

LEG Societal Impact Award 2018 Jury Report

10 JAN. 2019

The Faculty of Law, Economics and Governance (LEG) hands out the yearly Societal Impact Award to *show* the societal impact of academic work, performed both by students as well as staff, and to show *appreciation* for a selected number of students and staff members, for specific outstanding impact achievements.

We strongly believe that our research and education should have societal impact – that we link our research and education to societal issues, partners and practices; that we develop science in relation to society; that we take societal responsibility. This is symbolized by the upcoming Whale project that our dean already highlighted, but also represented by many activities that our students and staff – that *you* – perform. By way of projects, programs and partnerships, you contribute to dealing with societal issues like diversity and gender, refugees, sustainability, and social entrepreneurship.

Last year, two projects won the award, and they are doing well. The winning student initiative *Study societies in senior secondary vocational education* (MBO) has really taken off. They founded the study society ‘STARK’ and use the money they received to turn this into an official foundation – they were able to pay the fees for a notary and the chamber of commerce. *The Initiatives for Peace and Human Rights Foundation*, initiated by staff members, is still helping lots of vulnerable people, by drawing the public’s attention to their rights and by equipping them to act. They used the money for a computer and office supplies.

This year we received multiple nominations, which can see on our web-page. ‘We’ – the jury – are: prof. Judith van Erp (USG), Ann-Wil Dijkstra (Tony’s), prof. Hein Roelfsema (USE), prof. Marleen van Rijswijk (Law), and prof. Mirko Noordegraaf, LEG vice dean, acting as chair. The jury is supported by Rebecca van Musscher.

And now..., who are the 2018 winners?

First, we turn to the Societal Impact Award 2018 **for students**, which will be awarded by one of our strategic partners: Tony’s Chocolonely. The award will be presented by Tony’s director: Anne-Wil Dijkstra.

Who is the winner of the Societal Impact Award 2018 for students?

... The LEG Societal Impact Award 2018 for students goes to students from the department of Law, for the long-running project **Legal Aid for Prisoners – “Juridisch spreekuur gedetineerden”** –, its **permanent pool of students**, and one of its pool members: **Tessa de Groot**.

Together with a pool of around 15 students, Tessa has committed herself to spend at least half a day a week, every week, on helping prisoners – so literally, in prisons, in 2 prisons – with a range of legal issues. Two staff members – Antoinette Bakker and Pauline Jacobs – are available to provide general support, and the students themselves provide support to this invisible and vulnerable group of people, by making legal issues comprehensible, offering a listening ear, and helping them in finding solutions. The jury praised the durable and stable character of this initiative, to which many students have contributed and will be contributing. The project has fully proved its value by continuing to operate in times of budgetary cuts to basic forms of legal aid. There is a clear connection to the academic program; students are able to put their newly acquired knowledge into practice right away.

Tessa, and other students, congratulations! Tessa, please step forward to receive the award.

Finally, who is the winner of the Societal Impact Award 2018 for staff?

... The LEG Societal Impact Award 2018 for staff members goes to the project **Learning Lab Overvecht**, and to its founders/coordinators **Peter Linde and Jeroen Vermeulen**, both working at the department of Governance.

Learning Lab Overvecht grew out of an Erasmus+ project on 'Community Enterprise Action Learning', four years ago, and turned into a university-wide education innovation program on 'Community engagement'. Students, local residents, including residents with migration backgrounds, neighbourhood partners, and lecturers work together to turn 'value cases' into actual social enterprises with a clear societal impact on the neighbourhood. Examples are Café Mama, Social Car Wash, and Social bike. In Learning Lab Overvecht students, coming from different faculties, become part of a local Overvecht network in which residents, entrepreneurs and students learn together. The jury praised the inclusive and durable character of the project and its tangible societal effects. James Kennedy – dean of University College Utrecht –, an advocate of socially engaged academic education, recently referred to this project as the "golden standard of Community Service Learning".

Congratulations, especially to Peter Linde and Jeroen Vermeulen! Please step forward to receive the award.