

**A degree that carries you further**

Election Program Lijst Calimero 2017-2018



***LijstCalimero***

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There are many different ways to enjoy your time as a student in Groningen. But we all have one thing in common: when we graduate, we want to do this with a valuable diploma in our pocket. A diploma that will open up doors and will help us to achieve our dreams.

The value of your diploma is determined by the quality of education at the University of Groningen. For the past 12 years, Lijst Calimero has been committed to the further improvement of education at our university. In our opinion, high quality education is education that prepares students for their future, puts the individual student at the center of attention, and takes place in a healthy study environment. The quality of education is determined by three important factors: the content of education, the structure of education, and the study environment. Or in other words: what we study, how we study, and where we study.

In the past years, Lijst Calimero has been committed to develop those three elements in the best way possible for students at our university. We have a clearly formulated vision on education in which the student should be in the focus. We have the needs of all students at heart. On the level of the University Council we participate in the decision-making on broader matters that concern the entire University. With our clear vision on education we try to guide developments in higher education. That requires us to constructively and critically look at those broader developments, but sometimes we also tackle smaller, and more practical issues.

The past years have been proof that we can achieve a lot by being constructive and, when necessary, critical. We are able to influence university policies directly by being in contact with the people that are responsible for educational policies at our university. Decisions at the University are made in cooperation between people within the University and the student community. Nevertheless, we dare to be critical.

This election program will present our vision on education and how Lijst Calimero aims to improve the quality of education at our university and thereby enhance the value of your diploma. Your future is our priority. In order to represent your interests as a student we need your vote during this year's elections. Quality is a choice. So make yours, choose Lijst Calimero.

### **The 13th candidate faction of Lijst Calimero**

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# Key points

## 1. Future-oriented education – Content: what do we study?

- The range of university wide minors needs to be extended
- Students should be able to switch between studies more easily
- Students should be supported with improving their academic language skills
- More interdisciplinary projects
- Only internationalize if it contributes to the quality of education
- The UG has to support study associations financially in the process of internationalization
- The quality of education at the UG cannot be threatened by the establishment of a branch campus in Yantai (UGY)
- The career minor needs to be open to all students
- All trainings offered by Career Services must be free for all UG students
- Creating a balance between fundamental and market-driven research

## 2. Student-centered learning – Structure: how do we study?

- Funds from the basic students grants have to be invested into education
- Make use of various forms of examination
- Students need to receive more feedback
- All lectures have to be available online
- More digital exams
- More use of personal digital assignments
- Students should be involved in the spending of funds available due to the abolishment of the basic student grants
- It should be possible to look at course evaluations in advance
- The right of consent on the branch campus in Yantai will be used to represent the interests of students
- The University has to invest into a new website
- Administrative procedures should be equal across faculties
- All University buildings should be mapped in Google Maps, including room numbers

## 3. A healthy study environment – Conditions: where do we study?

- The University should hire a Study Career Advisor.
- The UG has to start an awareness campaign and devote attention to mental health problems among students
- No lectures and exams in the evening
- More graduation funds for study associations
- The UG must take responsibility in the housing issues of international students
- Outsourcing the Food & Drinks Services should lead to better quality
- Sufficient and adequate study places
- More work places for groups

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# 1. Future-oriented education

## Content: what do we study?

The most important part of a university degree is of course the content of learning. Education has to prepare students for their future, even if it is changing constantly. For Lijst Calimero that means challenging academic education that is linked to academic research, but also stimulates the development of skills and prepares students for the labor market. Students must be stimulated to follow their own interests so that they can get the most out of their student time.

### 1.1 More freedom of choice within degree programs

Degree programs need to have a strong academic base. At the same time, Lijst Calimero recognizes, that the individual interest of students go beyond their degree programs, for example regarding minors and specializations. All courses together should lead to a valuable diploma. Lijst Calimero therefore thinks, that students should be able to choose some of their courses themselves so that they can specialize into a certain direction. In this way, students can differentiate themselves from others and follow their own path.

#### *Key points*

- **The range of university-wide minors needs to be extended.**  
Lijst Calimero is aiming for the establishment of future-oriented, university-wide minors that are open to all students. Therefore, Lijst Calimero pleads for a university-wide career minor and a minor in rhetoric, which will be explained in more detail.
- **Students should be able to switch between studies more easily.**  
Students must keep the possibility to switch to a different degree program in a later stage of their study. Accessible pre-masters enlarge the possibilities of Bachelor students and enhance the individual development of students. It is also important to communicate to students that it is already possible to follow extra courses at different faculties during their Bachelor's degree, for example by doing a minor.
- **The Honours College should be more challenging.**  
Currently a lot of students stop with the Honours College because they think it is not challenging enough. Additionally, students need to receive more and better information about the possibility to participate in the Honours College and what that means.

