

When even the commercial sector starts to anticipate the end of stereotyping, it's a sign something's really happening in society in terms of diversity and inclusiveness. Enough reasons for FGW.nu to take a look at where the Faculty of Humanities stands. What have we achieved so far? Do all staff members and students feel they belong?

Examples such as HEMA's gender-neutral children's clothes' line or Unilever's decision to delete stereotyping from its advertisements prove that diversity and inclusivity are a hot item in the social debate (as well as a priority on the academic agenda). Since 2015, our Faculty has implemented a targeted policy on these themes

(which also happen to be University-wide objectives) and we now have a concrete plan. 'Our starting point is that everyone should feel welcome and thrive, irrespective of his or her background,' says Janneke Jansen, Faculty coordinator of the diversity policy and responsible for implementing the action plan.

**Better gender balance**  
The Faculty is, for instance, committed to a better gender balance among its staff. Various measures have been taken to attract more female professors. 'It's looking good,' says Jansen. 'Our goal is to have 37% of women professors by late 2018, and we're already nearing that target. But we have to remain alert.' Attention is

also devoted to the so-called leaky pipeline, the phenomenon by which although more women than men enrol for a study programme, many female students give up at some point along the academic career ladder. Last year the Faculty launched a mentor programme for female researchers to support women and encourage them to remain on track.

**'I already see that the work climate is changing'**

**Raising cultural diversity**  
Gender balance is not the only important factor. To stimulate cultural diversity, the Faculty wishes to attract academic staff from diverse cultural

backgrounds. In the recruitment procedure, women and applicants from a cultural minority are actively encouraged to apply.

According to Aya Ezawa, lecturer in Japanese Studies and member of the steering group for diversity, attention to this issue is bearing its fruits within the Faculty. 'It's becoming more self-evident to

## Et al Achievements at the Faculty of Humanities



### Language course a hit

Students are flocking to enrol in Dutch & More, a small private online course (SPOC) especially developed by the Academic Language Centre and Online Learning Lab for international students studying in Leiden. Gea Hakker, Director of the Academic Language Centre: 'We were hoping for 500 enrolments, but we're already passed the 1300 mark. Students who successfully complete this course are offered a discount on regular language courses. All the follow-up courses were fully booked in no time and we've even had to create new groups. We're now developing an online training course for international staff.' Dutch & More was created in the context of the Leiden University Language Policy Memo. Using fixed elements such as vocabulary, grammar and practice sentences, students learn Dutch in an accessible and fun way. The lessons are based on realistic scenes from the life of an international student at Leiden University, ranging from a visit to the Leiden market to life in a student house and Campus The Hague.



### Green light for BA in Urban Studies

In late November, the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO) gave the green light to launch a new English-spoken bachelor's programme: Urban Studies. This is the first Dutch bachelor's programme to address complex problems in urban areas from a humanities perspective. Unlike other Dutch Urban Studies programmes, the curriculum does not feature geography or urban planning courses, but focuses instead on such aspects as cultural differences or slang used in big cities. As the world becomes increasingly urbanised, there is more need for graduates who can view a problem from a variety of perspectives and join forces in finding a solution. The study programme is due to start in September 2018 in The Hague and brings together five faculties: Social and Behavioural Sciences, Law, Science, Governance and Global Affairs, and Humanities.



## Organise a StepTalk

The Spanish Steps in the Wijnhaven Building are the location for a new series of lectures, presentations and debates: the StepTalks. The topics are extremely wide-ranging, but what all the StepTalks have in common is that they are inspiring, varied and relevant – not to mention that they all take place at this exceptional location in the Wijnhaven entrance hall on Campus The Hague. A few examples: in November, Alfred Schaffer, Leiden University's 2017 guest author, spoke about authorship and poetry. This was followed by a talk on the food of the future, including protein transition, local produce and no waste, given by the sustainable Dutch Cuisine chef, Bas Cloo. All study programmes and institutes of the University can take the initiative to organise a StepTalk, to ensure that the series continues to appeal to students and staff of all disciplines. If you'd like to organise a StepTalk, please email your idea to [events@cdh.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:events@cdh.leidenuniv.nl).



## Baár goes to Brussels

Historian Monika Baár, leader of the ERC project Rethinking Disability, was one of seventeen researchers selected for the 2017 edition of the European Parliament's MEP-Scientist Pairing Scheme. During the Brussels Week in November, these researchers were paired with Members of the European Parliament in an attempt to reduce the distance between policy and research. Baár visited Dr Adam Kosa, a lawyer and the first deaf, sign-language using MEP in the history of the European Parliament. Baár: 'During the visit I had the opportunity to present my research to MEPs and other researchers. Together with Adam Kosa, I attended meetings of the EP committees. Thanks to this exchange, I gained a good impression of how the Parliament works. And I hope, of course, that my presentation made a good impression in Brussels.'

