

VOX

The golden years are over



ENGLISH
EDITION

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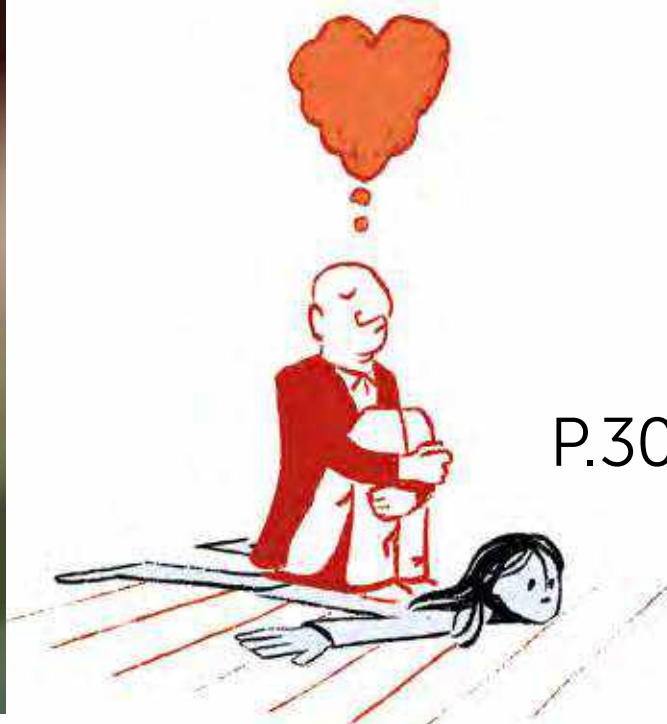


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FUNDING DRIES UP

There seemed to be no end to the money supply in recent years. But now the university has to make cuts. Nijmegen School of Management is already in financial crisis and even the successful Faculty of Science (FNWI) can no longer avoid it.



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'My job is to make sure people can say goodbye to the deceased in the right way'



UNUSUAL STUDENT JOBS

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P.34 / RECIPE / Former RU student Tobias van Slooten of Pizzacafé DESEM puts together an inexpensive and simple three-course menu.



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FOREWORD MORTGAGE

I'm a graduate in Social Psychology and I've got a great job at Vox (no, my editor-in-chief didn't force me to write this), but buying a flat as a happy single? That's not really on the cards. A mortgage of up to €190,000 will get me at most a 35-square-metre basement studio with a single window on the Graafseweg in Nijmegen.

With a substantial student debt of €30,000, I'm a proud member of the unlucky generation. Which is why I can't get a higher mortgage. Did I study for too long? Maybe, but I (a student from Germany) did all sorts of other things besides my studies to give something back to the University and the city that welcomed me so warmly as a 'stranger'. Studying is about more than just taking exams, isn't it?

When the money began to run out and I started borrowing, I was solemnly promised that my debt wouldn't be taken into account if I wanted to apply for a mortgage one day. An important point for me, because I knew then as surely as I know now that Nijmegen is my city.

Boom! Now it turns out that my debt does count after all, including a hefty interest rate increase starting from next year. And so I share my housing market frustrations with my Vox colleagues on a daily basis. As I was writing this, I got a phone call from the estate agent: I've been passed over yet again in favour of someone with no financing reservation. Another apartment gone.

I simply stand no chance in this housing market. Although... My grandmother recently passed away, leaving me a bit more money than I expected. Lucky me?

Johannes Fiebig
Video Editor at Vox



Guidelines or censorship?

Nineteen researchers who planned to organise a lecture series on the situation in Israel and Palestine in November changed the topic of their first lecture to 'academic freedom'. The reason: censorship by Radboud University. The Executive Board had urged the researchers to make some changes, which led to them feeling restricted in their academic freedom. The first lecture had to be postponed and was not to be public, and the poster had to be changed, the organisers said. The Executive Board disagrees with this representation, saying that they only offered some guidelines. In the end, the remainder of the lecture series went ahead two weeks later.



PHOTO: ERIK VAN T HULLENAAR

Commotion surrounding portrait of Louis Beel

The portrait of former Prime Minister and Radboud University alumnus Louis Beel, in the Grotius Building, has caused quite a commotion in recent months. The portrait of the controversial politician, who was responsible for the second police action in Indonesia, was removed for a project on 'uncomfortable heritage' by PhD candidate Oscar Ekkelboom. He replaced Beel's portrait with a portrait of Indonesian resistance leader Diponegoro. The Faculty of Law intervened by hanging Beel's artwork back on the wall, next to Diponegoro's, allegedly to promote debate within the academic community. In response, Ekkelboom removed his artwork of the resistance leader. What will happen to Beel's portrait is as yet unclear.



NEW: VOX-PODCAST

Every two weeks Antonia Leise and Jara Majerus from Vox host a new podcast titled 'In a Nutshell'. In the podcast, a Radboud University researcher talks about their favourite research topic, such as monsters, the history of emotion, or randomness in the universe. Check out the latest episode below.



THE FIGURE



2.56% INTEREST ON STUDENT DEBT

Bad news for students: the interest rate on student debt will increase to 2.56% in 2024. Students report feeling cheated: for a long time, they were told that interest rates would remain at 0%. Students from the 'unlucky generation' are particularly upset: they were not entitled to the basic grant and now they also have to dig extra deep in their pocket for their student loans.



DULY NOTED

'What else can you do but join the rat race? If you come up with a counter narrative as a philosopher, you are quickly dismissed as someone who didn't make it socially, who didn't manage to become a CEO, and who therefore promotes a philosophical story about success not being that important at all.'

Professor of Philosophy **Hans Thijssen** is concerned with the question of what makes a person happy. He was one of the speakers at the Radboud Wellbeing Week in late November.



PHOTO: JOHANNES FIEBIG



ON CAMERA

MIKE FOPPEN DURING THE ZEVENHEUVELEENLOOP

Former student and runner Mike Foppen is on track to make it to the Paris Olympics in 2024. The 26-year-old, who graduated this summer, recently recovered from an injury and is fit enough to run competitions once again. In the coming months, he aims to run the Olympic standard in the 5000 metres. Vox followed him before, during and after the Zevenheuvelenloop for a mini documentary. From cracking his joints loose at the physiotherapist to collapsing behind the finish line: you can see it all in the video.



IN THE NEWS

SHORT

A changing room for everyone

The Radboud Sports Centre now has an inclusive changing room. It is a space where everyone is allowed to change and shower, regardless of gender, sex, or identity. The changing room on the first floor is indicated by a coat hanger, instead of the traditional male or female icon. This is a pilot, which will be evaluated over the coming months.

Educational advisor with a coffee mug fetish

Educational advisor Steven Trooster has photographed 300 different coffee mugs already. He tracks them down in staff kitchens on campus and collects them in his Facebook album "Mugshots". Trooster has a soft spot for stray

mugs, which includes in his opinion mugs that belong to a specific department, but that one day begin their nomadic existence on campus. No one knows where they will end up.

Conflicts around educational media

The website of Eindhoven University of Technology's magazine *Cursor* went black in October in protest. The reason was a conflict with the University's Executive Board sparked by an article on conflicts of interest by the new Rector. The editor-in-chief was removed from his post. An interim editor-in-chief has since been appointed. Higher authorities also intervened at SAM, the journalist platform of HAN University of Applied Sciences. There, the head of communications placed his

own opinion above a critical, anonymous column. The Executive Board referred to this as a one-man action.

Internationalisation precarious

The fact that the PVV is now the biggest party, having won 37 seats in the House of Representatives elections, may have implications for universities. For instance, the PVV wants to put a stop to internationalisation and make all Bachelor's programmes Dutch-speaking. As does newcomer NSC, which won 20 seats. But at the polling station on the Nijmegen campus a different voice could be heard. An exit poll by Vox among students revealed that 48% voted for GroenLinks-PvdA. This was followed by D66 (10.5%) and Volt (7%).



World champion in pole dancing

Radboud University bioinformatician Hanka Venselaar won a gold medal at the Pole and Aerial World Championship last October in Poland. Together with Maaïke van Santvoort, she won the world title in the artistic pole senior doubles category. Her ambitions? 'I mostly do it for the fun experiences,' says Venselaar.



ARGOS BROADCAST ABOUT PSYCHOLOGY PROFESSOR

Radio programme *Argos* reveals that a **prominent Nijmegen Psychology professor** was guilty of transgressive behaviour between 2017 and 2020. He bombarded a Master's student, whose thesis he was supervising, with text messages, and claimed to be in love with her. The professor was issued a warning that was added to his personnel file. A second woman also told *Argos* that the man had besieged her with text messages. This happened while she was working at a company the professor in question had co-founded.

SATURDAY
16
SEPTEMBER

NO INVESTIGATION

The Faculty of Social Sciences announces that it will **not be conducting a follow-up investigation** into the Psychology professor because no new reports have been filed since 2020.

SATURDAY
23
SEPTEMBER

FACULTY MEETING

The Faculty of Social Sciences organises an **information session** for students and staff, following the revelations about the Psychology professor in *Argos*. Dean Evelyn Kroesbergen tells *Vox* that no additional sanctions or restrictions were imposed on the man. He still works at the Faculty, although he no longer supervises students one-on-one.

MONDAY
25
SEPTEMBER

COMPLAINT AGAINST RECTOR VAN KRIEKEN

De Gelderlander reports that in 2018, Rector **Han van Krieken** was the subject of a complaint for remarks he made against a staff member in 2017 and that could be perceived as sexually intimidating. A complaints committee upheld the complaint, and Van Krieken was issued a warning. The University did not make the incident public. The woman left the University with a settlement agreement in 2019. She has now come forward and is sharing her story with the press.

WEDNESDAY
27
SEPTEMBER

NEW INVESTIGATION AFTER ALL

The Dean reports that the Faculty has decided to conduct **a new, independent investigation** into the discredited Psychology professor. The reason: new reports and complaints about him.

THURSDAY
28
SEPTEMBER

RECTOR RESIGNS

Han van Krieken steps down prematurely as Rector, following news of the complaint against him. 'I am aware that the situation that has arisen stands in the way of a festive celebration of the University's centenary,' he writes in a post on ru.nl. The transfer of rectorship was originally scheduled for the Dies Natalis, on 17 October.

SATURDAY
30
SEPTEMBER

LETTER TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Members of the University Student Council and the Works Council, which together represent the university's participational bodies, send **a letter to the Executive Board**. In this letter, they call for a shift in culture. They believe that the Executive Board should do more to guarantee social safety and transparency. They are also not impressed by the fact that the complaint against Van Krieken appeared in an annual report only years after the incident and was referred to as a 'conflict between two employees'.

TRANSGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR IN THE NEWS

October marked Radboud University's centenary. At the same time, Radboud University experienced one of the most turbulent periods in its history due to two high-profile cases involving transgressive behaviour. A review of the autumn's events.