### 1.2 Focus on the development of academic skills

Next to academic skills a having wide range of practical skills becomes more and more important so that students will be widely deployable and will be able to adapt to a rapidly changing world. The UG underestimates the importance of academic and practical skills. The University has to enhance and support the development of all those skills. If skills cannot be developed sufficiently within a degree program, the UG has to facilitate and support the development of those skills on a central level.

### *Key points*

- **Students should be supported in the improvement of their academic language skills.**  
It is the UG's responsibility that upon graduation every student has to have an academic language proficiency. There are still too many students that experience difficulties in academic writing. The UG needs to develop a solution that improves the academic language proficiency university-wide.
- **Creation of a university minor in rhetoric.**  
This minor will help motivated students develop and improve their argumentation, reasoning, and debating skills. Those skills contribute to the academic development of students and are essential in today's society.
- **More interdisciplinary projects.**  
Cross-curricular projects, such as interdisciplinary Learning Communities and the Career Lab, can enhance the development of 21st century skills. Those are, for example, cooperation, entrepreneurship, leadership, and digital skills. 21st century skills are increasingly important and need to be a part of every degree program.

### **1.3 Internationalization should never be a goal by itself**

Our university is becoming more and more international and tries to adapt its education to this development. That is good, internationalization is a way to improve education and research and can help to prepare students even better for their future. It can, however, never be a goal by itself. Lijst Calimero is against quantitative goals, like a minimum percentage of international students. At the same time, we are for projects of internationalization that contribute to a study environment in which Dutch and international students both feel at home. Last year we launched the 'Buddy Program' in cooperation with the ESN in order to introduce international students to the student life in Groningen.

### *Key points*

- **Internationalization is more than just offering degree programs in English.**  
Lijst Calimero is actively involved in projects that are focused on internationalization within the curriculum, such as the International Classroom (IC). The IC is a project that aims to achieve a well-functioning learning environment that includes people with diverse backgrounds. Working together with people that have a different backgrounds, perspectives, and ideas is a valuable addition to a degree program.
- **Only internationalize if it contributes to the quality of education.**  
Lijst Calimero thinks that internationalization always has to contribute positively to the quality of education, for example if the research field is also internationally oriented. For some studies internationalization is therefore self-evident while it is not for others. Attracting international students cannot be an argument for internationalization.
- **Include a clear language requirements in the basic qualifications of teachers.**  
The quality of education is endangered when teachers are not able to adequately teach a course in English. With the extensive internationalization policies of the UG, the English language proficiency of teachers is increasingly important.

Therefore, Lijst Calimero pleads for the inclusion of a minimum requirement of a C1 level in English in the basic qualifications for education.

- **The UG has to support study associations financially in the process of internationalization.** Study associations are more and more required to adapt to the internationalization policies of the University. The internationalization of a study association is costly and therefore financial support for study associations is necessary. Recently, the UG made a limited amount of money available for this purpose. Lijst Calimero pleads for structural financial support of study associations in the process of internationalization.
- **The quality of education at the UG cannot be threatened by the establishment of a branch campus in Yantai (UGY).** In the past year, Lijst Calimero repeatedly expressed their worries about the consequences that the establishment of UGY could have for the quality of education here. We are afraid that too many excellent teachers will depart to Yantai and that the degree programs cannot compensate that. Therefore, we do not support the current plans for Yantai. We will only give our consent to the plans if the UG can guarantee us to ensure the quality of education. You can read a more detailed statement on Yantai on our website.

#### 1.4 Academic preparation for the labour market

It is important that students are prepared for their future career on an academic level and that already during their studies they can get in touch with potential employers. In the National Student Survey the UG repeatedly had low scores on the employability aspect of degree programs. Nowadays a university degree is simply no guarantee for finding a job anymore and employers often expect relevant skills and experiences. The University is responsible to prepare its graduates for this.