Monika Baár is researching the global impact of the International Year of Disabled Persons (1981). That year marked a turning point in how people across the world viewed disability. More than 10% of the world's population has some kind of disability, and this percentage is rising rather than falling. How did disability become a global concern and how can the concept be understood in a multicultural world? For more information, see the project website at <http://rethinkingdisability.net>

## Read more: Diversity: where we stand

work on redressing this imbalance. And although we're only now taking our first steps in this direction, I already see that the work climate is changing. A faculty with more women and more lecturers with an international background creates an inspiring work atmosphere; it makes room for different conversations, and you learn so much more from each other. But Ezawa also warns that there is still plenty of room for improvement, especially at policy level. 'Lecturers with an international background don't contribute enough to policy because of the language barrier. Of course, international staff members should master the Dutch language to a certain degree, but to effectively take part in meetings in Dutch requires more time, space and encouragement than they receive right now. I think this is a missed opportunity.'

### Successful buddy programme for students

For students, too, various activities are organised to promote diversity. For example, students from outside Leiden can take part in the Humanities Master's Buddy Programme. Nargess Asghari coordinates the buddy programme and as a newcomer was able to experience first-hand the value of this programme. 'As an international student it's great to have someone to answer your questions and help you find your way within the Faculty. At times you can feel pretty lost in a new country and environment.' The buddy programme is an accessible, low-threshold way to get in touch with other students. The programme

was launched in 2016 with 60 enrolments, and more than 140 students have now taken part. The Faculty also gave the green light for a POP corner, a physical support desk for all students with easy access to a specially trained staff member who can answer questions and offer advice.

### Primarily white clubs

The diversity action plan doesn't just focus on integrating students with different backgrounds within the Faculty; it also raises awareness of diversity among students. 'We organise diversity awareness workshops for students, including board members of study associations, which, in their own words, still tend to be primarily white clubs. In these workshops they learn to be more open to people from a different background,' says Jansen. Right now, the number of Humanities

### Leading role

Ezawa is convinced that the University plays an important role in the social debate on diversity. As far as she's concerned, the Faculty of Humanities, with its experience, knowledge and expertise, should lead the social debate on this issue. 'But this has never yet been fully embedded in our organisation, and it's a process that takes a long time. Not everyone is aware of the importance and added value of diversity.' Jansen agrees. 'People have to become aware of this value, including people with different backgrounds and perspectives, and inviting them to share these perspectives freely promotes creativity and innovation. Diversity brings renewal and enrichment, but it takes time for this understanding to dawn. Pushing things through too quickly, or imposing particular rules won't work. It's all about navigating, creating a base

'Our starting point is that everyone should feel welcome and thrive'

students with a migrant background is not very high. Jansen believes this is due to the fact that such students rarely opt for a Humanities study programme. But the "white" image of our Faculty also plays a role. 'This is why as a Faculty we've got to set an example for students and the environment. When they look at us, they should see a mirror of society and role models. Unfortunately we're still a primarily white organisation. We really are here for everyone, but we have to be able to show and prove that this is the case.'

of support, respecting people's pace, and raising awareness. There is so much still to improve, and I would be happy if things moved a bit faster. But I'm also really proud of what we've already achieved. Diversity and inclusiveness are firmly on the agenda. I can't deny that present-day social trends are helping. The current social debate on this issue is keeping the iron hot. Now's the time to strike.'

## Successor to Janneke Jansen

Janneke Jansen will retire in early 2018, but a strong diversity policy remains a priority on the Faculty's agenda for the coming years. Namrata de Leeuw will be taking over Jansen's position and will further implement the action plan, focusing on the visibility and familiarity of the various diversity measures and activities.

For more information, see the Faculty website:

[universiteitleiden.nl/geesteswetenschappen/over-ons/diversiteit](http://universiteitleiden.nl/geesteswetenschappen/over-ons/diversiteit)

