



Lijst **Calimero**

Your Education. Your Future. **Our Priority.**



Election Programme '21/'22

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Election Programme Lijst Calimero 2021-2022

For the last 16 years, Lijst Calimero has represented the students of the University of Groningen (UG) and has been committed to ensuring high quality education. What started as the smallest party in the University Council has now become the largest party with substantive vision. This vision is centered around providing students with an interesting, challenging and thought-provoking education while also helping them flourish as members of the society. However, we are aware that throughout these difficult times, students are experiencing different obstacles. This motivates us even further to achieve more results in the University Council because every student at the UG should receive the proper skills and a valuable diploma, no matter the circumstances. Given that we have many ideas to improve the quality of education, we decided to divide our comprehensive Election Programme in three parts:

How we study

We believe that there are various ways through which the UG can deliver qualitative education to its students. Such ways should include small-scale education, accessibility, digitalisation and internationalization in education. By incorporating regular constructive feedback, interaction and smaller working groups we can achieve small-scale education which offers more benefits than large-scale education. We also believe that the UG should offer all of its students a qualitative education that is in the interest of their future careers by testing their knowledge in different ways than one final exam.

Our university has to adapt to an ever-changing world. Digitalisation and internationalization are two of the elements which can further leverage the quality of education, especially during the corona crisis. We are aware that the current crisis brought with it many challenges, but we believe that the UG will find innovative ways to keep improving the quality of the education throughout these times.

Where we study

The second chapter of our Election Programme focuses on **where you study**. In this chapter, your study environment plays a vital role. Health, happiness and productivity for students are important and we see the mental well-being of students and teachers as a priority during these tough times. For this purpose, Lijst Calimero will lobby the UG to hire more student psychologists to shorten the waiting list for students in need. In the past years, we've done so with success, but despite the improvements the waiting lists are still too long. Also the UG should take responsibility in showing students where they can find mental support by setting up an online support network or a university wide crisis team for students. Furthermore, the UG is for every student, regardless of their background, and it should thus make initiatives to accommodate different cultures in academia. Finally, the UG has to continue taking its responsibility to make the University more sustainable. This can be achieved by proposing policy that allows every student to make meaningful contributions through their actions in solving the climate crisis.

What we study

High quality education makes our diploma more valuable. Therefore, it has always been a top priority for Lijst Calimero. We remain laser-focused on changing the UG in ways that drastically improve the quality of education. Thus, in our final chapter, what you study, we expand on our vision on education. Though the quality of education can improve through digital innovations, physical education has no replacement. Thus, we try to guide the UG to make sure physical lectures can be assured without compromising the safety of students and staff. Additionally, we conclude that the usage of lecture recordings should not be discarded post-pandemic. Furthermore, Lijst Calimero approaches interdisciplinarity as useful for most students. Hence, we want the UG to look into the possibilities for students to challenge themselves outside of their own discipline. Making the Honours programme and Pre-Masters more accessible can help students gain experience in multiple disciplines without doing a three years bachelors again. Finally, in order for students to truly benefit from above mentioned changes, will continue to stress the importance of small-scale education and a reduction of the student/staff ratio.

All in all, there are many ways in which we think we can help improve the UG, all of which are laid out in this Election programme. Through this document, we hope to give you, the student, a clear understanding of what it is we stand for and why we believe we are well-positioned to help improve your experience at the UG. Because in the end, you are the only reason for Lijst Calimero's existence, and without you, there would be no UG to improve. Therefore, we do everything in our power to make true on the promise that is central to our motto...

...Your Education. Your Future. **Our priority.** Choose **Lijst Calimero**

The **17th** candidate faction of **Lijst Calimero**

Casper Dam, Andra Buciu, Ashish Yadav, Michail Kokkorakis, Hidde van der Weg

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Theme 1: How we study

Small-scale education

The quality of your education is the core focus of Lijst Calimero. Education is all about transferring knowledge and skills, and we believe this is done best on a small scale. Teachers can give more attention to their students if classes are smaller and it allows for more interaction. Interaction and discussion can teach students to formulate opinions and to think from different perspectives.

Reduction of workload for teachers

The contact between teachers and students is very important. Teachers should be able to help students and give them feedback and explanations when it is needed. For example, teachers often have too little time to help students with their theses, check exams or prepare lectures and tutorials. Teachers having a workload that is too high is harmful to both teachers and students. In 2018, Lijst Calimero ensured that 5 million euros were made available structurally to lower the workload of teachers and to improve the student-staff ratio. However, teachers are still overworked and student-staff ratios still are not how they should be. This year we approved plans for €25.8 million to be spent directly on hiring more staff & student assistants over the next five years. The UG should start improving the workload for teachers as soon as possible, and we will closely monitor this process and advocate for more expenditure, should these funds prove insufficient.

