

Your education, our priority

Election Programme 2020-2021



Lijst **Calimero**

Quality is a choice, so make yours

Election Program Lijst Calimero 2020-2021

As you may know, Lijst Calimero owes its name to the Italian cartoon bird 'Calimero'. Just like this bird, Lijst Calimero started out as the smallest party in the University Council. Now, 16 years on, Lijst Calimero is proud to represent the students of the UG as the largest party with substantive vision. Our vision is centred on enriching the time students spend at our university, such that they receive a challenging, thought-provoking, and world-class education. We believe that the university should not only provide the conditions for quality education, but also to equip students with the ability to flourish as individuals and members of society. This is what grounds our vision and it is what drives us to achieve results in the University Council. In striving to increase the value of your diploma and enhance your overall time as a student at the UG, we have devised a comprehensive Election Programme which focuses on three key themes:

How you study

Quality of education should be delivered to the students of the UG through a variety of different, stimulating ways. While large-scale lectures can serve an important function, we also believe that students benefit from working in smaller groups.

Lijst Calimero is constantly looking for ways to improve our digital educational interference and we believe that this can compliment small-scale education. Indeed, the small and digital classroom has become even more important now that our university adapts to the coronavirus pandemic.

Although this crisis poses many challenges to our academic community, we believe that the university can learn innovative ways to improve the quality of education as well as itself during this process.

What you study

We believe that the university should not only be a centre for knowledge, but also a place where students can learn skills and competences fit for life. In this sense, we believe that students want and need to be challenged.

The future is interdisciplinary and we believe that this kind of education should be more accessible. We believe there is a healthy balance to strike between fundamental and applied research, and that this should be reflected in degree programmes.

The UG is not just a place where you acquire knowledge about a certain subject and get a diploma afterwards. It goes far beyond that. The university is a place where you gain valuable skills not just by studying, but also by challenging yourself and others. This way

students gain interdisciplinary ways of thinking and different areas of expertise, which do not just lead to a diploma, but also to a successful future.

Where you study

The environment and conditions of where you study are fundamental to quality education. Lijst Calimero, therefore, places the well-being of students at the centre of our policy-making. We know that when students are supported physically, emotionally, and socially they perform better academically and can realise their full potential as individuals.

As the UG actively promotes internationalisation within study programmes, we believe it also has the responsibility to make sure international students feel at home in Groningen, and that they have ample supply of housing. We believe that the university can better its sustainability credentials whilst also improving the quality of our study facilities. Our university should strive to be more inclusive, and students who contribute to our student community extracurricularly in this regard should be recognised for their work. We believe that all backgrounds, nationalities, and identities are what makes our university the rich and vibrant community that it is.

We deliver a better UG. In order to represent your interests as a student we need your vote during this year's elections. **Your education, our priority.** Choose Lijst Calimero.

The 16th candidate faction of [Lijst Calimero](#)

Rozemarijn Gierkink, Freddy Cawthorne-Nugent, Eoin Raftery, Lisa van der Panne, Naila Loudini, Nirva Portugal, Arne Hefting & Dion Theodoridis

Table of contents

Theme 1: How we study	6
Small-scale education	6
More teaching staff	6
Different ways of assessment	6
Learning communities	7
The implications of Commissie van Rijn	7
Digitalisation	7
Digitised Testing	8
Lecture Recordings	8
Digital Exercises	8
Mobile app	9
Website of the UG	9
Internationalisation in education	9
English courses and programmes	9
Language Courses	10
Access to Course Material	10
Accessible education	10
Honours Programme	11
Application procedure	11
Pre-masters	11
Theme 2: What we study	12
Employability	12
Soft skills	12
Career Services	12
Integrate the Young Alumni Network (YAN)	13
Internships	13
Interdisciplinarity	13
Minors	14
Courses at different studies	14
Extracurricular classes	14
Role of research in education	14
Balance fundamental & market-driven research	15
Platform for research opportunities	15
Improved quality of education	15
Theme 3: Where we study	16
Student well-being	16

Well-being Week	16
More student psychologists	16
Mental health during pandemic Psychologists and Coronavirus	17
Support from study advisors	17
Reduction of study stress	17
Internationalisation	17
Housing	18
-Short Stay Housing	18
An international university	18
The sustainable university	19
Sustainability in education	19
Associations	19
Energy Officers and Energy Use	19
Green Zernike Campus	20
Extracurricular activities	20
Flexibility in education	21
Professionalisation student boards	21
An inclusive university	22
Associations	22
International students and language barriers	22
Integration	22
Other ways of communication	23
More information and better facilities	23
Good study facilities	23
Access to more workspaces	23
Catering	24
Campus Fryslân	24
Decision-making at the university	24
Selecting new board members	25
Documents in English	25
More conformity Programme Committees	25
National politics	25
The loan system	26
Coalitie Y	26

Theme 1: How we study

Small-scale education

For fifteen years, small-scale education has been one of the central priorities of Lijst Calimero. Smaller groups make for a more personal education, which focuses on the individual needs of each student. Students are stimulated to participate in discussions actively and to give feedback. The Coronavirus outbreak has also taught us many things about online education; this could be a tool for more small-scale education strategies. In some cases, e-learning might be a better way to teach and learn.