##### *Key points*

- **The career minor needs to be open to all students.** Recently, Lijst Calimero handed in a proposal to make that possible. The career minor gives students the opportunity to do an internship for 15 ECTS and follow academic 'employability' courses for another 15 ECTS. In that way, students can acquire additional skills and prepare themselves for their future career during their student time.
- **All trainings offered by Career Services have to be free of charge for all UG students.** Lijst Calimero thinks that all the trainings offered by Career Services need to be free of charge for UG students. To prevent people from not showing up, a deposit system can be used, like they for example do at the Aclo.

#### 1.5 Maintaining the link between education and research

One of the main strengths of our university is the constant exchange between academic education and research. The University of Groningen differentiates itself by its excellent research that contributes to the quality of education. Additionally, the UG plays an important role in the society. The link between research and education should be cherished and maintained. The starting point of university degree program is the development of professional

and intellectual abilities on an academic level. Therefore, it is important for students to be confronted with academic research. Additionally, some of the students will stay connected to the University in their future as PhD-students and professors.

#### *Key points*

- **Creating a balance between fundamental and market-driven research.**  
It is extremely important that sufficient funding stays available for fundamental and independent research. In contrast to that, the share of externally financed, market-driven research at the UG has been increasing in the past years. At the moment, about two thirds of the research is funded externally. External funding is important, because without external funding a lot of the research could simply not be done anymore. It is, however, important that externally funded research meets certain requirements and always stays independent.
- **Research Masters need to be promoted better.**  
Our university especially distinguishes itself by its excellent Research Masters and we are very proud of that. Lijst Calimero thinks that the UG should focus on its strengths. Therefore, the UG should promote its Research Masters better and more extensively, especially towards its own Bachelor students.





## 2. Student-centered learning

### Structure: how do we study?

The structure of education has a large impact on its quality. Students should always be the center of learning. The research agenda of teachers should not determine the content of a degree program, but the individual needs and interest of students should. Students need to know how they can influence and decide upon what they will actually learn in their degree programs. Small-scaled and interactive education has been one of our main focus points for years. Within their degree program, students should be challenged to be critical and to develop themselves in the best way possible. Detailed feedback of teachers and peers is thereby important. Additionally, the UG needs to adapt to recent developments and should make use of digital possibilities in order to innovate its education.

#### 2.1 Focus on the individual student

The individual student should be in the center of education. Individual needs and strength should be the starting point, not what the UG has to offer. Students need to get sufficient room to develop themselves optimally within the curriculum. Small-scaled and interactive education make that possible. In small classrooms students can develop important professional and social skills, they can follow their own interest, and individual differences are embraced.

##### *Key points*

- **Funds from the basic students grants have to be invested into education.**  
The minister promised that funds available due to the abolishment of the Dutch basic student grants will be invested into the quality of education. Universities will receive those funds from 2018 onwards. Lijst Calimero agreed with the Board of the University that 70% of those funds will be spent on the recruitment of additional teachers. More teachers per student means smaller and more interactive classes, more attention for the individual student, and in general better learning outcomes. We are very happy that we could make this agreement. In the future, we will keep aiming for a structural release of additional funds for staff recruitment.
- **More student assistants in order to decrease group sizes.**  
Well-trained student assistants can often be used to support and guide students during tutorials. Hiring more student assistants is a cost-efficient way to decrease the size of tutorial groups. At the same time, students get the chance to develop themselves and their skills as a student assistant.

#### 2.2 Learning a course, not an exam

The individual student needs to be in the center of education and should be actively involved in the process of learning. Education should activate and stimulate students to be involved with the content of their curriculum. Passing a course should never be considered a goal by itself.

It should much rather be considered as a process in which students can develop themselves optimally.

#### *Key points*

- **Make use of various forms of examination.**  
Lijst Calimero thinks, that students should not only be evaluated based on the results of an exam at the end of a course. Their knowledge and skills need to be tested in various ways without increasing the study load for students. That way, it becomes possible to evaluate what students actually learned throughout a course. Lijst Calimero therefore pleads for a decrease in the amount of multiple choice exams.
- **Students need to receive more feedback.**  
Too often students do not receive any feedback on their work, even though they would learn a lot from it. Lijst Calimero wants, that students can receive continuous feedback. New digital media facilitates that.
- **Make more use of peer review.**  
Peer review means that students assess each other's work based on guidelines formulated by the teacher. In that way, students can receive more feedback on their work and learn more from the mistakes made by themselves or others. Digital media is one way to use more peer review.
- **Focus on continuous teaching.**  
The total of courses followed during a degree program should prepare students for their future. Therefore, one can never consider the courses separately, but one should consider them as a continuous teaching effort in which all courses together yield a meaningful diploma.