Learning communities

Learning communities (LCs) teach students to apply knowledge and work together, and enable them to obtain skills in addition to their regular programmes. LCs focus on interdisciplinarity and have coverage of contemporary problems and can, therefore, increase a student's employability. To ensure that there is an environment of collaboration and participation, the LCs should be small in scale. Setting up LCs at more faculties is a good way of offering more small-scale education. Especially big faculties could profit from implementing LCs, as they provide a small-scale learning environment that big faculties could miss. The UG should ensure that there are enough LCs accessible to international students.

Different methods of assessment

Students should not see their assessment limited to a multiple-choice exam at the end of their course. They do not stimulate students to take the most out of their course. Lijst Calimero supports the implementation of a diversified variety of testing. In addition to midterms and final exams, essays, research projects, weekly quizzes, oral exams and presentations are all useful in tracking a student's progress. New methods of testing that have been implemented during corona should be used permanently if they are advantageous. For example, this year students were asked to write an essay in 48 hours. This method of assessment tests students on how they apply the knowledge, which will still be useful after corona. When different forms of testing are used, they should be weighed accordingly so that students are rewarded for putting in an effort. If the end term still makes up 80 percent of the final grade, the assessment is not diversified.

Switch back to on-campus education

Since universities are allowed to start up on-campus education again, the UG should have as much on-campus education as possible. On-campus education often has advantages that are missed in online education. Video lessons hold back the interaction between students and teachers. Students often do not put on their webcams when it is not mandatory, so teachers end up talking to black screens. When education is on-campus teachers can "read the room", to see if their message is well-received. These problems do not only impact teachers, because the quality of education decreases for students. Lecture recordings should still be made when on-campus education becomes possible again, as they are very convenient for students.

Accessible education

High quality education should not be a privilege of few, but a right for everyone. Students' talents should come to fruition, and they should be able to follow a path that suits them best. Therefore, we believe that options for students to improve their performance should be as accessible as possible.

Lowering the Binding Study Advice (BSA)

For years, the BSA has been too strict, causing problems for students, such as stress due to the pressure to perform, but also hindering those who work or function as caretakers next to their studies from getting further in their studies. This year, Lijst Calimero has collected 500 letters from students about the problems that the BSA caused them. With these letters we have been able to push the UG to lower the BSA with 10 points. If the BSA is kept, we want the lowered version to remain in place, as it has shown to have great effects on both accessibility and student mental health. Finally, Lijst Calimero wants a university-wide and easily understandable policy for when you can get a lowered personal BSA, removing differences between faculties and studies, and making it easier to get a lowered BSA.

Honours programme

The Honours College is a valuable programme that allows motivated students to receive an interdisciplinary education, and it has 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 in the application procedure will be a cornerstone of our policy towards the Honours College. Information about joining the Honours programme should be given multiple times to all students throughout their first year at the University so that every student is aware of the opportunity to follow the programme. Making the Honours College more flexible can make it more accessible to students who struggle to fit it into their own schedules. For example, lecture recordings should be offered for students who miss lectures. In order to decrease the high dropout rates, students should also be informed better so that they are more aware of what to expect of this programme.

Pre-masters

Pre-masters open up a lot of opportunities for students. University students who want to take a different direction after their bachelor, for example arts students who want to do a master at the FEB, can profit from the availability of a wide range of pre-masters. 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 giving students

more choice in their study directions and how to make this easier, where this is appropriate.

Information for prospective students

Many students choose a bachelor with courses that they have not had in high school, so it is quite a leap into the dark. The UG offers bachelors and masters that are quite specialised and the courses stay close to the topic of the bachelor. This makes it even more important that students get a clear picture of the study they are about to choose. Dropout rates are high, so many students don't find a study they like at their first choice. Lijst Calimero wants the UG to research how they can make sure that more students find their study at first choice.

Selective masters

Many jobs only accept applicants with a master's degree, so following a master is a big necessity for students. However, more masters are becoming selective and only a fixed amount of students can follow them each year. This will result in many bachelor graduates not being able to do the master they want to do and it puts them in a bad situation. Making a master selective should be a last resort and it should only be done when capacity problems threaten the quality of education.

Digitalisation

In the past year, most students and teachers have experienced what it is like to study without ever seeing the inside of a classroom. This has made many realise how important physical education really is, which is why we want to make sure that people are able to get back into the classroom as soon as possible. Obviously, the safety of students and staff remains important while doing so. On the other hand, the past year has caused many positive innovations which show that digitalisation can also provide many opportunities. While doing everything we can to facilitate a return to the classroom, we believe that digital best practices should be retained. Therefore, Lijst Calimero will aim at improving education by balancing the best of the digital world with physical education.

Digital Assessments

The necessity of digital testing during the past year has demonstrated that there are many successful ways of taking tests online. We believe that methods that are appreciated by students should be kept, even after the pandemic. This would open the door to students being able to participate in assessments while not physically present at the University, for example because they are studying abroad or because they are ill or disabled.

Digital Exercises

During the past year, many teachers have used digital exercises to ensure that students come to class well-prepared. This has helped stimulate participation during seminars, and it helps students to test their knowledge throughout the block, lowering the amount of stress during exam weeks. We believe that best practices, such as the use of discussion boards and peer reviews, should be shared more between faculties.