- **More teaching staff**

Lijst Calimero believes that it is valuable to hire more teachers and student assistants. Since 2018, five million euros has been made available to be spent on improving the student-staff ratio and lowering the workload of teachers. More money should be made available to keep improving the student-staff ratio at the UG, as this ensures small-scale education.

When employing student assistants, it is important to have student assistants who understand the subject. To maintain a stable and high quality of tutorials, Lijst Calimero wants student assistants to be offered a short training before starting the course. This ensures a consistent quality of teaching assistants and helps them gain more academic skills.

- **Different ways of assessment**

An exam is just one snapshot of a student's abilities. One student might excel at writing and doing exams, while another student might be better at presenting or doing research. Therefore, besides taking an exam at the end of a course, assessment of a student's knowledge and skills should be assessed through varying assessment methods. Examples of this are presentations, essays, research projects, or assessment through peer review. Diversifying the assessment methods in programmes will have a positive effect on students as this will more accurately show the level a student has attained.

- **Learning communities**

Learning Communities (LCs) can also be a way of implementing small scale education. We encourage more programmes to offer this and to look at existing projects or LCs during the formation.

Within a LC, students can work together in groups on one small research project. Through the small research projects, the students learn to combine the knowledge acquired from different subjects given in their programme and thus focus on interdisciplinarity within the programme. Smaller groups also make for more personalised education. The LCs can be part of the curriculum or a way for a student to do extracurricular activities, depending on the faculty. The quality of education should always have the priority.

- **The implications of *Commissie van Rijn***

Under the current national education policy, universities are already struggling with multiple problems. Movements such as *WOinActie* have been campaigning to stop government cuts on higher education and a return to the support level per student of the year 2000. Instead of solving these problems, the van Rijn Committee proposes measures that change the distribution of funds to universities depending on disciplines. Lijst Calimero believes that this will only add further strain to the situation. If the money is distributed according to the implications of the van Rijn Committee, the UG will structurally receive nine million euros less per year. This will decrease the quality of education at the UG and therefore we will fight to prevent this from being implemented.

Digitalisation

In an ever-evolving technological world, it is vital to assess how digitalisation can improve education, particularly as the world recovers from the coronavirus pandemic. Digitalisation is what will enable students to have the ability to complete their academic year in 2020.

While online classes and practicals might have been necessary during this period, we strongly oppose a shift towards a completely online setting for a full degree. Instead, we would advocate moving back to physical education as soon as this is allowed under the safety regulations. Physical education should be regained as and when the RIVM considers it to be safe. In the meantime, a hybrid situation should

be maintained. Online settings should also still be available after the pandemic for anyone who justifiably needs it e.g. students with disabilities. However, it is always important to keep striving for improvement. Therefore, Lijst Calimero will improve the quality of education through more innovative digital strategies.

- **Digitised Testing**

Due to Corona, digital testing has been expanded, and previously unused methods have been successfully applied. We believe that the successful methods that have been appreciated by students should be maintained after the pandemic has subsided. Furthermore, digital examinations should be made available in the future for students who can not attend the exam. Additionally, students should be able to do exams when they are abroad. It can also be useful for students who want to study abroad for one or two periods and still need to do an exam during that period.

- **Privacy Infringement**

Proctoring should not be used during these exams as this is a disproportionate infringement upon the students' privacy, as the proctors have access to, for instance, the students' webcams. Faculties should find ways to minimize cheating by looking for alternative solutions, such as doing open book exams, that do not invade your privacy.

- **Lecture Recordings**

Where possible, lectures should be recorded and made available for students online. How the lecturer decides to do this should be stated clearly within Ocasys and the course guide so that students know what they can expect. This way, lecturers are within their rights to only release the recordings for a couple of days after the lecture and/or a week before the exam, if they are concerned about attendance rates.

- **Digital Exercises**

Students should be able to test their knowledge and understanding of a course throughout the semester, not just at the end. The student portal would be an excellent place to offer personal digital exercises that convey students' progress with the course material. This would give students an estimation of how fully they comprehend the subject matter throughout the semester. Furthermore, it would help students to be more prepared for their exams.