Text: Annemarie Haverkamp

WOMAN SHARES HER STORY IN *DE GELDERLANDER*

In *De Gelderlander*, the woman who filed a complaint against the Rector states that she had previously called him out on his remarks. But the incident continued to bother her. 'The fact that he was a role model made it more intense.' Unable to avoid him at work, **she had filed a complaint in 2018**. The settlement agreement she signed included a gag clause. She refers to the fact that Van Krieken ended up resigning after the case came to light as 'justice at last'.

BOARD PROMISES PLAN

The Executive Board responds to the newspaper article and various scandals by stating that the University is deploying **external expertise** to review social safety on campus. The Board expects an integrated plan of action to be in place by the end of the calendar year.

MONDAY
2
OCTOBER

MONDAY
9
OCTOBER

PROCESSION CANCELLED

The University announces its intention to cancel the procession of professors, the cortège, across the Keizer Karelplein during the Dies celebration on 17 October. The reason: unrest at the University following the news reports on transgressive behaviour. **Van Krieken's farewell reception is cancelled.**

NEW RECTOR APPOINTED

José Sanders is presented with the Rectors' Chain at De Vereeniging by Interim Rector Heleen Murre-van den Berg. In addition to King Willem-Alexander, former Rector Van Krieken also attends the centenary celebrations.

TUESDAY
17
OCTOBER

FRIDAY
6
OCTOBER

NO COVER-UP

In an interview with *Vox*, Executive Board members Agnes Muskens and Daniël Wigboldus say it was never the Board's intention to cover up the complaint against Han van Krieken. Muskens: 'Normally, the complaints committee reports the number of complaints to the legal department staff, who include it in the annual report. However, this concerned a complaint from a different, independent complaints committee [because it was a complaint against a member of the Executive Board, Eds.] As a result, **the legal department wasn't aware of the report** against Van Krieken. And since four other complaints were filed that year, it was also not apparent that a complaint was missing. I'm not trying to justify what happened. The complaint should have been in the report. When a few years later, it was reported that this complaint was missing, it was looked at right away and the complaint was added retroactively to the 2021 annual report.'

VAN KRIEKEN RESPONDS TO COMMOTION

Han van Krieken responds for the first time to all the commotion surrounding him in *Vox*. He says he never intended his remarks to be sexually intimidating. He also says that the fact that the woman could at any moment publicise the news hung like a **sword of Damocles** over his time as Rector. Both in 2018, when he was first issued a warning, and in 2020, when he was reappointed, he wondered whether he would be allowed to stay on as Rector. The answer in both cases was 'yes'.

He says he experienced the weeks following the publications about the complaint as 'hell'. About *De Gelderlander* articles, he says: 'The way it was communicated in the newspaper was very much focused on me as a person. At some point I thought: this is some kind of character assassination.' Van Krieken was to become Interim President of Universities of the Netherlands (UNL), but he withdrew. He hopes in the long run to take up a position as regulator in the cultural sector.

FRIDAY
27
OCTOBER



THE GOLDEN YEARS ARE OVER

AT RADBOUD UNIVERSITY

While Nijmegen School of Management has declared a vacancy freeze, the Faculty of Science is shelving its plans to expand the Huygens building.

For years, Radboud University had plenty of money, but now it is tightening its purse strings.

What are the consequences of this?

Text: Ken Lambeets and Mathijs Noij / **Illustrations:** JeRoen Murré

How fast can the wind change direction? At Nijmegen School of Management, the answer is very fast, as staff and students have discovered since the beginning of this academic year. For years, money was not a problem at the Elinor Ostrom building – just publishing all the vacancies was a full-time job. And this had the desired effect, as the number of researchers within the Faculty grew from 225 full-time jobs in 2020 to 356 in 2023.

This large-scale investment was made possible by additional funding from The Hague. The cabinet supplemented the University budget with incentive grants, study financing resources and sector plans, among other things. The Nijmegen Executive Board generously diverted this

money to the faculties to attract new staff and strengthen teaching.

Growing student numbers, especially at Nijmegen School of Management, further filled the money pot. Between 2020 and 2023, the Faculty's budget grew by €12 million. Even with rising costs, the sky was the limit on the east side of Heyendaalseweg.

Financial quagmire

Until suddenly in September, alarm bells started to sound. The Faculty was in financial difficulties and the Board was forced to take crisis measures with immediate effect. If they didn't, the management scientists were already looking at a loss of €4.6 million in 2023. With a budgeted deficit of €8 to €9 million, the Faculty would

→

sink much deeper still into the financial quagmire in 2024. By comparison, the Faculty receives just under €40 million a year from the Executive Board.

From that moment, all outstanding vacancies were cancelled, student assistants were put on hold, and researchers were discouraged from claiming travel or equipment expenses. Temporary staff who had not been promised a contract renewal lost out. Even the traditional Christmas gathering is not taking place this year.

The news hit like a bomb. From one day to the next, people were afraid for their jobs. ‘The uncertainty that this brought really took its toll on the staff,’ says Gaard Kets, Assistant Professor in Political Science and member of the Faculty Council. He says that communication from the Board at that time was still very limited, which only added to the uncertainty. ‘It then took another month before things became clearer.’

The Faculty Board now believes it has a pretty good overview of what might have caused the sudden financial shortfall, although Interim Dean Michiel Kompier remains cautious. ‘We also ran into surprises in our analysis of the financial situation. I don’t rule out another surprise popping out of the closet.’

In its budget for 2024, the Faculty writes that the current financial situation cannot be attributed to one single factor, but results from several, sometimes reinforcing factors, combined with limited monitoring of and insight into financial developments.

One such factor is a lower student intake than expected. Because universities formulate their budgets based on *expected* student numbers, a lower intake rate quickly leads to problems. The financial consequences run into millions: for the 2024-2025 academic year, Radboud University as a whole will receive €7 million less from the Dutch government than it was counting on.

In addition, salaries have increased by 9% in 2023, an increase that is not fully compensated for by the government. Furthermore, the University cannot escape higher costs due to inflation and rising energy prices. After all, even in times of crisis, buildings still need to be heated.

A different reality

All these external factors affect the University as a whole. Yet it is only Nijmegen School of Management that is in such deep trouble. What’s going on there? The Faculty budget speaks of ‘limited monitoring’ of finances. This can be explained by the fact that last year, the Dean and the Administrative Director stepped down in quick succession. Former Dean of Social Sciences Michiel Kompier started as Interim Dean in March. The new Administrative Director started work in May. When they took office, they were told there were ‘some issues’ on the table, but not that there were any major financial concerns. ‘Unexpectedly, the reality turned out to be quite different,’ says Kompier.

But the Faculty would have been in financial trouble even without changes on the Board, Kompier stresses. So the question remains of how it is possible for a faculty to be so surprised by an impending loss of millions. The same goes for the participational bodies, which only last year questioned the Faculty Board about the sustainability of the financial course it was taking. The reassuring answer was that it was permitted and it was possible.

The financial problems also raise questions about the Executive Board’s monitoring of the Faculty. A spokesperson for the Board informed *Vox* that the Faculty’s finances are monitored on a monthly basis. ‘The Faculty’s figures for the first three months of 2023 weren’t yet worrying enough to necessitate intervention.’ It was only later that the Board became aware of the financial concerns.

Kompier thinks that the Faculty is to blame. ‘We got more students and the workload was tough. We were then allocated additional resources for teaching and research, and we appointed a lot of staff. All kinds of incentive measures were available and we were too late putting a stop to this.’

Indiscriminate cuts

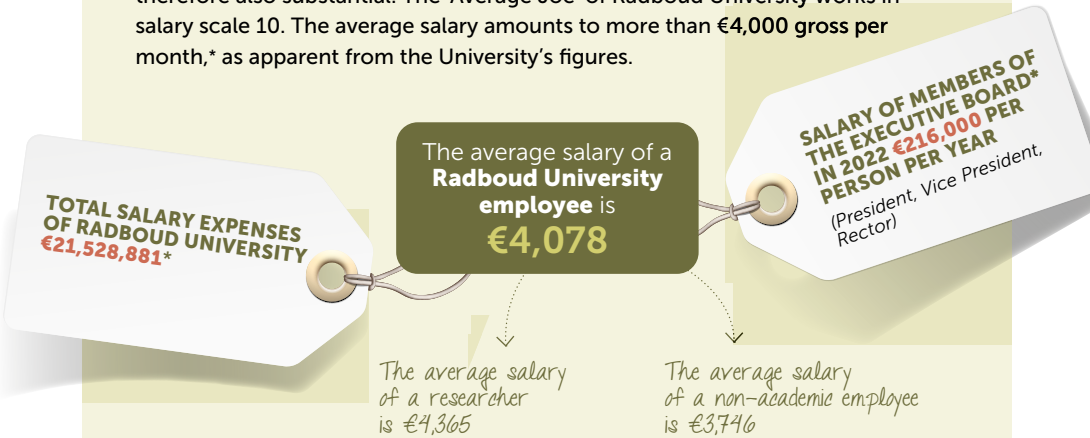
So now what? How are management scientists going to avert the crisis? The Faculty may still

‘WE RAN INTO SURPRISES IN OUR ANALYSIS OF THE FINANCIAL SITUATION’