Preventing Cheating, Respecting Privacy

Proctoring is an extreme method to prevent cheating, and it should not be used because it does not respect students' privacy. Prevention should take the form of alternative ways of testing, which should focus on analytical skills rather than plain knowledge. This should help prevent cheating because analytical skills are more difficult to transfer than, for example, multiple choice answers. Open book exams are a good example of this principle in practice. To ensure that not every professor has to reinvent the wheel, best practices should be shared between faculties and universities.

Lecture Recordings

Students should not miss valuable information just because they are ill or otherwise impeded from attending class. Therefore, lectures and seminars should be recorded where possible. It is up to the lecturer to decide how to do this, but it should be clear for students what they can expect. This could be done through Ocasys and course guides. If teachers are worried about attendance rates, they could limit the amount of time that recordings are available or set attendance requirements for the course.

Improving Nestor

A new version of Nestor is currently being developed. It is imperative that this website is easier to navigate than the current version is. The website should be easy to use on mobile devices as well, as this dramatically increases accessibility. Furthermore, the website should be upgraded with features that help students navigate both online and in real life. Examples of this are maps of university buildings and study schedules readily available on the front page. Other UG websites such as Ocasys or Progress should either be integrated into the new Nestor or they should be made more easily accessible with mobile devices.

Keeping Staff Up to Date

Some teachers have struggled to keep up with digital developments, which has impacted the quality of seminars and lectures for many students. To make sure that the quality of fine educators does not go wasted through a lack of understanding of digital environments, teaching assistants and embedded experts have been appointed until the end of 2021. Since it seems likely that the UG will make use of different forms of online education after that as well, we want to make sure that the use of teaching assistants and embedded experts for digital education will continue.

Internationalization in education

In a globalised world, students should be fully prepared and therefore able to interact in an international and multicultural environment. Creating specific courses that are taught in English enriches the quality of education and adds diverse perspectives to the learning process. Therefore, well-structured and well-taught courses offered in English already attract a plethora of foreign students. However, internationalising all courses should not be a pressing need and the language of a course should only be changed if this expands the career opportunities of students.

English-taught courses

By providing courses in English, students from all over the world are able to be part of our university. Taking part in a course taught in English not only creates a diverse setting, but it also equips students with all

essential knowledge to work and excel in an international environment. Nonetheless, pushing to translate all courses in English should not be the point of focus. If the quality of education is going to be increased by internationalising a course, the University should not hesitate to do so. On the flip side, we should avoid such initiatives if the motivation to translate a course to English is purely based on attracting more international students.

As many electives as possible should be offered in both Dutch and English languages. As said before, not all courses should be offered in English but there has to be a consistency so that international students are not excluded from the learning process. This change would have a positive effect promoting inclusivity and further increasing the quality of education.

Next to the quality of education, regard must be taken to the employability of the students after their study. For a study such as Dutch Language and Culture, the transformation of the course in English would not add much value to the career opportunities of students. 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

The language centre should offer more free language courses in both Dutch and English for students and teachers to further improve their language skills. Such courses can help students better their communication skills, so they can increase their performance. In cases where learning difficulties arise due to a problem with the English language, courses need to be readily available. Teaching staff might also need to follow English courses if their linguistic competency has a negative effect on the quality of education. Non-Dutch applicants are required to achieve a B2/C1 (CEFR) level, depending on the specific entry requirements, in order to partake in a course taught in Dutch. The same rule should apply for professors that teach within international programmes.

Besides, more places should be available on the B1 level Dutch courses. The current Dutch Language courses fill up so quickly that students

struggle to get a place and this can lead to study delay in some courses. On top of that, the number of attempts to pass each level should be increased, because not every student is capable of achieving the level of interest in time. Currently, UG students who wish to continue their Dutch up to a B1 level pay a student price of €385,-. In addition, for the levels higher than B1 the prices should be justified and standardised and not reach €479,60 purely based on the level's difficulty. There should be a subsidy system implemented for students who are motivated and want to proceed to learn Dutch after the B1 course and for those who are required to achieve a higher level to proceed with their study. Such changes are crucial for adequate integration and inclusion of international students in Groningen.

Access to Course Material

Courses that are offered in English language should have all documents, books, and exams translated. Often, courses that recently switched to English still have a lot of materials that are still in Dutch. This means that international students need to translate everything themselves, which does not only cost a lot of extra time, but can also lead to misunderstanding the course material due to errors in the translation. Students following the aforementioned courses should not be tested on material that is not available in the English. When a course is taught in a specific language all the documents and exams should be in that language.

Theme 2: Where we study

Student well-being

Studying is not just about passing your courses and getting your degree. While studying in Groningen, students should be able to make friends, build up professional networks, gain experience from extracurricular activities and feel safe and happy while doing so. Unfortunately, the BSA and the loan system have put a lot of pressure on students to complete their studies quickly and leave them little room for error. With the coronavirus pandemic, a lot of activities either go online or vanish completely, causing many students to suffer from mental health issues. We do not know what the long-term effects of the corona crisis will be. The UG should take an active stance in fighting mental health issues, for the remainder of the corona crisis and after.

