical photo archives. Browsing through the book gives you a very different perspective on buildings such as the Paardenkathedraal (Equine Cathedral) — currently a theatre, but originally built as a stable for ailing horses.

Illuster is pleased to give away three copies on behalf of Arjan and DUIC publishers. Just answer the following question: Who designed the Paardenkathedraal?

Go to bit.ly/illuster-winactie to take part. You can also visit arjandenboer.nl for more stories about Utrecht.



Win this book!

JOB VACANCY?

Reach recent UU graduates

Every year, thousands of new students become alumni after obtaining their Bachelor’s or Master’s degree at UU. Each of these alumni is highly driven to start their careers. Are you looking for recent graduates for an open position or internship at your organisation?



If so, post your vacancy in the UU Career Services Vacancy Bank and find your ideal candidate.

Career Services connects students, degree programmes and the labour market: uu.nl/en/collaborate/collaboration-with-utrecht-university/employer-and-student-career-services.



CLOSE-UP

UU history online

This year, Utrecht University and UMC Utrecht are celebrating 385 years of science and academia. Anniversaries always offer a great opportunity to reflect on our rich history. Did you know that the University website features a visual overview of all our historical highlights and achievements? Amongst many other events, the photos and videos provide a chronological account of the *Illustere school* (Illustrious School), the UU’s founding on 26 March 1636, the first woman to attend a lecture, the Utrecht Psalter and the Second World War.

Visit via uu.nl/en/organisation/profile/tradition-and-history/history for the historical timeline.

BOTANICAL GARDENS

Heavy metal and sheet music

We have all heard stories claiming that plants grow better if you play them classical music rather than exposing them to heavy metal. So is there actually any truth to this? Can plants even hear? If so, how do they do it? Learn all about the relationship between plants and music at the Botanical Gardens between 1 April and 1 December as part of this year’s theme *Takkenherrie & Bladmuziek* (Crashing Timber & Rustling Leaves). For example, you can visit the annual exhibition, follow the *Fluitenkruid* kids’ walk (lit. ‘flute’s herb’, *fluitenkruid* is Dutch for cow parsley) or take part in a specially themed *Met de muziek mee* (Follow the music) tour of the gardens.

In the Botanical Gardens from 1 April, see uu.nl/agenda/start-van-het-jaar-thema-takkenherrie-en-bladmuziek (in Dutch) for details.

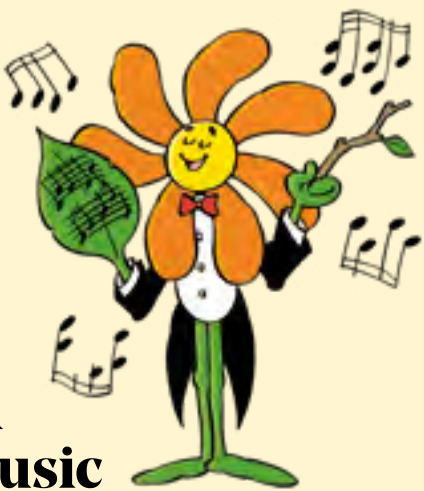
THE HAGUE ALUMNI NETWORK

Online lecture by James Kennedy

Our alumni network in The Hague was forced to rapidly reinvent itself in response to the current coronavirus measures, and now organises online events instead of its traditional themed dinners. The alumni network’s fourth online lecture will take place on **the evening of Thursday 22 April**, and will feature speaker Prof. James Kennedy (UU

History). Amongst other issues, Kennedy will be discussing the recent turbulent US elections.

For more details, see bit.ly/dh-online-event-4.



ONLINE COURSE

Human Rights for Open Societies

The European Convention on Human Rights is one of our most successful instruments for the protection of human dignity. But what does it actually say and how can it help us to promote human rights and the notion of an open society across Europe? Professor Antoine Buyse and Prof. Janneke Gerards join Claire Loven on a journey through the world of human rights, offering the audience an introduction to this crucial international treaty.