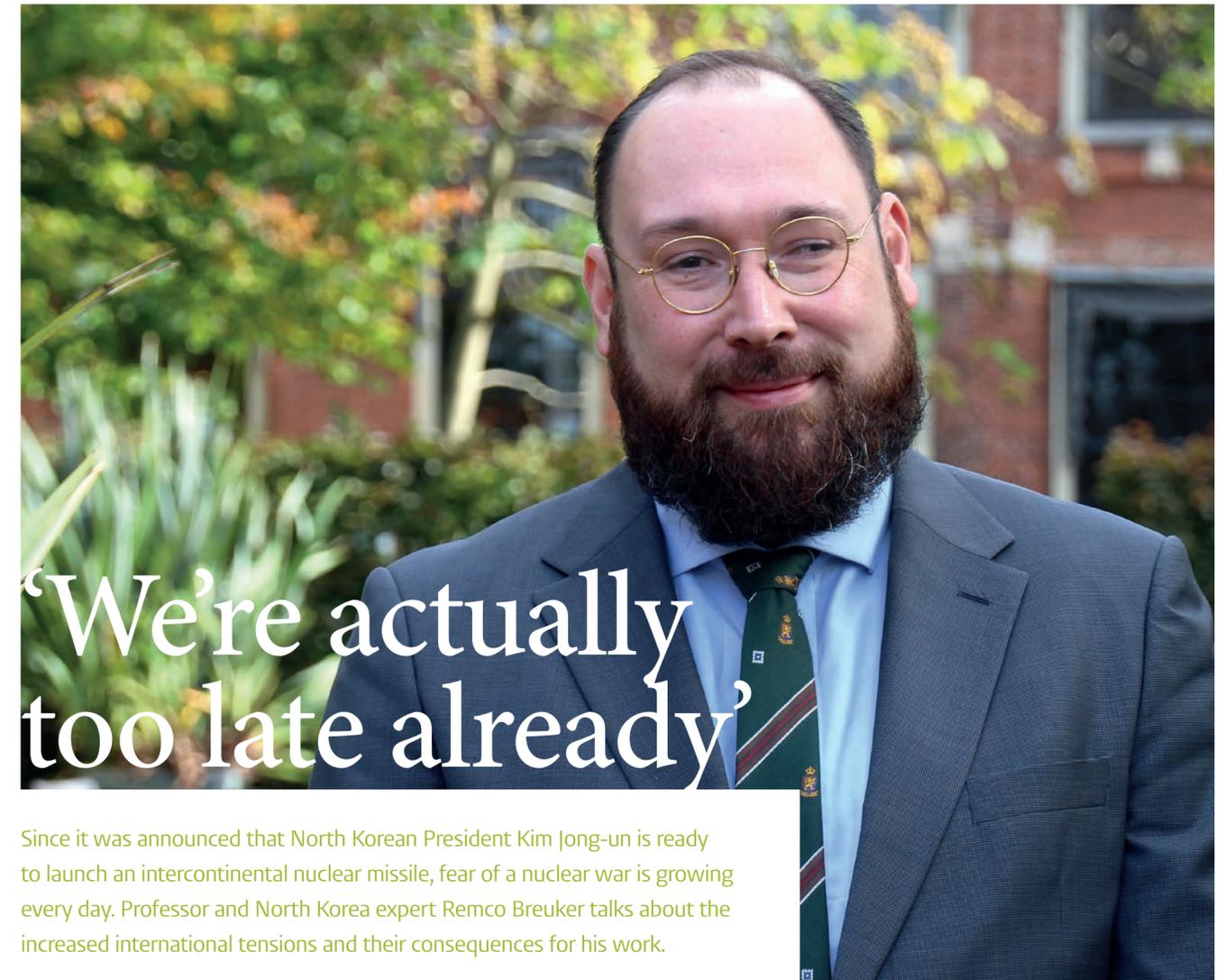
## Colofon

fgw•nu is a periodical for the staff of the Faculty of Humanities, Leiden University.

Chief editors // Menno Tuurenhout, Gerdine Kuggeleijn, Femke Wouters  
Advisory editors // Sanne Arens, David Cörvers, James McAllister, Imke Maessen  
Executive editors // Julia Nolet, Marieke Enter, Margot Derksen, Romy Koreman, Femke Wouters  
Cartoon // Bas van der Schot  
Photography // Marc de Haan, Juliën van Eck, Julia Nolet  
Concept and final editing // LIEN+MIEN Communicatie  
Art-direction // Creja ontwerpen  
Printing // UFB

### Address:

Faculty of Humanities,  
Department of Communications and Recruitment  
Room 2.06D, Lipsius  
E-mail: [fgw.nu@hum.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:fgw.nu@hum.leidenuniv.nl)  
Tel.: 071-527 5888



Since it was announced that North Korean President Kim Jong-un is ready to launch an intercontinental nuclear missile, fear of a nuclear war is growing every day. Professor and North Korea expert Remco Breuker talks about the increased international tensions and their consequences for his work.

### If you follow the news, it looks as if nuclear war is about to break out between the US and North Korea. Is that true?

'Pretty true, unfortunately; things are not going well. I'm convinced that right now some people in North Korea and the US are just busy calculating probabilities: "What are the odds that the US will attack us?", "What are the odds that North Korea will really attack, and what should we do if that happens?" We're back to square one with the Cold War.'