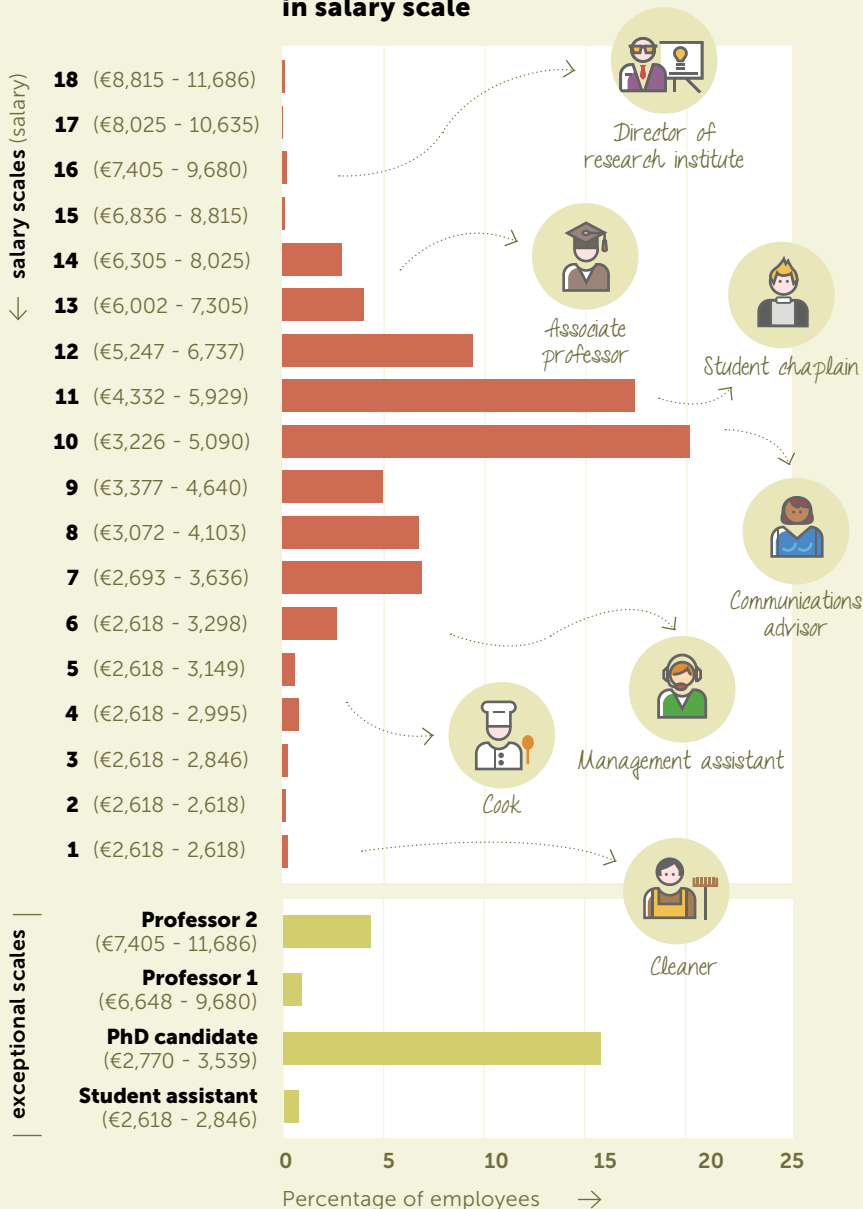


HOW MUCH DOES A RADBOD UNIVERSITY EMPLOYEE EARN?

From cleaner to President of the Executive Board, Radboud University employs a very diverse group of staff. The differences between salaries are therefore also substantial. The 'Average Joe' of Radboud University works in salary scale 10. The average salary amounts to more than €4,000 gross per month,* as apparent from the University's figures.



Percentage of employees in salary scale



* The salaries listed above are gross salaries per FTE, not including end-of-year bonus and holiday allowance

present red figures to the Executive Board until 2027, but after that it must show a break-even. This means a few more years of substantial cuts, which the participational bodies are very concerned about.

According to Representative Council member Gaard Kets, there is a reason why the Faculty hired so many people in recent years. 'It was overdue maintenance. Nijmegen School of Management had the worst student-staff ratio of the entire University. Lecturers were under huge work pressure.' With the Faculty once again changing course, Kets fears that all the efforts of recent years will be undone. 'Is that what we want?'

'WE DON'T WANT LAYOFFS, BUT WE WILL HAVE TO START REDISTRIBUTING TASKS'

According to him, thinning the staff will undeniably affect the quality of education. Students will be getting more multiple-choice exams, lecturers will opt for large-scale teaching, and they will have less time to supervise theses. The Faculty is already heading in that direction, as lecturers can no longer rely on student assistants and hired external lecturers.

Kets: 'For years now, we have offered the best Political Science study programme in the country. You've got to think carefully about what these cuts mean in the long run for the position of a study programme like ours. Otherwise, you risk creating a downward spiral, with fewer students and less revenue.'

Dean Kompier takes a different view. 'A Faculty can't survive without a healthy administration. We can't push the problems further down the road. We must take action now and stick to the step-by-step downsizing. This can and must be done.'

But that isn't the whole story, argues Kets. For years, part of the Faculty's annual budget flowed back to the University because not all the money was used up. 'As a result, our Faculty has contributed substantially to building

up the University's reserves.' According to the participational bodies, this amounts to some €8.6 million. Kets therefore calls – also on the Executive Board – for this money to be freed up to cushion the initial blows and avoid having to make huge cuts to teaching and research.

But it's not as if there is another 'earmarked case of gold bars' in the Executive Board's vault, Kompier stresses. Should the Faculty continue to run into red figures, it will be at the expense of the University as a whole. The losses that the Faculty may incur between now and 2027, and that total €12 million, will have to be borne by the University.

So the Faculty will go into the new year with its purse strings held tight. The ultimate goal: to avoid a reorganisation – possibly involving compulsory redundancies. Incidentally the fear of this has not been dispelled. As Dean Kompier points out, there may be more setbacks. What is uncertain is what a new cabinet, potentially led by the PVV, will do with the funding of higher education. So will the Faculty's crisis measures be enough?

'THE CUTS WILL AFFECT DUTCH SOCIETY AS A WHOLE'

Professor of Political Geography and Director of the General Education Union (AOB) Arnoud Lagendijk believes that, in any case, the Faculty should not be too negative about the idea of reorganisation. A reorganisation is now regarded as a doomsday scenario, as layoffs may occur, but not all reorganisations are the same. 'The current vacancy freeze results in gaps in the organisation, and you have to decide how you want to deal with this. We don't want layoffs, but we will have to start redistributing tasks. To remain healthy, a functional reorganisation may be necessary.'

Insatiable greed

Nijmegen School of Management is not the only faculty to experience some trepidation in

Wealth

Cutbacks or not, Radboud University is still very wealthy. Its liquid assets amounted to over €118 million at the end of 2022. That is the money the University has in its coffers. In 2022, this amount increased by €42.6 million due to additional investments from the Dutch government.

In recent years, the Executive Board insisted that faculties invest more in staff to reduce workload. Faculties were therefore allowed to operate with limited losses. By 2027, the Boards wants all faculties to have eliminated their deficits.

Real estate projects, such as the Faculty of Arts moving to the Spinoza building, are also financed from the liquid assets. This project has a budget of €106 million (spread over the years 2022-2031). For the upcoming refurbishment of the Erasmus building, the University has currently budgeted €82 million.



drawing up its budget for next year. 'All faculties need to get to work,' says Director of Finance & Control Arjen Peters. Peters is responsible for making sure that by 2027, no University department is spending more than it brings in. 'So the advice of the Executive Board is to be more prudent with finances, although we have to be careful that the quality of our work remains high. Workload remains a cause for concern.'

This is also felt, for example, at Radboud Services, the department responsible for non-academic services such as HR, Marketing, and Real Estate. Employees are already noticing that expiring contracts are not automatically renewed. A wake-up call is the fact that Radboud Academy – the University's flagship institute for lifelong learning – has to cut back expenses by 20%.

Even a successful faculty like the Faculty of Science can't escape the pain. And that while STEM researchers are reputed to be champions when it comes to attracting grants. 'But no matter how much money you give us, it will never be enough,' says Dean Sijbrand de Jong. 'We are often portrayed as being insatiably greedy, and that's completely justified.'

The Faculty of Science will also have to take measures to achieve a zero budget in 2027, explains Administrative Director Karen de Bruijn. 'Inflation hits us extra hard because we have more materials, equipment and energy costs than other faculties.'

Housing is a major expense for the Faculty, as it rents a relatively large amount of square metres from the University. And these costs are increasing. Certainly laboratories, which are more expensive than office spaces, weigh heavily. 'We were confronted with a 10% rent increase two years in a row, which amounts to approximately €1.5 million extra per year,' says De Bruijn.

Extra workload

Like Nijmegen School of Management, the STEM researchers invested the extra state funds in more staff. But those extra funds have already been halved for next year. Luckily, the Faculty mostly appointed PhD candidates, says De Bruijn. 'They will be done in a few years.'

The downside is that, as a result, the Faculty will have 70 to 80 fewer government-funded PhD candidates in 2027 than at present. The Faculty hopes to make up for this by appoint-

ing as many PhD candidates as possible with indirect government funds. By submitting proposals to the Dutch Research Council (NWO), for example. But that pot isn't getting bigger either, says De Jong, which is why he predicts huge competition. 'With all the implications for workload: it takes about a week to write a proposal. With a 20% success rate, you have to write an average of five before you get a PhD candidate.'

'I'M VERY WORRIED WE WILL END UP IN A DOWNWARD SPIRAL'

Moreover, De Jong continues, the Faculty will also feel the effect of a declining number of PhD candidates on the revenue side, as each PhD defence brings a bonus from the government. 'I'm very worried we will end up in a downward spiral, unable to meet the needs of society. The cuts will affect Dutch society as a whole. Fewer of our PhD candidates will be available to companies like ASML.'

Education will also suffer from the cuts. Since PhD candidates at the Faculty of Science spend 10% of their working hours teaching, a loss of eighty PhD candidates is equivalent to eight full-time teaching positions. 'We have to get those from somewhere,' says De Jong. 'You need money to pay staff members or student assistants. That means we have to lose people from other positions. He expects that this will create additional work pressure in every way imaginable: not only in terms of hours worked, but also in declining job satisfaction, which makes the work feel heavier.'

Broom cupboard

Some years ago, *Vox* wrote about a Faculty of Science professor who had to work in the broom cupboard, due to lack of space. The Faculty has faced an acute lack of space for years. The Campus Plan, in which the Univer-

sity presents its view of the 2030 campus, therefore includes plans to expand the Huygens building, for example by adding a wing. The Mercator building is also mentioned as a fall-back option.

All these options are off the table for now, De Jong says sadly. 'Office space in a new building, even if it is only a fifth of our current capacity, can easily cost a few million euros. As it stands, we can't pay for that without dismantling some departments – in which case we would no longer need that building.'

Meanwhile, the Faculty is trying to solve the lack of space internally. Offices in the Huygens building are being converted into lab space, because that is what there's a need for, and new professors often have specific requirements in terms of equipment. In 2020, the building still had a standard of 10 square metres per person. That has since been adjusted down to nine, and one department is now running a pilot with eight square metres.

According to the Dean, most people within the Faculty are aware of what is happening. 'People here are quite pragmatic – they get it,' he says. 'But whether it has completely sunk in psychologically, I don't know. Let's face it: right now we are at an all-time high, things have never been better in terms of equipment and number of PhD candidates. It's just unfortunate that this situation can't last forever.'

When will employees start to feel that things are getting tougher financially? 'In the last weeks of this year we are already going to be more frugal,' says De Jong. 'But in 2026, things will get tough,' adds De Bruijn. 'By that time, we will have had to make serious cuts.' The idea is that students will not notice any of this for the time being, but the administrators are not sure how sustainable that is.