- **Mobile app**

Lijst Calimero wants to run a pilot project of a mobile app of the university being available to students to improve student engagement. Students need to have access to a central handheld platform, which gives them access to the electronic learning environment, the floorplans of the UG-buildings that are now [available on Google Maps](#), student support services, and Career services.

- **Website of the UG**

The website of the University of Groningen contains a lot of vital information for both students and employees to look up. Nevertheless, the information can be hard to find. We want the UG to improve the website in two aspects, one being the way students can navigate through the website itself and the other being that when accessing the website from another page, for example Google, you can find what you are looking for.

Internationalisation in education

In a globalised world, students have to be prepared to work in an international and multicultural environment. Internationalisation has many aspects, and is always a means, never an end. Adapting and integrating different scholars, students and schools of thought in the curricula is a way of improving the quality of education. Courses should only change to English if this benefits the students and enhances the quality of their education, and not just because the university wants to attract more international students.

- **English courses and programmes**

Making English the teaching language of several courses and programmes attracts international students, which leads to a more diverse classroom. Experiencing your education in English is not a negative thing, as it can broaden your international point of view and prepare you for a global labour market. However, programmes should only be taught entirely in English if this is beneficial for the students of these programmes. Vice versa, if the quality of education of a programme or course is jeopardized by being taught in English, then it should not be.

Next to the quality of education, regard must be taken at the employability of the students after their study. For a study such as Dutch Language and Culture, the purpose of having an English study is perturbing. We believe that together with the Faculty Council and Programme Committee members, some studies should

be assessed as to whether they should be given in English. The Programme Committees can exercise their [right of consent](#) on this matter as of this year.

- **Language Courses**

Overall, there should be more free language courses in Dutch and English for students and teachers to fortify their language skills. These courses can help students increase their performance, so they can communicate better.

English courses need to be readily available to students so that students can participate better in any English courses. Not only students but also teaching staff should have access to English courses. They need to have the opportunity to improve their proficiency so that their language skills do not limit the quality of education. Professors that teach within international programmes should have a C1 level of English.

At the same time, more places should be available on B1 Dutch courses, as many international students want to start learning the language. The current Dutch Language courses fill up so quickly that students struggle to get a place.

Currently, UG students who wish to continue their Dutch from B1 onwards pay a student price of at least €385,-. There should be a subsidy system implemented for students who are motivated and want to proceed to learn Dutch after the B1 course.

- **Access to Course Material**

All documents, books, and exams should be in English for any international course. Often, courses that recently switched to English still have a lot of materials that are still in Dutch. This is a significant disadvantage for students, since it confuses both national and international students. Students should not be tested on material that is not available in the language that the course is being taught in. When a course is taught in a specific language all the documents should be in that language.

Accessible education

Every student should have the possibility to develop their potential to the fullest.

However, a lot of attention is paid to high performers, considering grades more valuable than motivation. This can hold back students in their development and achieving their goals. Therefore, we believe that options to improve students' performance should be as accessible as possible and motivation should always be leading.

- **Honours Programme**

Honours College is a valuable programme that allows motivated students to receive an interdisciplinary education, thus, having the potential to enrich and broaden students' mindsets. However, we believe that motivation is not only determined by grades and that all students should have the opportunity to apply for the Honours College. Therefore, greater accessibility to the application procedure will be a cornerstone of our policy towards Honours College.

Information about joining the Honours programme should be given multiple times to all students starting from the beginning of their first year so that every student can make the informed choice of applying for the Honours programme and take this opportunity to broaden their perspective. It should also be clarified what students can expect from this programme to help decrease the high dropout rates.

- **Application procedure**

The application procedure of universities has been a discussion for many years. Lijst Calimero strives to make this procedure more equitable. A matching procedure could have positive effects, as it is meant to make students more aware of their study choice, thus decreasing dropout rates. However, since it has been implemented, these effects have not been proven yet. Therefore the UG should do extensive research into the impact of matching procedures.

- **Pre-masters**

Pre-masters are a great way of changing your study direction, broadening your perspective, or flow through to a university master for students coming from the University of Applied Sciences. However, pre-masters are not always accessible to everyone, which takes away the option of gaining interdisciplinarity without having to do a full three-year bachelor again. Lijst Calimero wants the UG to look into the possibilities of changing study directions and how to make this easier. Finally, everyone coming from the University of Applied Sciences should have access to multiple pre-masters, since flowing through to a university master is an option that every student should have.