### Is this all bluff, or do you think nuclear weapons will actually be used?

'Chances are high that most people involved don't want a war. But if North Korea believes that America is planning a preventive attack, as they've done before in Iraq, then it's certainly possible North Korea will attack American bases in East Asia. If the US decides to strike back, they know North Korean nuclear missiles will cost them a few cities. The only way for North Korea to survive is if this is a strong enough reason for the US to refrain from retaliating.'

'I've come to realise that the media are not interested in a highly nuanced explanation.'

### Why would North Korea risk putting itself in such a dangerous situation?

'That's a good question, and opinions diverge as to the answer. I think North Korea wants to use nuclear weapons to put the US under pressure. For the past forty years North Korean propaganda has been full of the "final victory", i.e. a reunification of North and South Korea. I suspect we should take this propaganda quite literally. Nuclear weapons are North Korea's

way of pressuring the US to recall the 30,000 American soldiers stationed in South Korea so as to have a free hand in reuniting South and North Korea.'

'Every time I appear on the Pauw programme, I get phone calls the next day from Members of Parliament. There's no way I could generate that kind of attention with an academic article.'

### Is there anything we can do to prevent war?

'We're actually too late to prevent it. By now North Korea has a fully developed nuclear programme, and a preventive attack is no longer an option. All we can do is to strike if North Korea is on the verge of using its weapons, but the odds are high that this will end up in bloodshed.'

### That's a very depressing perspective

'It's also a very serious situation. I believe there are solutions, but they cost time and money.'

### What solutions?

'This has to be resolved from the bottom up. Give the North Korean people the tools to end the regime themselves. The greatest victims of North Korea's regime are its own inhabitants. The country is ravaged by hunger and concentration camps. Let human rights organisations inform North Koreans of how their elites live the good life while their children are starving. Give the thousands of North Koreans who cross the Chinese border daily to smuggle in goods micro-credits so they can regain control over their own lives. This is the only way to create a lasting solution.'

### Isn't the population already too brainwashed for that?

'They're certainly brainwashed, but it would be a great mistake to dismiss them as one-dimensional. They are simply people who are afraid, as anyone would be living under a dictatorial regime with an active concentration camp policy. The average North Korean is not stupid; he just doesn't have access to information. That's why it's essential to inform the population.'

### You often appear in the media to talk about this. Is it a difficult topic to discuss?

'Very much so, especially since there are so many prejudices about North Korea. I'm now systematically introduced as a prophet of doom, a reputation I won't be able to shake off easily. Actually, people have taken far too long to treat this issue seriously. I just

### Leiden Asia Year

The North Korean crisis demonstrates once again how crucial it is to understand Asia. Leiden University is contributing to this knowledge and understanding with the opening of a new Asian Library, a brand-new floor above the University Library housing one of the largest Asian collections in the Western world. In honour of the official opening, 2017 was appointed as the Leiden Asia Year - a year filled with lectures, exhibitions and concerts on Asian themes. The final activities are planned in December. Interested? Check it out at [leidenasiayear.nl](http://leidenasiayear.nl).

## Read more: We're actually too late already

→ tell them what's going on; things have been spiralling out of control for many years.'

### What responses do you get to your media appearances?

'Strong responses. Every day I get negative responses via e-mail and Twitter. From colleagues telling me I'm too negative about the situation, or people accusing me of working for the CIA or the South Korean intelligence services. People often react very politically, which I find painful. I've got nothing against a good debate; it's part of academic practice. But to get threatening messages from people who'd like to see me in a penal camp is hard, to say the least. These days I turn off my mobile phone at night, to let things settle down a little.'

### Does it ever make you consider stopping your media appearances?

'No. I keep doing it for two reasons. First of all, this is an important problem that concerns us all, and I believe it's my duty as a scholar to provide interpretations. Secondly, the North Korean concentration camps are full. Thousands have perished already. This is something that deserves to get our attention, and there's simply no better way to do so than via the media. Every time I appear on Pauw's programme, I get phone calls the next day from MPs. There's no way I could generate that kind of attention with an academic article.'

### How do you make sure your message gets across clearly in the media?

'You shouldn't be afraid to say what you think. I've come to realise that the media are not interested in a highly nuanced narrative.'

### How do you make sure that the nuance is still there?

'The funny thing is, it happens automatically. The more you appear in the media, the higher the odds you'll get a chance to tell a longer story. And be open to debate: if you can't nuance your story in a TV programme debate, others will do it for you. But as a scholar, I believe it's my duty at least to open the debate on these distressing matters.'

# At work in the P.J. Vethgebouw



The P.J. Veth building is ready and forms an appealing calling card for both Faculty and University. The building meets all the requirements of a multi-purpose modern building: work, learning, teaching and studying. The completion of the P.J. Veth building renovation is the first piece of the Humanities Campus puzzle.