More student psychologists

Student psychologists are essential for helping students that are in need of support. That is why Lijst Calimero lobbied for three extra student psychologists in 2019 and in 2021 another psychologist was added. Still, waiting lists are long and students who need help do not receive it as soon as they should. Lijst Calimero wants to make sure that students receive the support they need when they need it. More student psychologists should be hired to shorten waiting lists. Students should be made more aware of their options when it comes to getting support.

Mental health first aid

Lijst Calimero believes that setting up a network of mental health first aid (MHFA) would be a beneficial addition to the support network for students. MHFA is a certified course that was developed in Australia that is now used in 15 countries. The UG can hire people who graduated from the course. They can then help students by listening, responding and reassuring. They can refer students to possible solutions like therapy, support groups, self-help books and websites. Among others, it is used by the [Imperial College of London](#), where it has been a success. We want the UG to look into the possibility of starting this network at its campuses.

Well-being weeks

The well-being weeks should remain an annual event. Lijst Calimero has initiated this event and organises it together with the Student Service Centre of the UG and the SKLO. During this event, students can take part in a variety of interactive workshops focused on mental well-being. In recent years, we have cooperated very well with the Student Support Centre. After the previous well-being weeks, we have made a plan for the next few years and hopefully the UG will take charge of this event more. To be useful to as many students as possible, we want to raise more awareness of the existence of this event.

Peer support training

Students often recognise each other's issues and talking to peers is an accessible way of getting help. Therefore, Lijst Calimero wants the UG to look into setting up a peer support programme. The University of Oxford has set up such a programme, where students can take 24 hours of training on how to support their peers. The training focuses on crisis management and prevention, communication styles, listening, giving advice and referral options. Having trained students across faculties and years can provide students with an opportunity for support.

Online support network

Lijst Calimero advocates for the UG to set up an online support network for students, where they can anonymously help each other. Students often understand each other's struggles and anonymously talking to peers is an accessible option for those afraid to seek other help. For as long as corona persists, a platform like this can help students that miss in-person support.

Internationalisation

Internationalisation is defined as the process through which international students who come to study in Groningen are safely integrated within the Dutch culture and community. This process is also considered as a way of ensuring conditions for diversity to flourish. The University of Groningen is a highly international university that grows rapidly in international student numbers every year. However, in order for international students to feel welcome and at ease in Groningen, structural policies need to be implemented. Moreover, the UG needs to

increase the transparency of its marketing aimed at international students in terms of what they can expect, whether it is the housing crisis, the struggles regarding integration within the Dutch culture, or job opportunities after graduation.

Reduce international marketing

In the past years, the marketing policy of the University of Groningen has been very successful at attracting international students from all around the globe. However, this influx of students has not necessarily corresponded with the city's capacity to host them and has led to various housing crises. Currently, given the COVID-19 restrictions, most international students are staying in their home country until physical education returns. For those reasons, housing capacity has not been strained this year. However, with the planned return to physical education next academic year, in addition to a significant uptick in prospective student applications, Lijst Calimero is seriously concerned about the scale of the housing crisis that may hit in September. For example, it was communicated in March that there was a 25% increase in applications compared to last year. In that regard, the UG is already aiming at a new way of marketing which is focused less on attracting students and more on fair information provision. Thus, if the new way of marketing is implemented this year we will monitor it. Otherwise, we will encourage the UG to introduce it as soon as possible or come up with a new initiative based on the situation of those times.

Housing

Yearly, the shortage of student housing in Groningen represents a critical problem that affects, in particular, international students. However, 70.000 new houses will be built in Groningen. Lijst Calimero will investigate whether these houses are also available for incoming students and what conditions there are for them, given that it is the UG's responsibility to provide enough emergency housing for its students. Moreover, we believe that the UG is one of the key actors that is able to help solve the issue regarding housing. Lijst Calimero thinks that the UG does not take enough responsibility when it comes to housing and we want to change that. One aspect that the University should consider is increasing the quantity of advertisement of agents (such as private companies or parties like the GSb that help with legal issues or housing officers to current or

prospective international students. Thus, throughout this year, Lijst Calimero will not only 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), but also encourage the UG to speak more to its students about the housing situation and the people that they can contact in case of need.

Short Stay Contracts

While the University continues to welcome more international students with each passing year, the housing market continues to stay behind. Most international students coming to study in Groningen have difficulty finding a place to live, and they end up getting short-stay contracts. Unfortunately, these contracts are not transparent enough. Due to their nature, the SSH can find a lot of easy ways to terminate them and the students end up not having the same rights as students with normal contracts. Recently, a new agreement has been signed between the UG, Hanze, and the municipality which improved the short-stay contracts problem in such a way that there is more flexibility for international students. However, the major problems (e.g. the inability to have a rent check) still remained, which meant not changing the problem as much as it may seem. Thus, Lijst Calimero wants to move past short-stay contracts in the long term and make the University of Groningen, the Hanze University of Applied Sciences, and the municipality acknowledge their shared responsibility to improve the housing situation by either having more long-term contracts or making the short stay contracts more transparent.