Is the Faculty afraid of losing top international researchers to universities abroad? 'I have absolutely no fear of that,' says De Jong. 'There are still advantages to working in the Netherlands. Moreover, these employees are very loyal.' But attracting new top players will be harder, he admits. 'Because we can't offer them such good lab facilities, PhD candidates and technical and secretarial support as before. In Germany and England, there are often a lot better opportunities to set up your own group than here.' ★

UNUSUAL STUDENT JOBS

WHO: WOUTER DRESCHLER, POLITICAL SCIENCE STUDENT (24)

STUDENT JOB: PALLBEARER/ FUNERAL ASSISTANT (€15.50 PER HOUR)

'I work as a pallbearer and funeral assistant for Ferentes, a temporary employment agency for workers like me. I'm responsible for a team of four, six, or eight pallbearers. My work is a lot more varied than you might think. We close the coffin and carry it inside, but I also welcome guests, walk beside the cars, and I'm sometimes hired to explain to family members how to carry a coffin. The other day, I was even asked to look after a deceased person's house to prevent burglaries.

Sometimes the work is emotionally demanding. For example, I once had to carry the coffin of a person my age who had died in a motorcycle accident. On shifts like that, I talk to my colleagues afterwards, because I know it can be tough for them too. Talking about it helps.

Still, I enjoy my work because of how satisfying it is, and because it's not a nine-to-five job. Sometimes I'm up at 4 a.m. to go to a funeral in Belgium or Germany. I'm also a perfectionist, which is really useful in this line of work. My job is to ensure that people can say farewell to their loved ones in the right way, without being distracted by our mistakes.'

'SOMETIMES I'M **UP AT**
4 A.M. TO GO TO A
FUNERAL IN BELGIUM
OR GERMANY'





GAMBLING FOR AN EXTRA PENNY

Gambling to supplement your student grant? Plenty of students give it a go. However, the three that Vox spoke to did not turn into inveterate gamblers. They put on the brakes when things threatened to get out of hand.

Text: Alex van der Hulst / Images: Gloedcommunicatie

He remembers why he started: boredom during the Covid-19 pandemic. 'In that first year of the pandemic, I started placing some bets on football games. Later, I moved on to online fruit machines and blackjack. The latter mainly because you get quick results and you can bet a bit more than with fruit machines. Blackjack is also easy to play with friends.'

Boredom also played a role in Mark's case. 'I was nineteen and on a gap year. I started betting on Dutch football matches, but I loved the adrenaline rush, so I started looking for more matches to immerse myself in and bet on. I ended up betting a lot on the second divisions in France and Italy. And when the games in Europe stopped, I would bet on football matches on other continents at night. And that takes up a huge amount of time.'

Additional warning

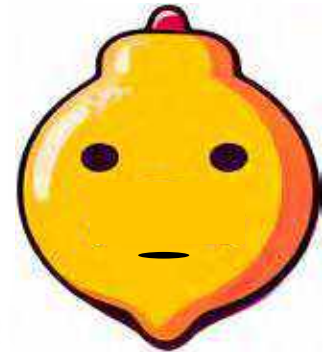
According to 2021 figures by research agency Breuer & Intraval, 64% of the Dutch population gambles. The majority (56%) play in a lottery. Students Niels and Mark are among about 5% of Dutch people who play physical and online slot machines, casino games, or who bet on sports matches.

These are global figures based on respondent surveys. We don't have a more accurate picture of gambling in the Netherlands, says Arnt Schellekens. He is Professor of Addiction and Psychiatry at Radboud university medical center and National Rapporteur on Addictions for the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport. 'We don't see many people with gambling addictions in addiction treatment centres,' he says.



When he found himself still betting on Brazilian football matches at 3.00 a.m. and his sleep started to seriously suffer, Liberal Arts student Mark* (21) knew something was wrong. 'I was talking to a friend about an acquaintance who was an addict, and then I thought: this is just what it's like for me with gambling, and I don't want that anymore. So I stopped cold turkey. I simply deleted TOTO and Unibet from my phone.'

For Law student Niels* (22), online gambling also eventually stopped being a bit of fun. 'The fun I had winning €50 didn't outweigh how bad I felt the day before when I lost €40.' It led Niels to ask himself: why am I actually doing this?



Blind luck

The gambling students in our story are not among the problem gamblers, Schellekens wants to stress. Precisely because they raised the alarm in time. For example, former student Jasper* (26) finds the 'dangerous' games annoying precisely because he can't influence them. 'I don't like fruit machines,' he says. 'They're just based on blind luck. Even with roulette, I feel that I've got more influence, because I can decide which colour I think the ball will land on.'

Jasper started gambling about five years ago, during his student days. An evening at Holland Casino once or twice a year, betting on sports games once or twice a month, and in the past, online casino games. 'In total, I bet €280 online, and ended up winning €282. So over the course of one year, I made €2: not a great hourly rate!' He sees a visit to the casino as a night out. 'We go there with a group of friends and we agree on our limit. So I assume that I'll lose that money.' In his student days, the limit was €20, Jasper says. Now that he and his friends are working, it's €50.

Student Mark, who gambled a lot in his gap year, was only allowed to put €100 a week into his online gambling account because of his age and the rules of the gambling platform at the time. 'I did put in that full amount every week. When I stopped, I was €300 in credit.' He also saw friends playing casino games for higher amounts. 'For me that risk was too great. You never win at the casino. I do want to have some degree of influence.'

'IN TOTAL, I BET €280, AND ENDED UP WINNING €282'

Gambling stop

Professor Schellekens suspects that lotteries and sports betting do not easily escalate to risky behaviour. Yet he also warns against this kind of gambling. 'If you know you are addiction-prone, it's important to stay away from these kinds of games. You can gain insight into your susceptibility to addiction by considering whether you are quick to want more with things like tobacco or alcohol, or if you know that you tend to lose yourself in addictive games. Some people are more focused on short-term rewards and spend money quickly, while others look more to the long term and save. Focus on short-term rewards increases the risk of addiction.'

For student Niels, the fun disappeared because of the unpleasant feeling he got from losing. 'The highest amount I bet in one go was €150. I've lost and also won that amount. I realised that boredom, combined with wanting

'But that doesn't mean they aren't there. We would have a better view of it if the gambling industry shared data, but that hasn't been the case so far. For our research and to improve prevention, we are very interested in differences between people who gamble occasionally and people who lose a lot of money on gambling.'

Short games with quick results pose the greatest danger when it comes to addiction, as Schellekens knows. 'Especially short-cycle games where you've got little influence, like fruit machines. I think we should issue an extra warning precisely for these games, just like for alcohol or risky investments. We know that these fast-paced games have a strong effect on the reward centre in players' brains. If a player has to wait for a long time for a result, it's less exciting. That's why traffic fines don't work very well. Because you get the fine a long time after the offence, you are less likely to change your behaviour.'



to win lost money back, was taking me to a dangerous point. That's when I stopped. A friend of mine, who was already working and playing for more money, set up a gambling stop for himself. Through the gambling government authority, you can set it so that you won't be allowed in a physical or online casino for at least six months. For him, that worked really well.'

Downward spiral

Arnt Schellekens would like to see more prevention. He finds it worrying that the threshold for gambling on phones is so low. 'You've always got your mobile on you, and hardly anyone sees you playing. Problematic gambling may be related to other mental health problems. For some people with ADHD, gaming can sometimes bring focus and calm for a while. People who are anxious or sad may be able to find some distraction in it without having to leave their house. However, we also know that people with these conditions have a higher risk of developing a gambling addiction.'

Gambling problems can send people into a downward spiral, says Schellekens. He wants more social dialogue around this problem. GPs, study and career counsellors and psychologists should ask students about gambling more often. 'If someone skips lectures a lot, you should also ask them about gambling. The

social environment is really important in such cases. Besides providing support, it also has a signalling function. An empathetic confrontation can motivate a person to take action.'

Schellekens knows stories of women who ended up in prostitution to pay off their debts. There is even a link to suicidality. 'A third of people with a gambling addiction think about suicide, and half of them actually attempt it. When a person falls into social isolation, this sometimes seems like the only way out.'

'GAMBLING PROBLEMS OCCUR IN ALL LAYERS OF SOCIETY'

The students *Vox* spoke to talk openly about their gambling habits. 'I can't imagine my friends keeping their gambling problem secret,' says Jasper. 'Gambling isn't a taboo subject among my friends. It's just fun to play together,' says Niels. For Jasper too, gambling together is part of the fun. 'We watch a match and everyone bets €5. That way you share the extra excitement with each other.' For him, these have to be matches that he actually finds interesting, or that he was going to watch anyway. 'When there was nothing to do during lockdown, people would bet on football matches in Kazakhstan, because that was the only league still active. But that's not my thing.'

Blocking gambling sites

In the Netherlands, online gambling has been legal since 2021. Professor Schellekens wonders

whether the rules are clear enough, and whether they are properly enforced. 'Game limits work well when there are only two gambling operators, like in Norway. But if you've reached your limit in the Netherlands, you just go to one of the dozens of other providers. You could hold gambling companies liable for damages arising from gambling if they didn't do enough to protect gamblers. That's what happened in Austria, for example.'

Our interviewees are critical of the gambling industry. 'Once, by blind luck, I won €400,' says former student Jasper. 'I noticed right away that I had to be careful. It made me feel a little too good and gave me the urge to gamble more. On this kind of online platform, you are then offered lots of opportunities to bet the money you just won. Transferring the money from the site to your bank account requires a lot more effort.'

Gambling companies are trying hard to enlist new players, for example by offering them €50 of extra play money when they wager their first €10. Student Niels thinks this is dangerous for young people who have just left school, for example. 'Good warnings are important in such cases.'

Professor Schellekens also sees a role for the University when it comes prevention. 'You could check whether it's possible to block gambling sites through the campus Wi-Fi network. That doesn't mean people will stop gambling, but it's about the message you communicate. By not selling alcohol at the Refter, you're also sending a message.' Schellekens also stresses the importance of communication. Share stories about gambling problems. And don't assume that reasonable people can't develop a gambling problem. 'Gambling problems occur in all layers of society.'

None of the gambling students ended up stopping completely. Niels: 'As long as it's still fun, I will keep going for a while.' Following a long stop, Mark resumed betting during the football World Cup. 'I only bet once a week now. I've got a much busier social life these days. I don't want to go back to the time when it had so much impact on my life; it's not worth it. It's just annoying that I hardly ever win anything these days,' he says, laughing. 'As a poor student, I could certainly use an extra €20.' *

*The names Mark, Jasper and Niels are fictitious at the students' request.



DEGROWTH

ECONOMIC DISASTER OR ECOLOGICAL PANACEA?

The economy is growing, but the planet is becoming depleted. A growing number of scientists argue that economic stabilisation or even decline is the only way forward. Other experts find this idea radical and unwise.

Text: Daan Appels / **Images:** Gloedcommunicatie



'REPLACING THE
CAPITALIST SYSTEM IS
NOT EASY, BUT IT CAN
BE DONE'

Solar panels on every roof, and everyone their own Tesla, including a charging cord mat so the neighbour doesn't trip. For some this sounds like a dream, for others like an untenable vision of the future. The debate between green growthists and so-called *degrowthists* is growing into a classic dispute. Both camps are also represented at Radboud University.