Theme 2: What we study

Employability

Knowledge alone does not allow you to orient yourself on the labour market. You need to develop yourself next to your studies and acquire other experiences. The primary goal of your programme is to gain knowledge, but your diploma is worth more if you can put it into practice. Furthermore, the corona epidemic will likely leave a lasting impression on the job market. Therefore the university has to facilitate this further development of her students, which is in favour of both students and university. Your study firstly needs to provide you with academic knowledge about your field, but also provide you with valuable experiences if you want to work outside academia.

- **Soft skills**

Currently, more and more people are getting university degrees. This means that a degree is not enough to stand out anymore. Soft skills such as leadership and communicative skills are what makes a person stand out when applying for a position. Therefore, more attention should be paid to opportunities for students to improve these skills, which can be achieved in multiple ways. The improvement of interdisciplinarity is one of these, as you acquire knowledge and skills from other disciplines. Doing a minor, participating in extracurricular activities, such as doing a board year in an association, or other opportunities like internships are excellent ways of picking up soft skills outside of the regular curriculum.

- **Career Services**

This year Lijst Calimero handed in a [memo](#) about the decentralisation of Career Services through career coordinators. By placing one Career Coordinator in contact with the Faculty Board, this coordinator could then work with and assist the study associations. This is advantageous as study associations are already focussed on faculty-specific topics that interest their student audience. In the past, students have been unaware of Career Services existence. This will be beneficial to students, as extra employability pointers will be provided by their association in conjunction with the career coordinator.

The differences between the faculties are considerable; thus in this way, attention can be paid to the specific needs of the different faculties. Furthermore

Lijst Calimero wants a general evaluation of Career Services, combined with an examination of the most efficient way this decentralisation could occur.

- **Integrate the Young Alumni Network (YAN)**

Currently, the UG has an alumni network that is occasionally used. However, it is not implemented enough and students generally are unaware of this project and its benefits. By integrating and promoting this network earlier on in students' degrees, students will be more familiar with it when they need to use it.

The UG has to involve more alumni from the work field in their curricula, to help you get acquainted with possible future professions and support in designing their study career. This can be done by asking alumni from the YAN to give guest lectures or seminars. This would also be a good way of promoting the YAN to students.

- **Internships**

Your studies provide you with a lot of knowledge and academic skills. However, if you want to get a job outside of academia, it is crucial that you also gain experience in the work field. Study programmes can give opportunities in achieving these experiences by offering internships in Master degree programmes where this is feasible. Currently, in some Bachelors, there is space to do an internship in the career minor, but this space is limited, and the minor does not always provide internships within your study area. This is why, besides having organisations offer them, the UG should implement the option for an internship within the programme. We are convinced that, when given the possibility, students will do more internships at companies and will vastly improve their skills outside of academia.

Interdisciplinarity

Throughout the entire university, there is a wide range of different programmes to suit all preferences. These programmes provide not just different kinds of knowledge, but also teach students diverse ways of thinking. This diversity the university provides also allows developing oneself in more areas than just their own. Lijst Calimero sees great value in the benefits of being taught different ways of thinking and believes that students should be given enough options to take part in courses from other studies. As such, we suggest the following points.

- **Minors**

Students have a wide range of possibilities in their minor space, and this is a key opportunity in a person's education to acquire not only knowledge but also skills from a different discipline than their own. This is why all students should be offered the possibility of doing a minor, be it within their faculty or elsewhere at the university. Besides this, existing minors should be evaluated, so that they can be improved where students find this necessary. Minors attract a broad range of students; therefore, optimising the quality of the minors will enrich the education of numerous students. Minors vastly improve students' soft skills, and we will strive for them to be offered and promoted accordingly.

- **Courses at different studies**

Students should be adequately informed about their possibilities of getting expertise in different areas. All study advisors should be able to help students choose courses from other studies if they have an interest in this. Next to this, a look should be taken into courses that can be valuable to every study. Courses such as statistics in research might be given to a larger extent, and perhaps more flexibly. This way, such courses could help more students throughout the university. When looking at possibilities of giving courses in such a manner, a close look should be taken towards their quality, so that this does not get significantly reduced.

- **Extracurricular classes**

Students should be offered the opportunity to receive an interdisciplinary education that goes beyond their regular specialism. The Honours College programme is in place. However, for many students, the required level of commitment may not be possible. Therefore, general extracurricular courses, which are free of charge and attendance based, should be organised and promoted to all students. The standard set up of a course, with exams and ECTS, does not apply. Instead, the organisation will be more like the studium generale, but with a course instead of one lecture.

Role of research in education

Research is one of the fundamentals of a university. Without researchers, universities would not function in their role to educate. Nowadays, innovation is a key factor, and this is why the role of research is essential and why it should evolve to keep pace. We want the UG to make the best of the available research and the opportunities this research offers.