The sustainable university

In the past years, the UG has kept sustainability on the agenda by supporting, connecting and inspiring both staff and students via its Green Office. However, sustainability should be one of the main goals of the UG and it can be strongly integrated from the faculties as a starting point of activities. Lijst Calimero will exert sustained efforts to push the UG to draw up more sustainable policies not only in education and research, but also in business operations like bank transfers, renovation and new construction of projects. Moreover, we have a concept of a working group on sustainability to brainstorm new

ideas from students' perspectives. In connections with the Green Office team, Lijst Calimero aims to pitch the ideas collected from its working group meetings. This way, it supports the University to be more sustainable and advance in sustainability rankings in order to catch up with the most sustainable national research institutions.

Sustainability in education

Our actions towards forming “a sustainable society” can potentially have a great impact on future generations for availability of the resources. The University should focus to work on the three core pillars of sustainability: People, Planet and Performance, to create a sustainable society whilst our students can become leading researchers and innovators in the sustainability area. Several courses related to sustainability are already offered at the University. Lijst Calimero promotes the integration of sustainability courses in all faculties. Moreover, introducing a minor of 15/30ECTS in Sustainable Developments pushes the academic integrity towards a sustainable society. The memo for a sustainability minor is planned to be laid down next year. The University minors in Energy and in Future Planet and Innovation were reviewed and they were found to have a strong sustainability aspect. However, these two minors have a capacity constraint of 50 students each, despite a larger number of interested students last year. Thus, the UG should address this capacity issue of such highly demanded minors and work to expand them.

Sustainability Sharing platform

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. Together with the Green Office, we created a Sustainability Sharing Platform, where all study associations and every UG student can stimulate best practices and share experiences related to sustainability. The associations can use this tool when they have to fill in the checklist from the Green Office for a sustainability label. However, we will further work with the Green Office to promote this platform adequately as we want more students and associations to be aware and use it actively. Furthermore, Lijst Calimero proposes a sustainability award for students or associations who come up with ways to make the UG more sustainable.

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 numerous buildings, and each of these buildings consumes a significant amount of energy. Currently, the UG uses the environmental performance indicators to measure the amount of waste created, and the amounts of power used and water used, per square metre floor surface of the buildings. By doing this, the staff in charge of managing the sustainability of the buildings can monitor these variables and aim to reduce them. For example, Lijst Calimero advocates that the presence of students and staff in the buildings is monitored. When there is nobody in the buildings, all non-essential power should be turned off so as to save energy. By doing small things like this, we believe that the UG will be able to achieve [BREEAM-NL](#) levels of at least “excellent” for its buildings.

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 UG should add the option of ceramic cups in the University restaurants for coffee and tea. The University should also look into more possibilities for vegetarian and vegan alternatives, as the Delft University of Technology has successfully done this year. 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, pushed the board to discuss the caterer’s sustainability and pose requirements for them. The wishes of students are important in this area, and they should be consulted thoroughly before changing caterers or menus. To integrate students even more, the University should give room for entrepreneurial students with innovative food concepts. Such experimentation should not get in the way of overall food quality due to the large number of locations where the UG sells food.

Reducing waste

Students should be made aware about ways through which they can reduce waste or adopt greener and healthier habits when they are at

home. Printing when necessary and also reducing the food waste are the options to practice. Such practices can also be promoted under the staff, resulting in more of the reading material being online and so preventing unnecessary printing. Next to this, the UG itself 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 via email.

Green Zernike Campus

Two years ago, the UG and the municipality started working on the restructuring of the Zernikelaan. Lijst Calimero applauds the creation of the mile-long Green Promenade. However, the Zernike campus is more than just the Zernikelaan. Lijst Calimero wants the University to collaborate with the municipality to transform the other parts of the campus or make university terrain into green and a pleasant environment to study and work. Thus, Lijst Calimero wants the UG to take part in the pilot projects which are focused on cooling down the entire city. It can be done through, for example, planting trees or creating picnic spots, stimulating the use of bikes and sustainable public transport. Also, a shared approach of these stakeholders is the only option.

Extracurricular activities

The student life stretches far beyond the University. Students can choose between a wide variety of sport, study, or student associations to spend their time at. Many students also combine their studies with volunteer work, an internship or a job. Extracurricular activities are not just a lot of fun, they can also teach students a lot. These activities can improve their ability to cooperate with others and gain skills like collective decision making and efficient communication. Doing extracurricular activities can also help students build up their CV. Because of these reasons, we believe that students should be given as much space to be active next to their studies. Student success is more important than study success.