The course will be in English and starts on 4 May. To sign up, go to coursera.org/learn/humanrights.

ONLINE EVENT

Lecture tour with Rutger Bregman

Alumnus of the Year Rutger Bregman (also see the interview on page 22) has recently become an intellectual influencer of global renown. He will be presented with the Alumnus of the Year Award during a special Lecture Tour at Tivoli Vredenburg on 25 March. Host Sofie van den Enk will be talking to Bregman about his ideas, ideals and sources of inspiration. One of his former lecturers, historian Prof. Beatrice de Graaf, will also be attending as a special guest. What did he learn from her?

The Lecture Tour can be viewed online on the UU YouTube channel. You can also watch it at a later date, from 25 March onwards. See youtube.com/universiteitutrecht.



Science Café: How can humans and animals coexist in a healthy way?

12 April 2021 From giant factory farms to wildlife markets, how can and must we change our treatment of animals? Speakers include animal scientist Prof. Saskia Arndt.

sg.uu.nl/agenda/2021/science-cafe-hoe-mens-en-dier-gezond-samen-kunnen-leven (in Dutch)

Utrecht Day of Philosophy

18 April 2021 The Utrecht Day of Philosophy invites you to critically examine yourself, others and the world around you. Join us in reflecting on Netflix, language and beauty, and broaden your outlook on the world around you.

utrechtsedagvandenfilosofie.nl (in Dutch)

Lecture by Ellen Deckwitz

4 May 2021 Poet and columnist Ellen Deckwitz will be holding a lecture on remembrance, silence and the power and impotence of language on the eve of this year’s National Remembrance Day.

sg.uu.nl/agenda/2021/4-mei-lezing-door-ellen-deckwitz (in Dutch)

Classico Giro Utrecht

30 May 2021 This year’s Classico Giro 2021 will once again start and finish at Utrecht Science Park. The routes range between 75 and 200 kilometres. Participants can register via the website.

classicogiroutrecht.nl/inschrijven

Visit uu.nl/alumni/agenda for an overview of (online) alumni events.

De Uithof

I never studied in the city centre. As a scientist, De Uithof was always my natural habitat. De Uithof — I think you're supposed to call it Science Park these days, not much of an improvement to me — could still be a bit disdained at the time (early this century). It was a remote enclave, a bit like the way they used to keep the lepers outside the city gates.

I never got that. I love De Uithof. (You can put Science Park on all the exit signs on the ring-road around it, but that's not going to change a thing). I wouldn't exactly describe it as a Garden of Eden, but I do have some divine memories of that time. The sandwiches from Tricolore. The extremely overpriced Spar. De Uitwijk cultural centre, where I noticed a large group of people staring in the same direction in September 2001, just before a plane crashed into the second WTC tower on the small television screen two minutes later.

De Uithof underwent a real transformation during my years as a student. It was where all the innovation took place. Everything you couldn't do in the city turned out to be possible at De Uithof: lofty tower blocks for students. Wonderful new University buildings. A huge library. (Where the toilets

always smelled, I should add — that's what happens if you don't put in any windows. And with lighting behind the toilet bowls and stall doors made of frosted glass, you could tell by the shadow who wiped their bum sitting or standing).

Nowadays, the concrete and brick designs by Kruyt and Langeveld (they'll probably start calling themselves Gunpowder and Longfield soon) stand alongside the red millennium stucco of the Minnaert building and the gleaming glass and steel structures built after I left. The University's motto used to be 'science is never finished', and De Uithof embodies that message to this day. The name Science Park might seem to imply a place to park science, but that couldn't be further from the truth: it's an extremely dynamic environment. I still feel at home every time I park my bike there — the kids' seats on my handlebars are the only reminder of the passing years.

Jan Beuving

Jan studied at Utrecht University for nine years, completing a Bachelor's programme in Mathematics (2008) and a Master's programme in the History and Philosophy of Science (2009). After that, he became a comedian and cabaret artist. See janbeuving.nl for his performance schedule.