### Connect and meet

These are core themes for the Faculty of Humanities, and they play a key role in the new design of all Humanities Campus buildings. In the P.J. Veth building, these themes translate among others to a study lounge, meeting places and an active learning classroom where lecturers and students can work together using touch screens. An underpass connects the building to the Singelpark walking route. This underpass, decorated with artwork, allows pedestrians to walk along the Singel and opens up the building on the Hortus side. The new P.J. Veth building was officially opened on 12 October. The Institute for Philosophy, the Academy of Arts (ACPA), the Confucius Institute, and staff departments of the Faculty of Humanities have already moved in. How do they like it?



### Fun and lively

Carola Koetsier is a facility account manager and was part of the project team responsible for the renovation of the P.J. Veth building. At the last minute, when the renovation work was nearly completed, we found out that our entire department would be moving from Lipsius to the P.J. Veth building. It was great news for me, since I was so closely involved

in the renovation. I helped formulate the requirements for the new building and now I get to see how it's worked out. It was also difficult because the construction work was not quite finished when we moved, which made things difficult. The acoustics of the building are also a cause for concern; in a lot of areas noises echo really loudly. We're now working on improving the acoustics with noise damping materials. Although the classrooms are on the other side of the building, it's still nice to have students walk around. It's fun and lively. It also makes P.J. Veth a real university building, not just an office. Students from the entire Faculty come here, not only from Philosophy or ACPA, and that creates a dynamic atmosphere. Students and lecturers can meet here, for example in the study lounge.

From my desk I have a fantastic view of the Hortus. Our office is right opposite the big tree on the Academy Building side. All the new facilities are really good: the printer, the pantry and the toilet areas. What I also really appreciate is the attention to sustainability and green. The new plant wall is a great success in my opinion. On the other hand, it's still just a workplace, but a very nice one.'



### Auditory component

Marcel Cobussen is Professor of Auditory Culture at ACPA. 'Together with multimedia artist Edwin van der Heide (LIACS), I created a plan for an acoustic installation in the tunnel under the P.J. Veth building, entitled 'Whispering wind'. I got the idea after seeing the Humanities Campus plan. It didn't mention the acoustic effect of the renovation. A lot of studies have shown that sounds play an important role in how people experience space. That's why I contacted the project group and asked them whether they would consider taking the auditory component into account when designing the renovation. We ended up talking about the P.J. Veth building first. It was clear from the start that an underpass would be built to connect the Hortus and the Nonnensteeg. That was a great opportunity to create an artwork to enrich people's experience as they walk through the tunnel. In addition to the acoustic installation we also created a relief based on an audiogram of the sound you hear as you walk through the tunnel. So there's a direct link between the wall and the sound. When we started on this project, I didn't know ACPA would be moving to the P.J. Veth building. I now share an office where we have a view of the Nonnensteeg, but I haven't yet spent a lot of time there. I usually meet with my students on location, since most of them don't live in Leiden, and I come here mainly for meetings. It's turned into a gorgeous building, although the acoustics could do with some improvement. It's all so new; the building still has to form itself to the needs of the people working here. But the many good facilities provide enough opportunity for that to happen.'



### The perfect place for me

Lecturer in Philosophy Rico Sneller traded his room at the Reuvenplaats for a new office in the P.J. Veth building. 'I love it here. It's a fantastic building, and I'm

so glad I get to work here. From my room in the mezzanine in the old Herbarium part of the building I have a great view of the Nonnensteeg and the city centre. Everything is so close by. There's a great coffee machine that makes tasty coffee, so I don't have to walk to the Literary Café at the Lipsius. I commute between Zoetermeer and Leiden on my electric bike (45 km/h). I asked for power sockets to be installed in the bicycle shed so I can charge my bike, and I'm very grateful that my request was met.

At first it took some getting used to. I'm on the mezzanine floor, but in the elevator I have to press the button for the fourth floor. Small things like that. But I already really feel at home here. I sometimes compare it to the buildings of VU University in Amsterdam or the Uithof in Utrecht, where I used to work. Those buildings were so boring and so far away from the city centre. The P.J. Veth building is the perfect place for me.

Everything about the building is new and fresh, and everything works. All of us Philosophy lecturers are close to one another, and I discovered that other colleagues I used to know are now also working in the building. It was a nice surprise. As far as I can remember, I've never had such a beautiful large office. It's now completely furnished, and the shelves are full of my books: my source of inspiration. I like to have them close by. Philosophy is a bookish craft, in my opinion. That's why I often show my books in my lectures, or when students come to see me. Teaching is my passion. I now also teach here in the building, in a beautiful new classroom. One day I hope I'll get to teach in that grand old renovated lecture hall with the wooden benches.'