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

Students doing board years are not only of great importance for the students at their associations but also pick up valuable soft skills in doing so. Lijst Calimero wrote a memo with the purpose to support students who want to invest in doing a board year. In this memo, Lijst Calimero proposes an extracurricular board programme in which board members are trained in different aspects of governance. This could be accompanied by ECTS and a certificate that shows they finished the programme. 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 programme 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. Moreover, not all associations are eligible for this certificate due to rules and regulations by CUOS. Lijst Calimero believes that it should be ensured that every board member has the option of acquiring such a certificate for their board year.

An inclusive university

The University of Groningen currently accommodates more than 36.000 students, each of them with different nationalities and features. Thus, given the international aspect of the University, and the other differences among students such as gender, cultural upbringing and different abilities, we must embrace the opportunities and benefits of an inclusive university. Moreover, Groningen is the city with the most associations for students in the whole country, which has its pros (such as having a place for everyone) but it can also cause a lot of segregation between different student groups, which is not something that we want. Lijst Calimero believes that it is essential to include everyone, regardless of personal differences, and policies should be put in play to accommodate all the students.

Associations

International students arrive in Groningen from many different countries. In order to help these students to not experience a huge culture shock, we believe that international associations are significant for integrating with a smooth transition. These associations represent the perfect solution for students who may need support from those coming from a similar cultural background and they increase intercultural awareness, thus enriching the University's cultural environment. However, we also believe that these associations should be inclusive with every member, disregarding their cultural upbringing and personal differences.

Lijst Calimero believes that the UG should be in contact with more of these international associations, as these are of great help for their respective students. Moreover, CUOS funding should be increased towards these international associations, and they should also be provided with a working space of some sort. Lastly, another issue with regard to segregation is the presence of two introduction weeks: KEI Week and ESN Introduction Week. Even though they are both open for everyone, segregation is created between international and Dutch students due to different reasons. KEI Week starts three weeks before the start of the academic year and some of the activities are only provided in Dutch, which are factors that make international students not join this introduction week. The ESN Introduction Week is not that well promoted among Dutch

students and it gives off the impression that it is mainly focused on introducing international students to the city due to the nature of some of the activities. Lijst Calimero believes that even though both introduction weeks are open for everyone there are other problems that create division, which should be remedied.

Language barriers

The language barrier between Dutch and international students is often a reason for separation between students. A solution to this problem is extra language courses. However, offering the students the possibility to pursue language courses that are paid by the University, only up to level B1 might lower the number of students that are willing to take these language courses. We are aware that there is currently not enough space to accommodate all students that are interested in taking these courses but we believe that there should be an opportunity for some of them to go up to a higher level, such as B2 (e.g. students that are required to have a B2 level certificate in order to start their master programmes). This might increase the number of students that are signing up, which consequently can result in the lowering of the language barriers.

Integration

In order for the international students to be integrated during their time in Groningen, Lijst Calimero believes that all study advisors and teachers that have many international students, should be trained with intercultural competences towards a broader spectrum of issues. The reason why we encourage these trainings is because international students experience university life differently than Dutch students. Another way of furthering integration is by continuing the introductory workshops that the faculties organise for students on the University system, study associations, exams, and whom to contact, and promoting them more amongst international students.

Other ways of communication

Given that there are students that have different types of disabilities, we encourage the UG to also come up with other ways of communication that can accommodate these students better. For example, audiobooks should be available for students who have difficulties with seeing or reading in order to make education on the University level more

accessible. In addition, Lijst Calimero believes that it is valuable to arrange an extra course on sign language and a sign interpreter should be present at every official UG event (e.g. the opening of the academic year). Moreover, if the resources will allow it, this can be developed into a linguistic and language acquisition department in the future. Another point that Lijst Calimero will focus on this year is the way through which the UG communicates with the students through all different channels and making sure that it is done in the most inclusive way possible.

More information and better facilities

Throughout the years, Lijst Calimero has always been a strong voice for students with performance disabilities, both physical and mental. In that regard, in 2018, a new policy plan regarding these students was written due to the decreasing of the numbers of student satisfaction and the call for notably better information provision became louder. In this plan, a lot of our ideas are mentioned, such as more attention for psychological pressure, stress, better information provision, and professionalization of staff members. The first evaluation of this new plan is supposed to happen this year, which we will approach with a critical eye and monitor closely. However, given that in the past academic year, the UG has focused more on other issues that were caused by the coronavirus pandemic and less on issues such as integration, we will make sure that these students are not forgotten this year.

Good study facilities

The past year has highlighted the importance of proper workspaces for students. During the past year, we have opened up more study spaces and we will continue doing so, keeping student safety in mind. It is also time to look at what the future after COVID-19 should look like.

Access to more workspaces

It is imperative that students have access to workspaces because they pay for such facilities. Long queues for the UB show that this was a problem before COVID-19, but it is even more so right now. In terms of the pandemic, the future is looking quite bright when it comes to study places. However, if restrictions return at some point, this should not mean that students lose access to their study places. If this were to happen, the UG

should open up empty classrooms for students. To keep social distancing measures in mind, the number of students that is allowed in each classroom can be limited. Finally, the UG could work together with owners of empty office spaces or buildings such as the old public library to provide extra study spots during times of high demand, also when the pandemic is over.