### **2.3 Smart application of new digital media**

Students themselves use new digital media a lot, while higher education is still lacking behind. Digitalization opens up possibilities for more interactive education, diverse examination, and continuous feedback. New digital media allow teachers to track the students' progress so that they can adapt to their individual skills and needs during lectures and tutorials. If digitalization happens too rapidly, however, it can cause problems, as well. Lijst Calimero therefore stresses that digitalization should be carefully considered so that it actually contributes to the quality of education.

#### *Key points*

- **All lectures have to be available online.**  
Students largely benefit from lectures that are available online. They can prepare better for exams and following extra courses or a second study is facilitated.
- **More digital exams.**  
Digital examination allows for more diverse examination in which students' knowledge and skills are tested in various ways. Lijst Calimero also thinks, that digital exams improve the quality of examination. Additionally, it can be more efficient for both teachers and students.

- **More use of personal digital assignments.**  
New digital media make it possible to tailor assignments to the individual student. Smart programs are able to track which parts of the course content a student already understands and where the student still needs to practice.

## 2.4 The interests of students must be heard

It is important that students' interests are heard and that they are taken seriously. Every year the faction of Lijst Calimero is committed to represent students. Lijst Calimero thinks that participation at the UG could use an impulse to improve in both, structural consultations and involvement in important dossiers.

### *Key points*

- **Students should be involved in the spending of funds available due to the abolishment of the basic student grants.** Due to the abolishment of the Dutch basic student grants the financial position of students has been weakened. The Education minister promised that the money that will be saved in that way will be invested into improving the quality of education. If the new minister keeps this promise, our university will receive a yearly amount of €6.8 mln from 2018 onwards. For Lijst Calimero it is important that students will have a say on how this money should be invested. Participation bodies need to be involved. For 2018, we were able to make proper arrangements with the Board of the University already and we will do our best to make sure it stays this way in the future.
- **It should be possible to look at course evaluations in advance.**  
Lijst Calimero thinks that students should be able to see the course evaluations of previous years before they start following a course. If students can see what is done with their feedback, they will be more willing to fill in course evaluations. Teachers will be forced to take feedback seriously and make changes, which in turn will improve the quality of education.
- **The position of program committees needs to be strengthened.**  
Due to an amending law, program committees will be official participation bodies from September 2017 onwards. Program committees will play a more important role in ensuring high quality education. This year, Lijst Calimero wrote a plan to make sure that program committees will be prepared adequately for their new tasks. This plan will now be adapted by the faculties. Also next year, Lijst Calimero will make sure that the position of program committees will be strengthened further so that they can contribute to high quality education at our university.
- **The right of consent on the branch campus in Yantai will be used to represent the interests of students.** In February 2017, Lijst Calimero together with the Personnel Faction was able to acquire the right of consent for the University Council and the faculty councils on the plan for UGY. Lijst Calimero will keep its critical position in the decision-making process. The branch campus can never threaten the quality of education at the UG or the quality of UG diplomas.

## 2.5 Better provision of information and less bureaucracy

Students often struggle with finding the right information, because information is scattered across various websites and the UG websites are not user-friendly. Additionally, it is often unclear how students can enroll for courses or request their Bachelor's diploma.

Lijst Calimero thinks it is about time that the UG invests in better provision of information.

### *Key points*

- **The University has to invest in a new website.**  
When students are looking for information on the UG website, they often google it. We think that is not acceptable. The UG needs to invest in a new, user-friendly website that combines all the online services. The often confusing Progress should be replaced by a user-friendly alternative in the new UG website.
- **Administrative procedures should be equal across faculties.**  
It happens more and more that students follow additional courses outside of their own study. That is good, but in practice students are often confronted with difficulties. In order to facilitate this trend, it is important that the administrative procedures are equal across faculties, so that students always know how to enroll and what to expect at a different faculty.
- **All University buildings should be mapped in Google Maps, including room numbers.**  
Students need to be able to find their way around UG building even though room indication can often be confusing. A trial with the Harmony building already proofed that adding buildings including room number to Google Maps can be helpful. Lijst Calimero wants to extend this to all university buildings and has recently handed in a proposal to make this happen.