## Facts & Figures

### P.J. Vethgebouw

 Built in  
1900

**Classrooms:**  
4 seminar rooms,  
including 1 active learning  
classroom, and  
1 auditorium



**110** workplaces **50** self-study places

**2** common rooms 

**5** rooms **4** = **100** lectures per classroom per day lectures per week

### APPROXIMATELY

**3343,8** m<sup>2</sup> gross floor surface  
**2000** m<sup>2</sup> of usable floor surface



### Open and inviting

Yinzhi Zhang is Vice Director of the Confucius Institute and moved last summer from the Reuvenplaats to the P.J. Veth building. 'On the wall of our new office we have a famous quote by Confucius:

'The Master said: to learn, and to apply your learning at the right time, is that not gratifying? To have friends visit you from afar, is that not pleasant? To refrain from anger when misunderstood, is that not proving your superiority as a man?' When discussing our wishes for the new space, we said we wanted that quote on the wall. It's turned out beautifully. Over a year ago we heard we would be moving to the P.J. Veth building. We were well informed and guided through the process, and we were even asked which space we would prefer. In the end we chose a large space in the high part of the building. It's inviting for visitors and shows how open we are. The space has high ceilings and it's very light, which also makes for a pleasant atmosphere. I think it's a great improvement for us compared to the Reuvenplaats. It did take some getting used to, sharing a single large space with all of us. And we're frequently bothered by the sounds from the large classroom next door. We've already put a bookcase against the wall, and we're working on insulating it better still. If needed, we can always move to our meeting room around the corner, which is good. The construction work took a bit longer than planned, but that's usually the case with renovations. It's a great place to work. The view is fantastic, and I hope we stay here for a very long time.'



### Alumni: committed ambassadors

Our alumni are our ambassadors. On the University website they share how their Leiden BA or MA has helped them in their career, they coach students in the context of the University's Mentor Network ([universiteitleiden.nl/alumni/mentornetwork](http://universiteitleiden.nl/alumni/mentornetwork)) and they talk about their career during career and alumni days. Recent successful examples include the Labour Day organised by the Russian Studies programme and the Jane Austen Festival organised by the English Language and Culture programme. Our alumni are generally closely involved with the Faculty, and eager to offer their former study programme something in return. Do you have plans for an alumni or career day? If you'd like some help with organising and publicising your activity, please contact the Faculty's Alumni Relations Officer, Sanderien de Jong, or Career Adviser, Loes Nordlohne. For alumni events: Sanderien de Jong ([s.de.jong@hum.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:s.de.jong@hum.leidenuniv.nl)) For career days: Loes Nordlohne ([l.nordlohne@hum.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:l.nordlohne@hum.leidenuniv.nl))



# 3 questions for Florian Schneider

Sinologist Florian Schneider was awarded the LUS Teaching Prize, officially making him this year's best Leiden University lecturer. Schneider was commended for his innovative teaching methods based on role-playing.

## 1. // ARE YOU PROUD OF HAVING BEEN VOTED BEST LECTURER?

'Absolutely. It was a very important moment for me. What moved me most was that I was nominated by my students. These past few weeks, so many of them have come to congratulate me that this prize really feels like a moment of recognition. I sometimes work 70 hours a week to create high-quality teaching, so I'm really glad my students noticed my efforts. I have to admit I'm highly privileged to be able to spend so much time on my teaching; I have a very understanding wife and no children. In the current system, many researchers find it hard to make time for teaching. I'd like the dynamics to change, making it easier for lecturers to offer high-quality teaching. I think the LUS Teaching Prize contributes to this change, because recognition is essential for lecturers. Researchers don't get rewarded or promoted for teaching as much as for doing research. As a result, researchers devote most of their time to research, while our work is just as much about teaching.'

## 2. // WHAT MAKES YOU SUCH A SUCCESSFUL TEACHER?

'I base my teaching method on the role-playing game Dungeons & Dragons. The idea behind role-playing games is that you create a character that collects Experience Points (XP) by acquiring certain skills. The more XP you have, the higher your game level. I use this in my lectures by giving students assignments that correspond to a number of XP, which in turn represent a grade. This means my students know what they have to do to get a 6 or an 8. This creates a completely different learning experience. What I see is that students work harder when they feel in control of the outcome of their work. They don't stop at a 6, but go for an 8 or higher. I try to make sure my lectures contain something for each type of student. Some students are strong cognitively, others emotionally or socially. We have to create a learning environment that integrates all of these qualities. I also devote a lot of time to feedback. I give students lots of feedback on their assignments and advise them how to do better next time. This is one of the aspects of my teaching students seem to appreciate most.'