Information on available workspaces

The creation of extra workspaces has proven to be useless if too few students know about these spaces or whether they are available. The library has an app for this purpose, but too few students know about its existence, thus it needs to receive more active promotion. Furthermore, the library app should include city-wide information about available workspaces, rather than just those at the UB, Zernike, or the Central Medical Library. This information should also be easily accessible in the new Nestor. If the new Nestor turns out to be suitable for mobile devices, the functions of the library app should be integrated there.

Campuses Fryslân and Emmen

The distance between Campus Fryslân and Groningen can sometimes cause difficulties, especially when students of Campus Fryslân want to use facilities in Groningen. They have every right to do so, and the UG should facilitate them in doing so. Ways of achieving this are partly compensating travel costs or expanding digital infrastructure where possible. For the more basic facilities such as study places, students should not have to travel to Groningen at all. With the creation of a Campus Emmen looming on the horizon, it is important to stress that what is mentioned above is true for Campus Emmen as well. The UG should also make a clear branch campus strategy. Finally, Lijst Calimero will actively include the student-assessor and faculty council of branch campuses to make sure that they are not forgotten.

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. By 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 crucial to informed, democratic decision making at UG.

Transparency

While some faculties post all minutes of meetings online, others are less public with their documents. To make sure that the decision making process of the UG functions properly, transparency is key. Therefore, we will push for centralised transparency guidelines which apply to all parties who are involved in the University's decision making process. Of course, Lijst Calimero will continue to be as transparent as possible about what we do.

Selecting board members and student assessors

The selection of a member for the Board of the University or the Faculty Boards is done by their respective Application Committees. In the case of the Faculty Boards, the student representative of this committee is currently chosen by the Faculty Board, and it is often decided to be the Student Assessor. Because 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, since the students themselves have voted for these representatives. As a result, students of the faculties have agency in the selection of their Faculty Board.

Documents in English

More international students and staff members are joining the Faculty Councils. Therefore, documents regarding decision making should be available as much as possible in both Dutch and English. Lijst Calimero is proud of having achieved that all University Council documents are now in English, but we firmly believe that this practice should be extended to all faculties. 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 monitoring the quality of your education. Lijst Calimero wants to ensure greater conformity between the different approaches of Programme Committees and Faculty Councils to improve the quality of their work. Last year, a training was made available after Lijst Calimero joined forces with DAG to write a memo about this. We want to make sure that these trainings improve each year and help as many student representatives as possible. Therefore Lijst Calimero wants that all available training is clearly communicated to all the parties involved and properly evaluated afterwards.

National politics

Many issues concerning UG students stem from decisions on the national level. The Netherlands recently had its national elections, so there should be a new government sometime soon. This is an opportunity for students to let their voices be heard and to steer the policy in their favour. Lijst Calimero will lobby with the Interstedelijk Studenten Overleg, the national student organisation. With them we will convey students their needs to the government.

Loan system

The loan system has been in place since 2015 and it has put a large burden on students. Before, students would get a monthly allowance to help them pay for their education and general expenses. This allowance was turned into a loan for most students. Students are building up considerable debt during their studies and many students want to finish their studies as soon as possible because of the loan system. This can put a strain on students' mental health and it disincentivizes students from developing themselves with extracurricular activities. Therefore, Lijst Calimero actively takes part in the #NietMijnSchuld campaign. This campaign strives for the reintroduction of the allowance and compensation for those who did take loans. The money needed for this cannot be taken from the education budget. We have taken part in actions and demonstrations to let the government know that the loan system has to be abolished.

Funding of universities

The advisory Commissie van Rijn has advised the minister to relocate

funds in and between universities. The UG will see an annual decrease in its budget of 9 million, and certain faculties will be hit even harder than others. Van Rijn is shifting the problem of lack of funding, instead of solving it. [Recent research](#) commissioned by the ministry of higher education has shown that universities are currently lacking funding. The budget needs to grow substantially, with a one-off increase of 300 million euros and 800 million euros added structurally. The movement WOinActie campaigns against government cuts in higher education and supports the proposed increases of the budget. We agree with this view, the budget needs to increase and more money needs to be spent per student.

Coalition Y

In addition to their university education, students have problems that they share with their peers. Housing, finding a job and paying the bills are of concern to all young people. Coalition Y wants to give young people a say in politics. Lijst Calimero is actively involved in Coalition Y Groningen, which focuses on the high pressure to perform and the wellbeing of young people.

Theme 3: What we study

Employability

While the UG is first and foremost a research university, in reality most students will want to enter the job market after their studies. Therefore, it is up to the University to prepare them for exactly that. To succeed in today's competitive job market, students need more than just knowledge. They need a variety of skills which are future-proof and relevant to their field. We believe that it is the task of the University to teach students how to put their academic knowledge into practice.