The French Juliette Alenda-Demoutiez found the idea of degrowth interesting before she had ever even heard of the term. Alenda-Demoutiez is Assistant Professor of Economic Theory and Policy at Radboud University. 'Degrowth is one of the things I focus on in my research on sustainability transformations,' she says. 'It could offer us a way out of the climate crisis.'

Human geographer Karolien van Teijlingen, like Alenda-Demoutiez, is also in the degrowth camp. Ideally, she would like to see a radical change in course. 'We're running into planetary limits because economic growth takes priority,' she explains. 'Capitalism has been around for a long time. Replacing that system isn't easy, but it can be done. We need to

move towards an economy that promotes human, climate, and environmental well-being. Economic growth isn't a must for that.'

The economy has grown rapidly since the 1970s, but Dutch people's level of satisfaction hasn't increased proportionally, says Van Teijlingen. This makes one wonder what exactly the sacred idea of growth, so deeply ingrained in Western culture, brings us.

Green dreams

Degrowth adepts are often accused of not having their facts straight. But Van Teijlingen tries on the contrary to back her arguments with figures, for instance when it comes to green growth. 'I've heard it said so many times that we should all drive electric cars and fill the Sahara with solar panels. But when I look closely at the statistics I see that an electric car uses eight times more copper than a normal car. So we would need eight times more copper mines than for our current fossil-fuel cars with internal combustion engines. And those mines won't be located in the woods near Radboud University, but in the Amazon.'

As part of her research, Van Teijlingen has made a number of visits to copper and

'It's hard to be a degrowthist and live by it'



The three Nijmegen researchers share a sustainable vision of life.

Karolien van Teijlingen has no driving licence, no car, buys 'very few clothes', and is a vegetarian. **Alenda-Demoutiez** eats less meat, often opts for public transport or cycling, and tries to repair things before buying something new.

André van Hoorn hardly ever buys meat, no longer sprays his garden, turns 'saving energy into a sport', and shares a car with his ex. 'If you want to get richer, you have to be less needy. There is something to be said for curbing human nature via a sense of purpose and community.'

Flying is something all three researchers still do. 'My partner is from Ecuador,' says degrowthist Van Teijlingen. 'I fly there once every two years and combine it with a work trip. If I measure myself on the CO₂ yardstick, it doesn't look great: it's really hard to be a degrowthist and really live by it.'



Van Hoorn has a flight scheduled soon to a conference in Stockholm (he stresses that it is not paid for by the University). 'I could go by train, but with two young children at home, it's too long a journey. In Stockholm, we comment on each other's work. Knowledge exchange benefits from physical proximity; it works better than in an online meeting.'

Degrowthist Juliette Alenda-Demoutiez also flies for her work. 'Unfortunately, I still have to fly because my expertise is participatory policy around climate change in Africa. I looked into whether I could go there by train and boat, but it's too expensive. With colleagues from around the world, I'm now thinking much more about co-creation and collaboration, so there is less need for flying. By the way, I also have a car because I have family and friends in very remote places in France that are almost impossible to reach by public transport.'

gold mines in Brazil and Ecuador. 'I know indigenous leaders who were killed for opposing the coming of a mine, and I've interviewed residents who were chased off their land. For us in the West, the electric car represents freedom and sustainability, but on the other side of the world, the expansion of the electric car fleet leads to lack of freedom and environmental damage.'

Her colleague Alenda-Demoutiez is researching the situation in African mines, where lithium, cobalt and copper are mined: raw materials needed to make green dreams come true. 'One of my main research areas is Congo, where forests, people and animals are victims of cobalt mining. The environment there is under pressure and the industry is flourishing thanks to hazardous child labour.'

Van Teijlingen would welcome a world with less consumption. Why should everyone have their own car? Their own drill? Their own lawnmower? Neighbours can easily share a lawnmower. 'For example, I personally make use of community supported agriculture. It works as follows: if it takes producers two hours to produce my food, I pay them what I earn myself in two hours.'

Asked whether this kind of exchange will not ultimately lead to a communist system, Van Teijlingen replies that this is not something she is necessarily against. 'If you look at the statistics, you see that Cuba has a reasonable level of development and a limited ecological footprint. The country may not be democratic, but healthcare and education are pretty good, while emissions are within limits. Our capitalist economy gifts us great freedom, proponents say. You should ask yourself what this freedom is worth if the planet suffers as a result.'

Static vision

Professor of Economics André van Hoorn doesn't believe the planet will fall victim to more, more, more. He is convinced that growth is also possible within the earth's boundaries. He does think it is realistic for everyone to eventually be able to drive an electric car. If you extend today's calculations, then indeed we need too much copper, as Van Teijlingen argues. But, Van Hoorn argues, that is a static view.

'If copper really is a limiting factor, we will come up with other solutions. First we walked, then we rode horses, and now we drive vehicles with internal combustion engines. Every time we hit a limit, we push beyond it. Degrowth removes that incentive.'

Not only that, but degrowth will make us poorer, he thinks. And it inhibits innovation. Van Hoorn strongly opposes the idea that the economy should stop growing. 'Development costs money. Inventions used to be reserved for the wealthy nobility. Isaac Newton discovered gravity because he had money and therefore also time for research. And look at our health-care system, which is incredibly expensive,



**'DEGROWTH
WILL MAKE US
POORER'**



partly because we are capable of doing fantastic surgery and developing amazing drugs.'

Alenda-Demoutiez often hears that if degrowth leads to less money in the coffers, healthcare may suffer. According to her, medicine, machinery, materials and knowledge (and prosperity in general) are now mostly concentrated in rich countries. 'In the current system, it is therefore primarily the rich countries that decide what to invest in. As a result, relatively little money goes to a malaria vaccine, for example. An important aspect of degrowth is that wealth is distributed more equally and democratically. Programmes around welfare and health should be funded without the need for a constantly growing economy.'

She uses the term 'systemic change' a lot in her speech. As far as she is con-

cerned, this involves much more than economic values alone. She thinks people should focus more on communality than on individuality, which will benefit mental well-being. And don't forget infrastructure, she says. Specifically, the presence of bicycle lanes in a country. 'Systems may or may not make a more sustainable life possible. In the Netherlands, I cycle a lot, but in France it's almost impossible – it's far too dangerous. We need to make room for healthy or green cities.'

Van Teijlingen speaks of the cultural shift that is needed for degrowth. She too mentions bicycles. 'We think we can't get people out of their cars, but we don't

even try to. I could park my car for free in front of my door, but my cargo bike isn't allowed there, even though I use it to transport three people. We also thought it was impossible to fly to the moon, although that may not be the best example in terms of CO₂ emissions,' she says, laughing.

She believes that the University could lead by example. 'In terms of housing, for example, by recycling buildings. I personally have an office in the super-deluxe Maria Montessori building. The idea is that a big, beautiful, new building should be made of new materials. You can be critical of that. And more generally, you can ask yourself what you are training your own students for, what idea of success you are giving them.' *



'THE PRODUCTIONS
I WORK ON **AREN'T**
STANDARD PORN
VIDEOS'

UNUSUAL STUDENT JOBS

WHO: LAURA MEEUWSEN, PSYCHOLOGY STUDENT AT HAN UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES (22)

STUDENT JOB: EROTIC PHOTOGRAPHER (€110 PER HOUR, FREELANCE RATE, VARYING HOURS)

'I work as a photographer and do mostly sex-related jobs. For example, I take nude photos of men and women, but also of porn sets that can be used as teasers on a website. I was already interested in nudity as an adolescent - I went to nude beaches and I've always been very open about sex. Later, when I went to photography school, I was able to combine my interest in sexuality with my interest in photography. My goal is to get people to reveal themselves completely in front of my lens, both physically and personally.

The productions I work on aren't standard porn videos. So no Blonde Hair Big Tits scenarios. There's nothing real about that. I find it important to combine the artistic with the erotic. I'm quite creative and I enjoy playing around with the different aspects: How do I bring out the emotion as purely as possible while making sure the picture also tells a story? That makes this work a lot of fun.

What is less fun is that I sometimes feel judged because of my work. Many people have pre-conceived ideas about the porn industry.

For example, they don't understand how a professional porn film is produced, and they think that the people working on it are constantly horny. I would advise them to engage with people like myself and be more open to other perspectives.'

THE COVETED MO

Can you still get a mortgage if you have student debt? And if so, can you afford more than a garage box? Vox offers a free piece of mortgage advice, courtesy of Karin Boog, financial expert at Vereniging Eigen Huis (Dutch Home Owners Association).

Text: Thijs Doedens / Photo: Getty Images

Let's assume the following hypothetical situation.

The graduate has:

- A student debt of €20,000 (the national average is around €17,000).
- A job with a starting salary of €3,000 gross per month.
- A one-year contract, with the prospect of a permanent contract.
- No savings.
- No partner.

Can you get a mortgage that would allow you to buy more than a garage box?

'Clearly, what you can buy for your money depends on where you are looking, but based on this situation, I made a calculation assuming current interest rates: 4.3%, with a fixed rate for 10 years. If we assume the maximum achievable mortgage, under the new system [i.e. if you started studying after 2015, when the basic grant was abolished, Eds.] you would be able to borrow €160,405 without a student debt. With a student debt, your maximum would be €147,260. That's a difference of more than €13,000. With the old system [if you studied during the time of the basic grant, Eds.], a student debt had even more impact on your mortgage.'

Why are there such big differences between the old and the new student loan system?

'That's because in the old system, student loans had to be repaid within 15 years, and in the new loan system within 35 years. This means that under the new system, your monthly expenses are less affected by your student loan repayments.'

How much of a difference does having a partner have?

'Two people always have more income, which also means more mortgage. In the example above, if we assume that your partner is in the same situation as you, under the old system jointly you can borrow as much as €366,000, without a student debt. If the partners have a joint debt of €40,000, they can borrow a maximum of €314,000.'

What is the smart thing to do once you have found a job: save or pay off your student debt?

'Under the new system, paying off your student debt faster will have little effect on the amount of mortgage you can get. In the old system, it could be advantageous to pay off your debt faster. But if you want to buy a house, you need to have money of your own for additional costs anyway. These days, you need to factor in at least €10,000 for things like notary, valuation or mortgage adviser fees. If you've got no money set aside, you can forget about buying a house in the first place.'

MORTGAGE

Is there anything else you can do to maximise the amount of mortgage you can get with a student debt?

'Simply waiting until 2024 can make a difference. That's when new norms will come into effect, so that a single person will be able to borrow up to €16,000 more than this year. Starting from next year, the energy label of a house will also be a factor. The more energy-efficient your new home, the more you will be able to borrow. For example, for a house with an A+++ label, you'll be able to borrow up to €30,000 more.'

Can't you just not mention your student debt when applying for a mortgage?