## 3. // THE PRIZE COMES WITH A €25,000 TEACHING GRANT. WHAT DO YOU PLAN TO DO WITH THIS MONEY?

'I still have to hear back from the University whether my idea is feasible, since the prize money is subject to some rules. But my dream would be to write up my game-based teaching method and turn it into an open source textbook for lecturers and students. I want to adapt my approach for a variety of disciplines, so that other lecturers can use it. I still have to figure out how much it costs to publish a textbook in open access; I believe it's quite expensive. Ideally, I'd like to just offer it for free online to anyone who's interested; I also want the book to be available to teachers in countries that are less prosperous than the Netherlands. But I still have to figure out whether the plan is feasible. The book is primarily useful for lecturers who want to devote more time to teaching, because my teaching method is quite time-consuming. But I hope that one day the University will say: this is what we want, so we're going to give lecturers enough time and resources to actively improve their teaching.'

**MORE AWARD-WINNING HUMANITIES TEACHING**

In addition to the University-wide LUS Teaching Prize, the Faculty of Humanities also has its own Faculty Teaching Prize. Lecturer in Philosophy Victor Gijbbers was the winner this year. Gijbbers was praised for the energy and humour he puts into his lectures on the Philosophy of Science.

**Quests**

**Discourse Analysis**

What is discourse?  
The politics of discourse.  
Conducting a discourse analysis.

# 'Dutch students just like to stay put'

While growing numbers of international students find their way to Dutch research universities and universities of applied sciences, Dutch national newspaper Trouw recently reported that Dutch students are remarkably attached to their home base. They don't mind a few additional months on an Erasmus or other exchange programme, but studying abroad for a longer period of time? No thanks! Why such reluctance? And is this a problem?



'There are other ways of gaining international experience'

**Who:** Kasia Bruning  
**What:** Works at WilWeg, a Nuffic initiative that informs Dutch students about opportunities for studying abroad

'Dutch education prepares students for society and the labour market, and international skills play an essential role in this context. All students should acquire some international experience, and going abroad is a good option, but certainly not the only one. An internship at an internationally oriented company, digital research projects with other countries, and more international students in the lecture hall: all these are ways of gaining international experience. More than 24% of students spend some time abroad during their studies, following courses or taking an internship. Only 2% opt to complete an entire study programme abroad. This low percentage of diploma mobility can easily be explained. The quality of Dutch education is good; we offer a diverse range of study programmes and the international climate of our educational institutions makes studying in the Netherlands very attractive. In addition, Dutch students often lack the funds to complete an entire study programme abroad, especially when compared to students from countries that score higher on diploma mobility such as Sweden, Norway or Germany. Some students also feel that a four-year bachelor's programme away from home is too long a time to be separated from friends and family.'



'Students tend to base their choices on the wrong reasons'

**Who:** Frans-Willem Korsten  
**What:** Teaches Cultural Interaction: A Global Perspective at International Studies

'The Italian city of Pisa features not only a leaning tower (now supported), but also a university - one that could certainly use a makeover. Would I go there for academic reasons, other than learning Italian? Certainly not. One of the reasons Dutch students decide not to go abroad is the standard of Dutch universities, which is remarkably high. Another reason is that life at Dutch universities is quite pleasant. Pisa is fun for a while, but would you want to be stuck there for a whole year? The Dutch central Randstad region and society are international enough. What's more: the Dutch are the most widely travelled people in the world, and they usually travel for fun. Why would you also go international for your work? The above reasoning illustrates the fact that Dutch students often base their decision whether or not to go abroad on the wrong reasons. They first choose a city, then a university, then a study programme. They'd be better off basing their decision on researchers they'd like to meet. A good question to ask a third-year bachelor's student is: Which international researcher would you most like to meet? That's a good basis for your choice. It will make your time abroad truly inspiring, and it will be good for your network and your CV!'



'More for life experience than as a career step'

**Who:** Fredericke van Damme  
**What:** Studying for an MA in Media Studies

'In the last year of my BA in Italian I spent a semester in Bologna to work on my Italian. At the time, more than half of my fellow students did an exchange programme. It's just more common when you study a language. I spent my second bachelor's programme in the Netherlands. It would have been financially tricky to go away, and going abroad usually leads to study delay, which I wanted to avoid. But I don't mind having stayed: Dutch education is of a high level, if you believe the university rankings at least. I don't think you need to study abroad for career reasons, or that you'll be at a great disadvantage if you don't. The education I got in Italy was not particularly challenging; it was certainly not a good enough reason to go there. But I do think it's a good idea to spend some time abroad, for your personal development. Going alone to a new place has taught me so much. I see my time in Bologna more as a life experience than a career step. Many Dutch students probably also feel this way, which is why they opt for a shorter stay abroad.'