- **Balance fundamental & market-driven research**

It is of great importance that there is a healthy balance between fundamental and market-driven research, as these two are interdependent and have very different driving forces. Fundamental research is done to improve knowledge and advance technology overall, whereas market-driven research mainly has a financial stimulus. We want to make sure that every faculty has the right balance by evaluating staff members' and students' views. Programme Committees should take an active role in this.

- **Platform for research opportunities**

We think that students should get a clear overview of research opportunities in their faculties. We suggest a pilot project where a module or a platform would be available on Nestor: here, all students would be able to search current research projects, including the requirements easily. We envisage that this will encourage research participation from students and more engagement from professors.

Improved quality of education

Quality agreements are a government project that allows universities to develop projects to increase the quality of education. The UG was the first to have its projects approved by the government. Lijst Calimero is very proud of this achievement and has occupied itself with guiding these projects within the faculties by keeping close contact with them. The faculty councils should be engaged in keeping track of the allocated funds. Our priority is to make sure that the allocated funds for quality agreements are spent on increased student-staff ratio, more personalised education, and more facilities for education. This will be done to ensure that the students from the UG can profit from a higher quality in their education and still benefit from the money they otherwise would have gotten through the study grants.

Theme 3: Where we study

Student well-being

More and more students are dealing with mental health challenges as a result of performance pressure, lacking a sense of belonging, financial stress, as well as struggling to adapt to university life. This is evident in the media, but also on demand for mental health support. Students often feel very overwhelmed and do not know who to turn to, so emphasizing the importance of mental well-being is essential.

The coronavirus has also had an enormous impact on the lives of the students at the UG. Everyone has been forced to stay home, which might cause a student's well-being to be at risk. It is vital to adapt to the current situation as soon as possible, to improve the mental health of the students during this current situation and in the upcoming years.

- **Well-being Week**

We think that the well-being week should remain as an annual event. At this moment, the initiative of the well-being week lies upon Lijst Calimero. We are currently working together with the Student Service Centre to look into the organisation of this event. In recent years, we cooperated very well with the SSC when organising the Well-being week and we would like to have even more support from the UG for this university-wide initiative.

- **More student psychologists**

Lijst Calimero was successful in lobbying for three more student psychologists to be hired by the SSC in January 2019. Even with the extra psychologists, the waiting list was monitored but appeared to be long still. As a solution, the student psychologists should develop a network with other psychological clinics in the city where they can refer students if there is overcapacity. This would be aimed at reducing waiting time for students, particularly in critical cases. Finally, more student psychologists should still be hired and it should also be clearer where the students can find the student psychologists.

- **Mental health and coronavirus**

With the coronavirus causing psychologist sessions to be online, we have noted a decline in waiting list times. However, we have also noticed an increase in appointment cancellations. These trends need to be investigated further. We believe that a healthy balance needs to be struck between online and physical psychological support services. To give students more avenues to psychological support into the future, we intend to measure the quality of online services and evaluate whether these online methods can be kept after the coronavirus subsides. Nevertheless, SSC is an essential service for students, and Lijst Calimero will encourage the SSC to prioritise its safe reopening for students who prefer to speak in person with a counsellor.

- **Support from study advisors**

Students should be more informed about the study advisors. Lijst Calimero believes that the study advisors should be equipped with the ability to detect when a student is having mental and personal issues, so they can direct them to either the student psychologist or SSC. Study advisors should engage more with one another to learn and apply the skills attained with their students for better improvement. For example, study advisors from all faculties can have a system of generated email that sends out an email at the beginning of each block, asking if students need anything and inform them about the SSC and other support resources. By repeating the message, it will be more apparent to students where they can come for help.

- **Reduction of study stress**

As has been reported in the [media](#), many students are dealing with burnout caused by a high amount of stress. The high amount of stress does not have a good influence on the well-being of the students. The majority of the stress that students feel comes from performance pressure or financial needs. Lijst Calimero will look for the root causes of high-stress levels, look for ways to reduce the stress put on students, and inform the UG about extra help. Students should be made more aware of where they can, for example, find support for fear of failure.

Internationalisation

Internationalisation can be defined as the process of ensuring conditions for diversity to flourish. However, structural policies need to be implemented to ensure

that these internationals feel welcome in Groningen. This is particularly urgent in relation to adequate housing for international students.

- **Housing**

Shortage of student housing is a critical problem that affects, in particular, international students on an annual basis. Lijst Calimero believes that the UG is best placed to solve this issue and should take a more proactive approach. Students should be more aware that there are agents that can help them with legal issues; this can be done by the UG advertising them more.