'Yes, you can. But lenders may request a printout from DUO or bank statements showing that you pay a monthly amount to DUO. Of course, you may not be paying it off yet, in which case you could simply not mention it. I do have to say, though, that mortgage conditions always specify that if you conceal anything, the lender is entitled to cancel the mortgage. This means that you would be forced to sell the house. If you have an NHG insurance policy [National

Mortgage Guarantee, a safety net for when circumstances prevent you from paying your mortgage, Eds.] and you apply for it, the NHG may refuse to pay out if it turns out that you concealed your student debt. Ultimately, you will be the one to suffer the consequences. Paying off a student debt is an extra financial burden, which you do need to be able to afford alongside your mortgage.'

Will rising interest rates on student loans also affect mortgages?

'On January 1, the interest rates will go up. This increase will in turn affect your monthly expenses, and therefore the maximum amount you can borrow.' ★

'IF YOU'VE GOT NO MONEY SET ASIDE, YOU CAN FORGET ABOUT BUYING A HOUSE'



WHAT DOES IT COST A PROFESSOR?

Time and again, they make the news: professors who are guilty of transgressive behaviour. Not many are dismissed, though, which is strange considering how controversial and extremely expensive such a professor is. How is this possible?

Text: Ken Lambeets
Illustrations: Roel Venderbosch

Paul Bovend'Eert, Professor of Constitutional Law, is amazed that employees who have been found guilty of forms of serious sexual harassment are often allowed to keep their jobs. In an opinion piece on the Vox site, he called on Radboud University to ensure adequate enforcement of rules of conduct and integrity.

Because in Nijmegen, too, professors sometimes cross boundaries. The *Argos* radio programme revealed last summer that between 2017 and 2020, a Psychology professor had sent a Master's student transgressive emails and confessed that he was in love with her. The man was given a warning, which was added to his personnel file as a yellow card. But he was not dismissed. Following new signals and reports, the professor in question is currently subject to a new, independent investigation.

A colleague from the Philosophy department

could not be appointed Dean for reasons of inappropriate behaviour. He was offered a new workspace within the University, after being banned from the Faculty for an extended period of time. He is no longer allowed to teach, but he has retained his position as professor and the corresponding salary.

Growing number of complaints

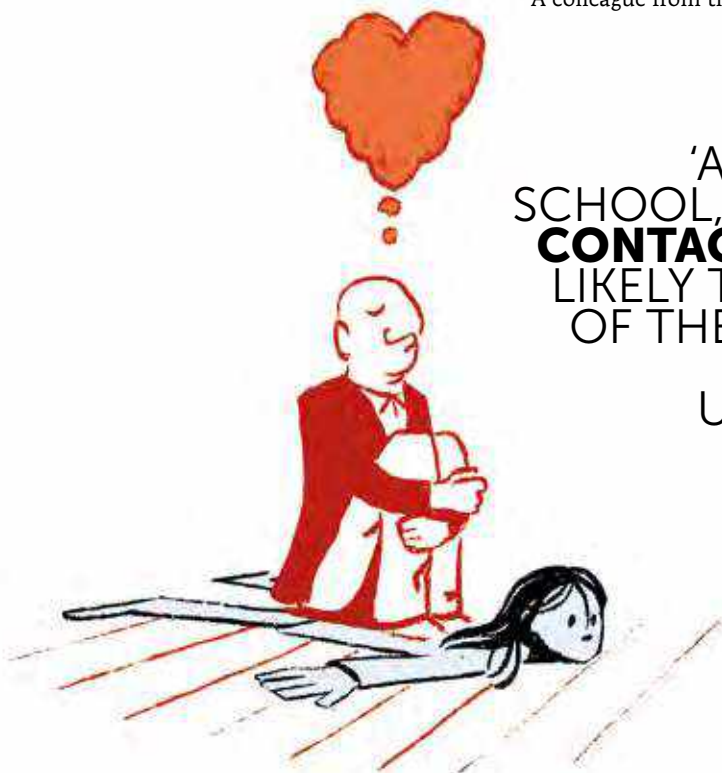
Is it really that hard to show a professor the door? According to Bovend'Eert, it rather depends on what the man in question [these are usually men, Eds.] has done. 'Was he guilty of groping, stalking or suggestive proposals?'

These are things a judge takes into account when a case comes before the subdistrict court, the court of appeal, or the Supreme Court, says Bovend'Eert. The number of lawsuits is growing, as more and more complaints are filed around #MeToo in the workplace, from all kinds of companies and organisations. The corporate culture from which the complaint originates also plays a role, he says. 'At a drama school, for example, physical contact is more likely to be part of the training than at a university.'

'In case law, the question of whether there is a relationship of dependence is very important,' says Bovend'Eert. If that is the case, the judge is far more likely to conclude that seriously culpable behaviour is involved. As a result, the person can be dismissed, either with immediate effect or by termination of the employment contract in the subdistrict court.

Employer and employee can also decide to part ways by mutual agreement, through what is known as a settlement agreement. This almost always includes a confidentiality clause.

'AT A DRAMA SCHOOL, **PHYSICAL CONTACT** IS MORE LIKELY TO BE PART OF THE TRAINING THAN AT A UNIVERSITY'



TO FIRE

A PROFESSOR CAN EVEN BE FIRED FOR TAKING A TOILET ROLL.

FOR WHAT ROLE?

Clear sanctions

Another important consideration is whether the organisation has clear rules, such as a code of conduct or a complaints procedure. And has the person been warned before? Employees need to be well-informed of the consequences of their behaviour, says Marlet Bron. Bron, who works as an employment lawyer at Abeln Bron in Groningen, often defends clients who were guilty of transgressive behaviour at a university.

She gives an example: 'If a university's code of conduct states that employees who take materials home may be dismissed with immediate effect, and you take home a roll of toilet paper, you can be dismissed for it.'

The same applies to an employee who has been given a warning concerning sexually transgressive behaviour. 'The warning letter should state clearly that if certain behaviour recurs, it will result in immediate dismissal.'

Radboud University has a code of conduct and a complaints procedure that sets out various rules, including around sexual intimidation. Employment lawyer Bron told *Vox* last year that the code of conduct should specify more clearly the sanctions in case of transgressive behaviour. →

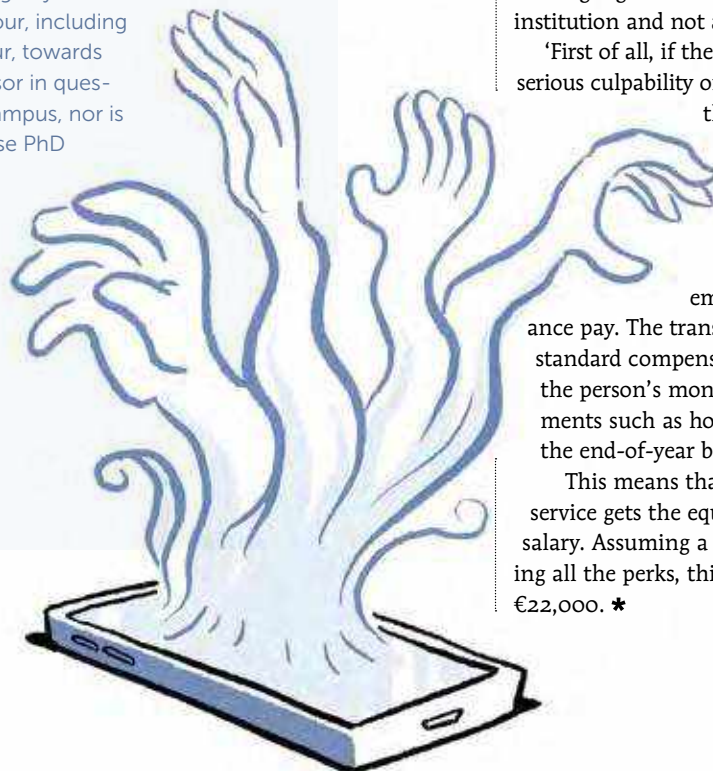


Three professors guilty of transgressive behaviour

Maastricht University is allowed to dismiss a professor from the Faculty of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences who has been found guilty of sexually transgressive behaviour. The subdistrict court announced this last month. Among other things, the professor had a sexual relationship with a woman for whom he acted as lecturer, PhD supervisor, divisional leader, and manager. Several other female employees also filed complaints about the man's sexually transgressive behaviour. The University does not owe the professor any severance pay. The €921 in legal costs are to be paid by the man himself.

Last March, **Utrecht University** fired a professor from the Faculty of Social Sciences for transgressive behaviour. Many reports of a sexual nature, from both inside and outside the University, had been filed about the professor, who had only worked at the University for one year. The professor accepted the dismissal, which meant that the case did not ultimately go to court. Utrecht University agreed not to file for a lawsuit, on the condition that there would be no severance pay and that the University could to some extent publicise the news.

Leiden University announced last year that a professor of Astronomy had for years been guilty of intimidating and undesirable behaviour, including sexually transgressive behaviour, towards female colleagues. The professor in question is no longer allowed on campus, nor is he allowed to teach or supervise PhD candidates. However, he was not fired. He retains his professorial title, and his salary continues to be paid. This decision was based on labour law considerations, the University said.



'WE WANT TO CLARIFY THE CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATING THE CODE OF CONDUCT'

That message has now reached the University. 'We want to clarify the consequences of violating the code of conduct, and when there is cause for internal or external investigation,' President of the Executive Board Daniël Wigboldus and Vice President of the Executive Board Agnes Muskens wrote in an email to all employees in early October.

Severance pay or no severance pay

Another difficult question is whether professors dismissed for sexually transgressive behaviour are entitled to severance pay or not. Two years ago, the Advocate General who advises the Supreme Court called for a clear rule of thumb in case of sexually transgressive behaviour in a dependency situation.

'There's no such rule of thumb at present, which is why different courts make different rulings on this matter,' says Bovend'Eert. 'I hope the judiciary clarifies this soon, so that people no longer get off scot-free at one educational institution and not at another.'

'First of all, if the fault is so great that there is serious culpability on the part of the employee, they are not entitled to transitional severance pay,' explains employment lawyer Bron. If the court rules that there is no 'serious' culpability, an employee is entitled to severance pay. The transitional severance pay is a standard compensation equal to one-third of the person's monthly salary (plus emoluments such as holiday allowance and 1/12 of the end-of-year bonus) per year worked.

This means that a professor with 9 years of service gets the equivalent of three months of salary. Assuming a salary of €6,375, and including all the perks, this amounts to approximately €22,000. *

The new science podcast by **VOX**

In a Nutshell

with Jara Majerus & Antonia Leise

Why do humans believe in monsters?

What do noses have to do with soil health?

And what's the role of randomness in the universe?

Listen on Spotify!

We don't have the answer to all those questions - but the experts we invite do.