### Medieval blog

'The goal of the Leiden Medievalists Blog is to share knowledge about the Middle Ages with a wider audience, both within and outside the academic world. The Middle Ages are becoming increasingly popular: just look at the popularity of 'medievalist' TV series like Game of Thrones and Vikings,' says Marlisa den Hartog, PhD candidate in the Institute for History. Together with Thijs Porck and Jerem van Duijl, she began this new Leiden University blog to offer a view of the Middle Ages from a variety of disciplines, including History, Art History, Archaeology, Book History, English Language and Culture, Dutch Language and Culture, German Language and Culture, and Middle Eastern Studies. In addition to a new blog every two weeks, the website also gives an overview of all courses on medieval themes offered by Leiden University. Interested? [leidenmedievalistsblog.nl](https://leidenmedievalistsblog.nl)



### Mexican partner for LUCL

Leiden linguists and archaeologists will soon be collaborating with the CIESAS, a Mexican institute for research in social anthropology, to support researchers who are studying an indigenous Mexican language. Leiden linguists and archaeologists have already joined forces in the Leiden Centre for Indigenous American Studies (CIAS), a virtual centre for research on the indigenous peoples of Latin America. Niels Schiller, Academic Director of the Leiden University Centre for Linguistics (LUCL), is enthusiastic about CIAS's new collaboration with the Mexican institute. 'For ethical and safety reasons, it's good that we're now able to work with a 'mediating partner' in Mexico. CIESAS has valuable contacts that we can use to more easily gain access to indigenous communities in the future.'

## Column the personal vision of a member of the Faculty of Humanities:

### A man with two faces

'By Christmas you'll have it figured out,' was the hopeful prognosis of my predecessor, Aurelie van 't Slot. This in response to my question as to when I would know enough to feel truly at home in this company known as the Faculty of Humanities. Last year I chaired the board of study association Maktub (Film and Literature Studies) and the Humanities Faculty Symposium: that was a crazy time in terms of making new Faculty connections. But it was nothing compared to the hordes of students, staff members and administrators I've met in the last two months. They are all very open people, and I can honestly say that I feel very welcome and at ease in the Lipsius Environment.

#### Tough call

It's certainly food for thought for sociologists, this student member position: a thesis-writing student who has only walked the Lipsius halls for a scant three years, now being taken seriously by managers with thirty years of experience, and representing seven thousand students. And yet, only a few of these students are aware of the fact that one of their own club is sitting on the third floor of their Faculty building, pressing some of the buttons. Visibility is a permanent issue for the student member. This year I'm trying to give it my own twist with an Instagram account (@delipsiusmeneer) and by attending special student events, such as study association activities. I live in Leiden and try to make grateful use of this by making an appearance at student initiatives.

For the rest, taking over from Aurelie was a tough call: she was able to translate the experience of her first year on the Board to new ideas and initiatives. That's great, but it also meant that I spent the first weeks staring at my computer screen with a vague 'What now?' expression on my face. How to make such a diverse range of tasks my own while also keeping the engine running? At times it did feel like a Christmas gift that looks like a lightweight box, but then when you open it, it turns out to be filled with lead.

#### Two faces

The dismay of those early days quickly passed, and my negativity in the previous paragraph may be a bit over the top, since (the metaphor serves me well here) lead has some beautiful uses. I see the Humanities Master's buddy programme flourishing, I direct the study association orchestra with 28 players, I work on promoting University-wide diversity and communication with fellow members of the Leiden Student Members Consultation (LAssO), and I do all sorts of other wonderful things that won't fit the word count. It finally feels like I'm in the right place. I plan to put as much energy as possible into my term as a student member, while keeping sight of the needs of the students I'm representing. At times, in the late afternoon, my office in the Lipsius crow's nest feels a bit like an ivory tower. When it does, I sometimes go downstairs and work in the canteen, right at the heart of the student mass - a man with two faces, gazing contentedly at his screen.



**Olivier Faigenblat**, is a fourth-year student of Film and Literary Studies and since September he has also been a student member of the Faculty of Humanities Board. In the coming year he plans to focus on inclusive -participation, labour market orientation, and channelling the performance pressure experienced by students. //

# 1 image, 1000 words

Wall poems are a well-known Leiden phenomenon. The Leiden walls sport poetry in many languages, from Hebrew to Japanese. Sign Language expert Victoria Nyst (LUCL) noticed that an important local language was missing: Dutch Sign Language. 'Despite it being the mother tongue of many deaf Dutch, unlike most neighbouring countries the Netherlands does not recognise it as an official language.' Thanks to Nyst, the Language Museum and a successful crowdfunding campaign, Leiden is now home to the first sign language wall poem of the Netherlands, if not of the world. Nyst: 'The poem appears on a side wall of the Hortus and consists of an artistic video of the poem 'Polder' by the Netherlands best known sign language poet Wim Emmerik, who unfortunately passed away in 2015. I hope this poem will contribute to the visibility and recognition of this beautiful visual language.'