Therefore, we will fight to sustain a continuous conversation between the Board of the University and the municipality so that enough housing and adequate space will be made available for (new) international students.

- **Short Stay Contracts**

While the university continues to grow, the housing market is staying behind. Most international students have difficulty finding a place to live, as they have no prior knowledge of the housing market and sometimes experience discrimination within the private sector. Therefore the agreement the university has with the SSH to reserve rooms for international students is necessary in the short term to make sure they have a place to stay. However, these short-stay contracts list only all-inclusive prices, so they are not transparent. More importantly, it does not offer the right to go to the *Huurcommissie*.

Furthermore, their contract can be terminated too easily by the SSH, while these students should have the same rights as students with a normal contract. Therefore we want to move past short-stay contracts in the long term. The UG, Hanze, and the municipality should acknowledge their shared responsibility to improve the housing situation. With the current developments regarding short-stay housing within the municipality, the UG should take this opportunity to realize a long term solution, whereby it is also necessary to focus on building extra housing.

- **Reduce international marketing**

The university's marketing policy has been very successful at attracting international students in past years. However, this influx of students has not corresponded with the city's capacity to host them and has led to various housing crises. Lijst Calimero maintains that the university's marketing policy should be scaled back until Groningen has the structural capacity to accommodate these students. Furthermore, in light of the coronavirus and the

adverse impact that this is having on international student applications, we will monitor this issue on an evolving basis.

The sustainable university

The UG has been very active in its role regarding sustainability in the past years. However, sustainability should be one of the main topics of strategic planning, which can always be improved. Lijst Calimero will push for the UG to keep working on becoming more sustainable. Lijst Calimero will also make sure to collect ideas to support the university in its goals to reach the highest sustainability possible.

- **Sustainability in education**

As we learn on a daily basis about “a sustainable society”, we have to act in a way that does not compromise the future generation. The university should incentivize more on the perspective of reducing, reusing, and recycling so that students right now can become leading researchers and innovators in the sustainability area. Several [minors](#) considering the topic of sustainability are already implemented at the university. We want to take a look at how much these existing minors concern themselves and raise awareness concerning sustainability. One of these minors, Future Planet Innovation, was reviewed to have a strong sustainability aspect and should, therefore, be reinstated after it was cancelled in September 2019.

- **Associations & the Green Office**

Lijst Calimero supports the Green Office’s work for students and associations. Associations can apply for a subsidy and a label at the Green Office. However, smaller associations can often not make a significant difference in the UG's sustainability level, so it is harder for them to receive a high label. To stimulate these associations to become more sustainable, we want to make it easier for them to achieve a label as well. Furthermore, Lijst Calimero proposes a sustainability award for students or associations who bring an implementable idea regarding sustainability to the UG. This could be done through the Green Office, who can assess the best ideas and award them accordingly.

- **Energy Officers and Energy Use**

The UG has an infinite number of buildings, and each of these buildings naturally has energy output. In the aspect of sustainability, these energy outputs should be monitored and, where possible, reduced to achieve excellent energy levels. This could be done with the help of energy officers, who could not only monitor

this but also advise the university on policy regarding these energy outputs. The UG should strive for a [BREEAM-NL](#) level of at least 'excellent' and where possible 'outstanding'.

- **Sustainable catering**

We want to make catering as sustainable as possible. An example of this is in regard to the plastic cutlery that is currently used at the canteens of the UG. We want this to be changed to a more ecological and sustainable alternative.

The university should also look into more possibilities for vegetarian and vegan alternatives. This does not only provide more sustainable options to meals they currently have, but it also enables more students to buy meals at the university. Lijst Calimero, therefore, proposes that the Board of the University will discuss the caterer's sustainability and pose requirements for them.

- **Reducing waste**

The UG should replace regular bins with bins that allow the separation of paper, plastic, and other items. Next to this, the UG should stop printing the alumni magazine *Broerstraat 5*. Hundreds of student houses receive several copies of this magazine. Quite often, these are addressed to alumni who do not live in said houses anymore, and the magazines are thrown away. Instead, it would be much easier, cheaper, and sustainable to send this magazine to the alumni over the email.

- **Green Zernike Campus**

Last year, the UG and the municipality started working on the restructuring of the Zernikelaan. Lijst Calimero applauds the creation of the so-called *Green Promenade*. However, the Zernike campus is more than just the Zernikelaan. Lijst Calimero will ask the Executive Board of the University to collaborate with the municipality to make the other parts of the campus more green and a pleasant environment to study and work. This can be done through, for example, planting trees or creating picnic spots. A shared approach of these stakeholders is the only option.