VALKHOF MUSEUM
in samenwerking met Radboud Universiteit

into the **BLACK HOLE**

17 oktober 2023
– 19 april 2024

Foto: Mafra/Anadolu Live/First, Discoveries in Space/Time, 2018

Vallei Autoverhuur

Bij ons staat uw gemak voorop

Huur per uur mogelijk

Sterke merken en een jong wagenpark

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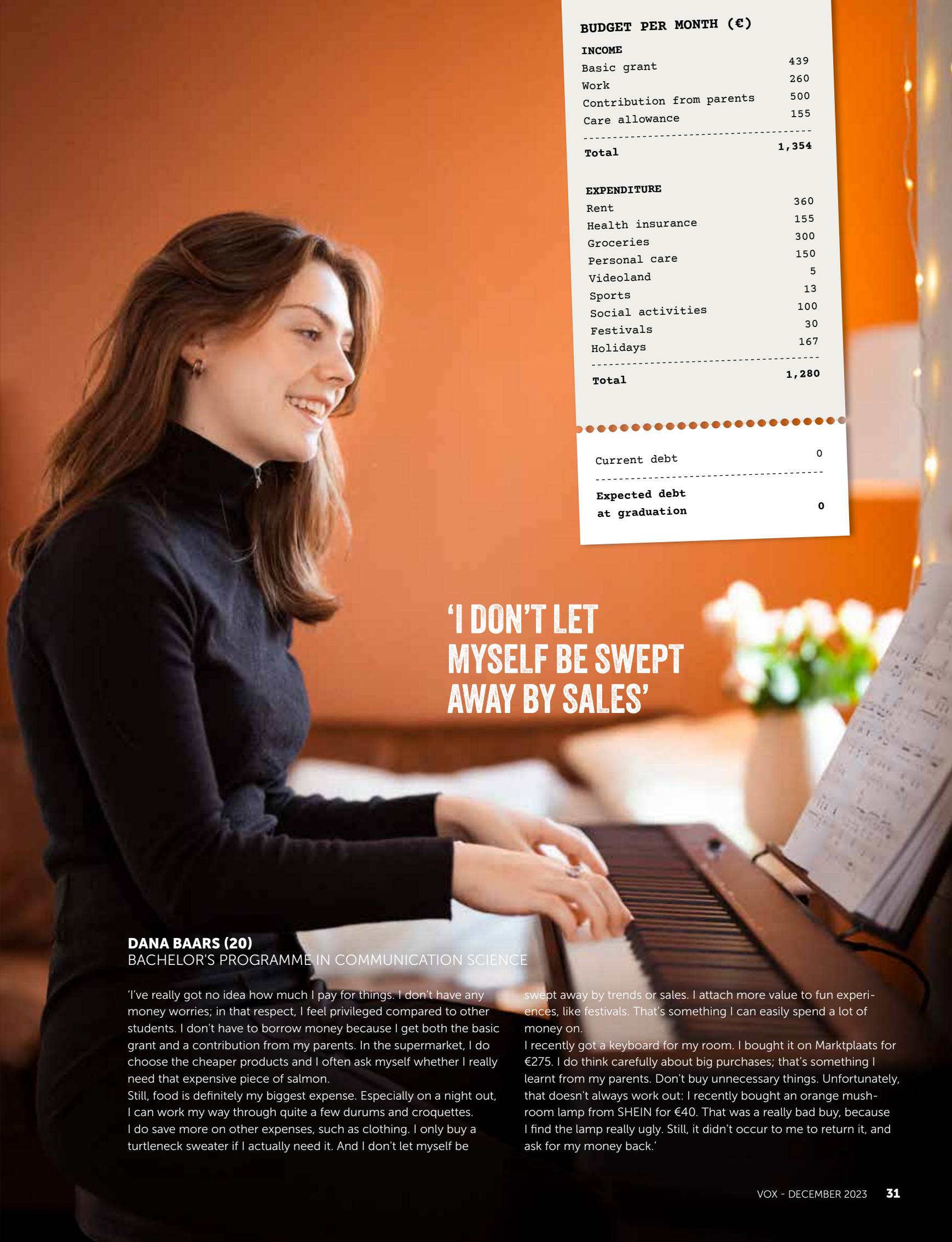
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Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen 

OUR MONEY

For members of the unlucky generation, it's not unusual to graduate with a student debt of €50,000. No student loan equals no bread on the table. So what do students' household accounts look like? Dana, Victor and Heske offer an insight into their finances.

Text: Maaike Hollestelle and Julie Rasing / **Photos:** Johannes Fiebig



BUDGET PER MONTH (€)

INCOME	
Basic grant	439
Work	260
Contribution from parents	500
Care allowance	155

Total	1,354
EXPENDITURE	
Rent	360
Health insurance	155
Groceries	300
Personal care	150
Videoland	5
Sports	13
Social activities	100
Festivals	30
Holidays	167

Total	1,280
Current debt	0

Expected debt at graduation	0

'I DON'T LET MYSELF BE SWEEPED AWAY BY SALES'

DANA BAARS (20)
BACHELOR'S PROGRAMME IN COMMUNICATION SCIENCE

'I've really got no idea how much I pay for things. I don't have any money worries; in that respect, I feel privileged compared to other students. I don't have to borrow money because I get both the basic grant and a contribution from my parents. In the supermarket, I do choose the cheaper products and I often ask myself whether I really need that expensive piece of salmon.

Still, food is definitely my biggest expense. Especially on a night out, I can work my way through quite a few durums and croquettes. I do save more on other expenses, such as clothing. I only buy a turtleneck sweater if I actually need it. And I don't let myself be

swept away by trends or sales. I attach more value to fun experiences, like festivals. That's something I can easily spend a lot of money on.

I recently got a keyboard for my room. I bought it on Marktplaats for €275. I do think carefully about big purchases; that's something I learnt from my parents. Don't buy unnecessary things. Unfortunately, that doesn't always work out: I recently bought an orange mushroom lamp from SHEIN for €40. That was a really bad buy, because I find the lamp really ugly. Still, it didn't occur to me to return it, and ask for my money back.'

'I BORROW AS MUCH AS I CAN'

VICTOR BRUYNEL (23)

PRE-MASTER'S PROGRAMME IN COMMUNICATION SCIENCE

'Since last summer, I am a board member at student tennis association Slow. So, I've got less time for work this year than in previous years. I've got a part-time job as a sales assistant at Blokker, which is partly where I get my money from. Being in my seventh year of study, this is the last year I can borrow money from DUO. I borrow as much as I can. I still have to figure out how I will get money after that.

I also get money from my parents because I'm not entitled to the basic grant and because I suffered from financial stress, like lots of other students. I'm lucky that my parents can help out, but I find it hard to ask them for money. I just think I should be able to take care of myself, financially. The money I get for my year on the board is also nothing to write home about, and I don't get it paid into my account until the end of the academic year anyway. But of course, board work isn't something you do for money.

This year, I moved out of my parents' house, and I joined a student sports club. Those are both extra expenses, but they are well worth it to me.'

BUDGET PER MONTH (€)

INCOME

Basic grant	Not eligible
Work	350
Loan from DUO	1,028
Contribution from parents	350
Care allowance	155

Total	1,883

EXPENDITURE

Rent	405
Health insurance	148
Groceries	140
Personal care	80
Telephone contract	11
Spotify	3
Sports	17
Going out	300
Public transport (OV)	36
Holidays/weekends away	120

Total	1,260

Current debt 41,733

Expected debt at graduation 52,000

'WILL I STILL BE ABLE TO BUY A HOUSE?'



BUDGET PER MONTH (€)

INCOME

Basic grant	Not eligible
Work	0
Loan from parents	750
Contribution from parents	110
Care allowance	155

Total	1,015

EXPENDITURE

Rent	355
Health insurance	142
Other insurances	20
Groceries	200
Personal care	120
Telephone contract	11
Spotify	5
Sports	25
Social activities	50
Holidays	125
Charity (Greenpeace)	7
Weekends away	50

Total	1,110

Current debt at DUO: 34,011
with parents: 4,000

Expected debt at graduation 50,000

HESKE BOEVE (23)

MASTER'S PROGRAMME IN ENVIRONMENT & SOCIETY STUDIES

'Because of the interest rate being raised to 2.56%, I stopped borrowing money from DUO. I've already accumulated a substantial debt at DUO, of over €34,000. Now I borrow from my parents, at no interest. During my Bachelor's study programme in Groningen, I really lived like a student: I spent a lot of my money on beer and going out. But now that I am doing my Master's, I'm far too busy for that. I don't have a specific budget for social activities, especially now I've moved to a new city. I see such activities more as an investment in meeting new people, which is worth every penny to me. I can honestly say that my student debt and this recent interest rate increase do make me nervous about the future. How am I going to manage it all later? Will I still be able to buy a house?

My best purchases are my phone and my laptop. Especially my phone, which I bought second-hand and which has already lasted five years. My best money tip for students: check your phone contract, because there are much cheaper deals to be had. I switched to another provider and I now pay half as much, only €11. It's a question of comparing different providers. And make a savings plan. That way, you really become a lot more aware of your spending.'

A MEGA GRANT IS NOT AN ATM MACHINE

€97 million for a fully automated chemistry lab, €80 million towards artificial intelligence in education. Radboud University is winning one mega grant after another. How do you spend such immense sums of money effectively? 'You have to be careful not to become a small NWO.'

Text: Stan van Pelt / Photos: Erik van 't Hullenaar

€101 million. That was the amount Wilhelm Huck and his colleagues initially arrived at when calculating their grant application to the National Growth Fund. Now, if we get below that psychological threshold of 100 million, we will surely have a slightly better chance, thought the Professor of Physical-Organic Chemistry. So they adjusted their plans. 'We managed to get it down to 99 million, but that didn't feel right either. It made us look like the Lidl discount among Growth Fund applications.'

In the end, they applied for €97 million. In April last year, the good news came from The Hague: their project proposal for a Robot Lab had been approved. The staggering amount was a new high on an already impressive list. Brand-new Professor of Educational Sciences Inge Molenaar was also awarded a Growth Fund grant: €80 million for research on artificial intelligence in education. And last year, Professor of Neuroscience Francesco Battaglia was awarded €21.9 million by the Dutch Research Council (NWO) for research into the workings of the brain.

These are sums that an average researcher will not even raise in the course of a decades-long career. Is it really necessary to spend so much money on a single project? And how do you spend all those millions? To start with the first question: such grants are essential to achieve real innovation. At least that is Huck's firm belief, as he tells us in his study on the third floor of the Huygens building.



Beer or medicine

Consider his own Robot Lab project, which aims to build a fully automated chemistry lab, where robots take over all human operations. Pipetting, mixing substances, placing samples into analytical devices – these are still relatively labour-intensive operations that take up a good part of the working day of chemistry researchers and lab technicians. In this respect, not much has changed since the time of the alchemists in the sixteenth century. The idea is that at the Robot Lab, autonomous robots will take over this manual work. Regardless of whether you want to make beer, medicine, or paint, all processes will be streamlined by artificial intelligence.