Soft Skills

For many students, it is important to develop a good set of soft skills. This can be done through extracurricular activities such as an internship or a board year. Such activities are valuable, but often too costly for a student who has to live on a loan and cannot afford to rack up large amounts of debt. Currently, many students find that the demands for being allowed to do a tuition-free board year are too strict. These students are not only gaining valuable experience, but through their board activities they also facilitate the academic, social, and professional development of students. Furthermore, they often do not attend any courses. For these reasons, they should not have to pay tuition. We thus want to see the requirements for doing a tuition-free board year relaxed.

Career Services

As of right now, the centralised nature of Career Services prevents it from serving most students properly. To counter this, we proposed to install one Career Coordinator per faculty who can work with faculties and study associations on career-related topics. This makes great use of the study-specific knowledge that is widely available in study associations while also making use of existing networks. The central office of Career Services should take up a minimal role. This role should entail holding regular meetings with the Career Coordinators of the different faculties and training students in the basics, such as writing a resume. Furthermore, communications from and about Career Services need to improve in a multitude of ways so that students are aware of what is possible. In this way, students will enjoy a more relevant experience which will better prepare them for their future career.

Integrate the Young Alumni Network (YAN)

In 2015, Lijst Calimero initiated the creation of the Young Alumni Network. Now that a few years have passed, we can conclude that the network does not function the way we wanted it to yet. Many students only find out about the network when they graduate, which seems to decrease willingness to sign up for it and attend its events. The YAN should be visible earlier on in students' time at the UG. This can be done through guest lectures from young alumni and networking events, which should receive more promotion than such events do right now. Doing so would not only benefit students, but also alumni and the University, as it would strengthen the ties between the three. To account for differences in Dutch and international job markets, and thus to make sure that all students are served properly, the YAN should have a Dutch and an international branch.

Internships

Internships are important for students who want to pursue a career outside of academia, because they provide valuable experience and they are often the closest thing to what a future career may look like. Currently, not enough bachelor programmes allow for doing an internship without causing study delay. For many students, the only way of doing an internship without study delay is participating in the Career Minor, but there is limited space and the internships there are not relevant for all students. To solve this problem, the UG should utilise the University of the North, a project which aims to connect industry and educational institutions in the North of the Netherlands and parts of Northern Germany. The project is very well suited for creating local internship opportunities and should be used to do so.

Interdisciplinarity

In the current university curricula, a wide range of different programmes exist. This diversification offers to fill in a variety of areas of interest for our students, researchers and the staff. Lijst Calimero believes that a programme with a wide range of courses strengthens the knowledge-base at a multidisciplinary level and also enhances the soft skills. As a result, students develop themselves with growing interest in various disciplines. Lijst Calimero approaches this topic as

a fact of life for students. Thus, we believe this approach should be rigorously incorporated in higher education with more serious effort at UG. In general, we advocate that students should be given sufficient flexibility to participate in different courses and minors from other studies.

Minors

Students have access to a wide range of faculty minor and university wide minors to broaden their horizons. Lijst Calimero believes that all bachelor programmes should be structured in such a manner that enables every student with the choice of doing a minor. This could be achieved either within their respective faculties or by creating more university-wide minors. Besides this, existing minors should be evaluated periodically, so that they are subject to improvement from students' feedback and experiences. Minors also improve students' soft skills to great extent after doing a minor, and we believe these minors to be offered and promoted at a higher scale to increase its visibility. Also, the University should release newsletters or minor brochures to publish the information of the minors, simultaneously giving tips for choosing a right minor for students. This reduces the chance of students ending up with a wrong minor and keeps the students well-informed about the options they have.

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 to choose courses from other studies if they have an interest in this. This can be done by recommending the other high quality programmes and encouraging the students to take a look into courses that can be valuable to their respective 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.

Role of research in education

Research is one of the most important pillars of a university. Research thus plays a significant role in the learning process. By providing a research-oriented education, students are stimulated to dig deeper and make the most out of their studies. Nowadays, innovation in science and research go hand in hand. Therefore, we want the UG to optimally deploy all available research opportunities and provide its students with a state-of-the-art educational model.

Balance fundamental & market-driven research

It is of utmost importance that the University maintains a healthy balance between fundamental and market-driven research.

Fundamental research is conducted to foster knowledge and advance technology overall, whereas market-driven research mainly has a financial stimulus. We want to ensure that every faculty has the right balance by evaluating staff members' and students' views. Programme Committees should have an active role in this.

Platform for research opportunities

Students should get a clear overview of research opportunities in their faculties. The search of research opportunities in and between the faculties are not standardised and thus limit interdisciplinarity. Therefore, an initiative has been launched by the 16th faction of Lijst Calimero to create a research-sharing platform that would be available via the University. There, all students would be able to search current research projects (led by the staff of our university), including the requirements easily. Since this will not only be limited within one faculty, interdisciplinary research opportunities will flourish. This is going to encourage research participation from students and more engagement from professors between different study programmes.



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