Extracurricular activities

For many students in the Netherlands, taking part in any extracurricular activities is a popular pursuit and an essential aspect of student life. Groningen offers a wide array of associations for students to be part of. Lijst Calimero believes that students taking part in these associations vastly enhance their student experience. This is

why we would like to help students as much as possible when they want to participate in extracurricular activities. These activities could be educational, such as additional courses, but could also be for other self-development of students. Taking part in any association, be it sport, student, study or otherwise, helps students learn valuable skills, such as efficient communication and collective decision making. Indeed, taking your mind off studying from time to time is also beneficial for students' [wellbeing](#).

- **Flexibility in education**

Students who do not want to study next to their board year can sometimes do so without paying tuition fee. However, this is not always possible, and some board members still want to finish parts of their study during their board year. This can be difficult for these board members, because of compulsory classes they have or, for example, examinations that take place during board-related activities. Lijst Calimero believes that students who are taking part in extracurricular activities that benefit the university or society, in general, should be able to have some flexibility in their education. Some possibilities could be offered to these students. For example, to take exams at alternative time slots if they are prevented from taking it during the original time slot, or exemption from a part of the curriculum.

- **Professionalisation student boards**

Lijst Calimero handed in a memo to achieve more recognition for students that do a board year. These students are not only of great importance for the students at their associations but also pick up valuable soft skills in doing so. In this memo, Lijst Calimero proposes an extracurricular board program in which they are trained in different aspects of governance. This could be accompanied by ECTS and a certificate that shows they finished the program. In this way, students know better what they can gain from doing a board year and thus may be more eager to do so. Another great benefit to this program is that students can better display what they have learned during their time as board members when they are looking for jobs later in their life, thereby increasing their employability.

After doing a board year, students receive a certificate of participation to prove that they have done work outside of their curriculum. Right now, this certificate falls short of displaying what the students gain from doing a board year and therefore needs to be changed appropriately. We want to see a certificate that

shows that you participated and properly indicates how much time and effort you have put into a board year.

An inclusive university

The UG is a university that accommodates more than 30.000 students, each of them different. We must embrace the opportunities and benefits of an inclusive university. Lijst Calimero believes that it is essential to include everyone, regardless of personal differences. Policies should, therefore, be put in play to accommodate all the students.

- **Associations**

International students arrive in Groningen from many different countries. To help these students, especially non-European students, not to experience a huge culture shock, international associations are significant for integrating with a smooth transition. These associations function as notable venues for these students who may need support from those coming from a similar cultural background. Furthermore, they increase intercultural awareness and exchange between students of different nationalities, thus enriching the university's cultural environment.

The UG should be in contact with more of these international associations, such as the Indonesian, Korean, Vietnamese, Chinese, and African, as these are of great help for the students. CUOS funding should increase towards these associations, and they should also be provided with a shared working space. In addition, ESN should also have an office of its own in one of the university's buildings, as they are currently working in an office that can not deal with the amount of inflow of students.

- **Language barriers**

There is often a separation between Dutch and international students due to the language barrier. A solution to this language barrier is extra language courses. These entail both extra Dutch language courses for international students and additional English language courses for both foreign and Dutch students, which mainly focus on speaking skills.

- **Integration**

All study advisors, especially those who have many international students in the specific study, should be trained with intercultural competences towards a

broader spectrum of issues, as these students can experience the university differently than Dutch students. The university has to encourage faculties to do an introductory workshop for students on the university system, study associations, exams, and whom to contact.

- **Other ways of communication**

Audiobooks have to be available for students who have difficulties with seeing or reading to make education on a university level more accessible. In addition, Lijst Calimero believes that it is valuable to arrange an extra course on sign language. This is an idea that we have proposed, and we want to see results from it. A sign interpreter should be present at every official UG event, as the opening of the academic year. Moreover, this can be developed into a linguistic and language acquisition department in the future.

- **More information and better facilities**

Calimero has always been a strong voice for students with a performance disability. As the numbers of student satisfaction were dropping and the call for notably better information provision became louder, in 2018, a [new policy plan](#) regarding these students was written. In this plan, we see a lot of our ideas back, such as more attention for psychological pressure, stress and international students, better information provision, and professionalization of staff members. This new plan is being implemented now, and the first evaluation of this will happen in 2021, which we will approach with a critical eye. Finally, we will monitor this implementation closely and see that this happens right.

Good study facilities

Both where we study and how we study has a great influence on the quality of education itself. These two factors can and should be maintained and improved through good study facilities. This is why the UG should take an active role in the service of these facilities.

- **Access to more workspaces**

Every student should be able to find a space to study, especially during exam periods. However, study places have been scarce before and due to COVID-19 they'll be even more so. Of course it is difficult to create new spaces for students to revise, but we believe there lay some solutions in the spaces that are already being used. We would like to propose a pilot project to use existing space at the UB more efficiently by replacing bookshelves into workspaces where applicable.