## 3. A healthy study environment

### Conditions: where do we study?

Students can only study successfully in an environment in which challenges and relaxation are balanced. Students should be able to enjoy their student time. A lot of different factors have an influence, such as a pleasant study facilities, good support, tasty and healthy food, and sufficient exercise and relaxation. The University is responsible for facilitating these factors as they significantly contribute to the quality of education. Students can then choose to make use of the facilities in whichever way they please.

#### 3.1 More awareness for study stress and mental health

The social and study related stress and pressure that students experience is increasing. Unfortunately, students do not always ask for help, so that some students struggle while nobody notices. The University needs to take responsibility in this matter. The increased study pressure is partly caused by changes and policies imposed from above and has negative effects on the performance of students. Our university should therefore support its students with both making choices and solving issues. Additionally, the University should devote attention to mental health issues and inform students about the possibilities to get help.

##### *Key points*

- **The University should hire a Study Career Advisor.**  
Last month, Lijst Calimero handed in a proposal to recruit a Study Career Advisor. That person can support students when they have to make decisions that go beyond their degree program. Examples are interdisciplinary minors or combining studying and a board year. At the moment, the UG does not have such a supportive function yet.
- **The UG has to start an awareness campaign and devote attention to mental health problems among students.** Mental health problems are still a non-discussed issue. Starting an awareness campaign would make mental health problems discussable and asking for help more accepted.
- **More student counsellors.**  
The student counsellor is a confidant. Students can consult him or her with personal and financial issues, or with study-related questions that they cannot or do not want to solve with their study. At the moment, there are not sufficient student counsellors for all students even though the demand for appointments is rising.

#### 3.2 Sufficient room for self-development

Students need to have sufficient room to develop themselves during their time as a student. While the degree programs of the UG prepare students for their future, students also need to have sufficient room to develop themselves beyond their study and acquire important skills.

Therefore, Lijst Calimero thinks it is important that students get the possibility to be active in study, sport, cultural and student associations.

#### *Key points*

- **No lectures and exams in the evening.**  
A full-time degree program has a workload of 40 hours per week. It is therefore not necessary to schedule lectures and exams in the evening. Lijst Calimero wants the UG to make necessary investments to solve capacity problems so that students can choose themselves how they want to spend their evenings.
- **More graduation funds for study associations.**  
Students take their study seriously and study associations play an increasingly important role. In the past years, the graduation funds for study associations exceeded their maximum amount. Study associations are entitled to receive higher compensations and support as they organize more and more activities. Lijst Calimero thinks study associations have a direct impact on the development of students and that therefore more money should be made available to support them.

### **3.3 Handling the consequences of internationalization**

The University of Groningen has ambitious goals for their internationalization policies. As a consequence, the number of international students coming to Groningen increases every year. The UG is not only responsible for the effects that their internationalization policies have on education, but also for the effects outside of the University. The UG should take responsibility and make sure that new international students receive a warm welcome in Groningen and in the student community.

#### *Key points*

- **The UG must take responsibility in the housing issues of international students.**  
New international students are vulnerable and often struggle finding a decent room for a reasonable price. The UG should guide students in the process of finding a room by providing them with sufficient and adequate information.
- **Introduction periods should be more welcoming for international students.**  
The KEI-week should be made more attractive for international students and activities for international students should be organized in the time between the KEI-week and the start of the academic year so that international students feel more welcome in Groningen.
- **The Erasmus Student Network (ESN) Groningen needs to get their own building.**  
The ESN is one of the biggest student organizations in Groningen and plays an important role in the inclusion of international students. At the moment, the ESN does not have a building of their own and Lijst Calimero thinks that it is time to change this.

### 3.4 Pleasant study facilities and university buildings

Good study facilities and university buildings are essential for students. The University should not only be a place for lectures, but also a place where students can study and come together with fellow students and teachers.

#### *Key points*

- **Outsourcing the Food & Drinks Services should lead to better quality.**  
Last year, the University decided to outsource the Food & Drinks services. Lijst Calimero imposed four important requirements: the prices cannot increase, the product range should be more diverse, students need to be able to consume their own food and drinks in the university restaurants, and sustainability needs to be guaranteed. We will make sure that those requirements are met.
- **Sufficient and adequate study places.**  
In the past, Lijst Calimero successfully pleaded for denying Hanze students the access to the University Library during exam periods and for opening the Harmony building in the weekend. Also in the future, there need to be sufficient study places at all times.
- **More work places for groups.**  
Next to the silence areas in the University Library work places for groups are necessary. More work places for groups should be created so that students can work together on assignments and prepare for their exams.