- **Information on available workspaces**

Students should have more information on whether or not and which workspaces are available. The UG already offers certain classrooms for students to use for studying during exam periods, but a lot of students are not aware of this. Students should be able to see the availability of rooms through Nestor. Due to COVID-19, it's now more important than ever to look at the ways in which students can use the workspaces again and information about these can be given. In an [interview with RTV Noord](#) and an [article in the Ukrant](#), Lijst Calimero addressed safe options to take the study rooms into use again, so that you can use these workspaces again without harm.

- **Catering**

Two years ago, Lijst Calimero evaluated students about the catering of the UG. This evaluation made it clear that students, in general, found the price-quality ratio to be unjustifiable. Another point from the assessment was that there are not enough vegetarian and vegan options in the canteens and that the limited existing options are too expensive. Lijst Calimero strongly agrees with these points and believes the UG should have requirements that a caterer should meet. Because the current caterer contract is running to an end, we believe this is an excellent point in time to create these requirements and include students in this process as much as possible. If the current caterer does not meet these requirements, we propose looking for alternative caterers that are more in line with students' interests and the policy of the UG.

- **Campus Fryslân**

There is a considerable distance between Campus Fryslân in Leeuwarden and the other UG buildings in Groningen. This can create difficulties for its students to make use of the facilities the UG provides, i.e., the Student Service Centre. The UG should, therefore, secure access to all facilities easier for the students of Campus Fryslân, as every UG student has the right to adequate facilities. Lijst Calimero proposes to partly compensate travel expenses of students of Campus Fryslân who want to make use of these facilities.

Decision-making at the university

Central to the University Council is advising the Board of the University on policies and decision-making. Lijst Calimero critically engages decisions of the Board and strives to craft progressive, constructive policies. We achieve this by actively

speaking to students and their representatives, such as the faculty councils and study associations. In doing so, students are not only well informed about developments within the university but also voice their opinions through us. We believe that such a bottom-up approach is vital to informed, democratic decision-making at UG.

- **Selecting new board members**

The selection of a board member for the university or the faculty boards is done by the *Application Committee (Benoemings Advies Commissie)*. In the case of the faculty boards, the student member is currently chosen by the Faculty Board. As Faculty Board members are not elected, they should not select the student representative for the committee. The elected Faculty Council members are the ones that should choose the student representative, as the students themselves have voted for these representatives.

- **Documents in English**

Now that more international students and staff members are joining the council, the documents regarding decision making should be available as much as possible in both Dutch and English. This is a significant step and takes time, but our university is becoming more international, so it is of great importance that all levels of organisation evolve accordingly.

- **Training day student representatives**

Student representation is essential to the monitoring of the quality of your education. Lijst Calimero wants to ensure greater conformity between the different Program Committees and Faculty Councils' approaches to improving the quality of their work. Therefore Lijst Calimero has proposed to organize a training day for all of our programme committees, faculty councils, and the university council. This training day will provide student representatives with the necessary skills to successfully co-govern their program, faculty, or the university.

National politics

On the 17th of March 2021, the national elections will be held. After this a new government will be formed. It is important for students that education is high on the mandate for the new coalition, even in the wake of a pandemic. Thus, we will actively lobby with the [Interstedelijk Studenten Overleg](#), the advocate of all students

in the Netherlands, on crucial topics such as small-scale education and student well-being, as they speak to the government directly.

- **The loan system**

Since 2015, a new system of student finance has been implemented; the social loan system. The idea behind this was that the money that would be saved by not giving students a 'basisbeurs', a monthly loan, would be invested in education. However, these investments are lacking. It turns out that the current system is stressing the quality of education. Students feel more pressured to finish their studies in time to keep their debt low, so undertake fewer extracurricular activities, live with their parents longer, and, most importantly, start working with a considerable debt. Because this restrains the development of students, Lijst Calimero actively supports the campaign [#nietmijnschuld](#). This campaign roots for the reintroduction of a form of the *basisbeurs*, compensation for the students in the current system and the assurance that this will not be paid from the education budget.

- **Coalitie Y**

The pressure to finish your studies quickly is ever increasing. This combined with uncertainties about a future job and housing is hitting students all over the country. This is why [Coalitie-Y](#) has been created; to give young people a stronger voice in national politics so that they are heard within the debates. Because Coalitie-Y has the interests of youngsters, with them also students, at heart, we support them to get national policies that solve problems that are currently experienced by students.

Vote now via vote.rug.nl



Lijst **Calimero**