You don't build this kind of fully automated yet multifunctional lab on a small grant, Huck argues. 'It costs tens of millions in investments. It's something everyone in the chemical and food industries wants, but developing it is too risky for companies, due to the complexity. So without public investment, it will never get off the ground.' The National Growth Fund should counter this kind of 'market failure'. The money comes from the budget of the Ministry of Economic Affairs.

Still, €97 million? You could also use this money to build an entire new university building, like the Maria Montessori building (price tag: €75 million). Or almost a city bridge like the Oversteek (€148 million). Aren't these more sensible uses of public funds? According to Huck, you should also think of the Robot Lab as a major infrastructure project. 'We also have to deliver a physical product, namely a lab that companies and other institutions can use.'

'And nearly €100 million may sound like a lot,' says grant advisor Pieter Jan Boon, who was closely involved in Huck's application, 'but this money is spread over



Wilhelm Huck:

**'AN ADVANCED
PIPETTING ROBOT
CAN EASILY COST
€600,000'**

eight years and five project partners.' Huck may be a figurehead, but there are dozens of researchers in the consortium. Apart from Radboud University staff, there are researchers from Eindhoven University of Technology, the University of Groningen, Fontys University of Applied Sciences, and physics institute AMOLF. Per partner, this amounts to an annual budget of €0.8 to €3 million, Boon calculates. 'This changes the perspective considerably, bringing it much more in line with a large individual research grant.' For example, a five-year ERC Advanced Grant can go up to €3 million. By comparison, Radboud University has approximately €700 million in annual revenue.

No transfer

With mega projects, a lot of things work differently. For example, there is no maximum budget to apply for. Huck explains that this requires a totally different approach from, say, a Vidi grant proposal, which allows researchers with several years of experience to set up their own research group. Vidi grants always amount to maximum €800,000, enough for the salary of the applicant, one or two PhD candidates, and some equipment.

The Growth Fund works the other way round: the project goal, in Huck's case an automated lab, is central, and from there you determine what you think you will need to get there. Huck: 'You can only make an overall estimate, not a detailed calculation.' Approximately how many people will you need and how much do they cost? And how much equipment? Eventually, this is how you arrive at a list with numbers of PhD candidates, postdocs, and material.

In practice, the vast majority of the Robot Lab project's budget (about 80%) is spent on people and material. In this context, the Chemistry Professor estimates that the

ratio of staff costs to materials is about 3:1, compared to 5:1 for an NWO grant. 'Our goal is to create an autonomous lab. So we need to invest a lot in analytical tools. An advanced pipetting robot can easily cost €600,000.' Another important difference is that the Growth Fund money is not simply transferred all at once to the University's bank account. 'That is a big misunderstanding,' sighs Boon. Payout is incremental. In October or November of this year, the government will transfer the first four-year tranche of €51 million. In practice, that money is transferred in annual portions. Boon: 'The second tranche has to be applied for separately in four years' time. Every year we have to account for our spending, and halfway through the project there's a substantive evaluation.'

Five major grants with Radboud University as project leader

ROBOT LAB

€97 million

NOLAI

€80 million

LANGUAGE IN INTERACTION

€26.7 million

THE DUTCH BRAIN INTERFACES INITIATIVE

€21.9 million

DYNAMIC (14 TESLA MRI SCANNER)

€19 million

There's also no guarantee that every partner will simply get the money that was reserved. The plan, Huck explains, is that all consortium members will soon be able to apply for funds from the project board, which will honour the project ideas that best match each other in terms of content. The project board is part of a specially created foundation that is separate from the University; its members are Huck and the principal investigators of the other project partners. The foundation is allocated the money and channels it back to the universities concerned.

Trial and error

While Huck is still in the starting blocks of his new mega project, neuroscientist Peter Hagoort has almost crossed the finish line. Ten years ago, a research consortium that he led was awarded a €26.7 million NWO grant for the Language in Interaction project, a study of the biological, linguistic, and psychological aspects of human language. Three quarters of the budget went to Nijmegen: to the Donders Institute, the Max Planck Institute (MPI), and the Centre for Language Studies of the Faculty of Arts. The project is due to end in June 2024.

Managing such a large research programme involves trial and error, Hagoort reflects in his MPI office. 'You have to be especially careful not to become a small NWO.' What he means by that is that researchers might start to see the consortium as a glorified ATM machine for raising money for their existing research projects. 'What we wanted was to tackle big questions that can only be answered by working together.'

Overhead costs

Researchers sometimes complain about the money they spend on overhead costs. This is the amount the University skims from a grant to pay for general expenses. Think accommodation, cleaning, and secretarial support. 'From my last ERC Advanced project, I had to pay half a million euros to the Faculty, which is 20%,' grumbles Professor of Physical-Organic Chemistry Wilhelm Huck. 'Of course, the University also has to pay its electricity bill, but those overhead costs also go to a thousand and one things, and I do wonder how essential they are. Think valorisation, coaching, and communication departments.' Huck fears that it may even lead to competitive disadvantage. 'On an ERC application, I have to specify

that the grant needs to fund 30% of my salary. When of course, my salary will get paid anyway. At other universities, you only have to specify that you will devote 30% of your time to the project. So then you have some money left for, say, an additional PhD candidate.' The differences between universities, says grant advisor Pieter Jan Boon, are not so much related to ERC requirements (which are the same everywhere), but to how grant winners can compensate for that 30% extra time and income. Some may reduce their teaching hours, while others get additional PhD candidates. 'That is something grant winners agree on with their faculty. This is custom work and it varies per university or even faculty.'



That is why, just as with Wilhelm Huck's Robot Lab, the Language in Interaction funds were not distributed all at once to all the researchers involved. 'That isn't possible with such a large and long-term project,' says Hagoort. 'This kind of consortium is like a living organism that goes through all kinds of new developments in its lifetime. For example, you want to do follow-up experiments based on new research.' Moreover, the composition of the consortium is constantly changing: people are constantly dropping out or joining in. 'In fact, sadly, two of the professors involved, Anne Cutler and Pieter Muysken, have passed away.'

Cross-pollination

To spend the funds most effectively, Hagoort and consorts opted for a construction that was similar to Huck's. Consortium members could submit applications to a scientific board composed of researchers who were not involved in the project. The best rated plans were honoured. Plans from researchers who had never worked together before were given priority in this regard. Hagoort: 'This is how you encourage mutual cross-pollination.' At a later stage, the project managers drew up Five Big Questions that were to become central to the project. One of these questions was: Why does language capacity differ from person to person? Why are some people more eloquent than others or are able to learn a foreign language more easily? The answer lay in differences in how brain regions are connected. This was revealed by running scans with hundreds of subjects – from less educated to highly educated, and from young to old. Hagoort: 'This kind of groundbreaking research is logistically impossible to do in the context of a small project.' In hindsight, he would have liked to do some things differently, Hagoort now says. Like formulate those Five Big Questions earlier. 'Everyone wanted to get started as soon as the money was allocated. This makes sense, but it actually would have been better to write a position paper [a theoretical paper with hypotheses, Eds.] as a consortium at the start. That way you work together right from the start.'



Peaks and valleys

Hagoort and Huck are aware of the fact that they are in a luxury position. And to be honest, Language in Interaction could in retrospect have done with a few million less, Hagoort thinks. Still, he says, there is a lot to be said for large grants like the Growth Fund and NWO's Gravity Programme. And not only because of the economies of scale. 'You need peaks and valleys in the scientific landscape, not flat lowlands. If you have top-notch research in house, you should continue to encourage it. Otherwise, foreign talent will stop coming here.'

Incidentally, this doesn't mean that top research should come at the expense of smaller disciplines, he stresses. 'Today's society needs a broad knowledge immune system. That's why I think that Starter Grants [€156 million to support starting assistant professors, Eds.] are also very welcome.'

A major focus for Huck and Hagoort is the period after their mega projects. Hagoort: 'You want to prevent everything from collapsing like a plum pudding.' That is why he is currently applying for a large follow-up grant within the new NWO Summit programme. Tenure track researchers have also been appointed within the consortium and these positions are now funded by the relevant faculties in Nijmegen and Amsterdam.

Within Huck's Robot Lab, people are also already working to guarantee continuity, says grant advisor Boon. For example, the intention is for companies to start investing in the lab, hopefully making more funding available in a few years' time. 'That's why it's called the Growth Fund.' Within the project, €11 million has been set aside for this purpose. The lab will ultimately have to keep running once the subsidy pot is empty, and the foundation will become a company: Robot Lab Ltd. Provided the researchers can deliver on their promises, of course. Huck is hopeful, but gives no guarantees. 'I personally don't know yet whether it will work out, but that's inherent in this type of research. It really is high risk, high gain.' *



Peter Hagoort:

'THIS KIND OF
**GROUND-
BREAKING
RESEARCH IS
LOGISTICALLY
IMPOSSIBLE IN
THE CONTEXT
OF A SMALL
PROJECT'**



COLUMN

Lucy's law

Lucienne van der Geld is a lecturer in Notarial Law and director of Netwerk Notarissen.

Criminal inheritance

Money doesn't stink. The Romans were already saying it: *pecunia non olet*. Incidentally, I often cite the Romans in stories and lectures, ever since discovering, thanks to a small hype on social media last summer, that men think about the Roman Empire on average several times a day.

But that bit is a misunderstanding. About money not stinking, I mean. Money does stink sometimes. For example, when you inherit from a deceased criminal. In fact, heirs may be found guilty of money laundering if they accept a 'criminal' inheritance.

The criminal record of Heineken kidnapper Willem Holleeder reveals that his sister Sonja made a deal with the Ministry of Justice about 'returning' the inheritance of her late partner (and fellow kidnapper) Cor van Hout. This allowed her to avoid criminal justice herself. The average Dutch person is not married or related to a criminal, so you'd think things aren't that bad. But that remains to be seen: a person who inherits from someone who has committed tax or social security fraud can also end up in trouble.

When you receive a gift, you don't usually look the gift horse in the mouth. But according to a Rotterdam judge, that is precisely what a daughter should have done when her mother suddenly started giving her substantial gifts. For five years, the mother transferred substantial sums to the daughter's bank account, or gave her cash and other presents. The question the daughter should have asked, but didn't, was how could her mother afford all this, given her job. The mother turned out to have embezzled half a million from her employer, a trustee foundation. And the daughter? She also ended up in front of a criminal court for culpable money laundering and handling stolen money.

So my tip is: sniff money first, before you take it. Because it may well stink.



UNUSUAL STUDENT JOBS

WHO: KAS RAPSTOK, SOCIOLOGY STUDENT (21)

STUDENT JOB: WATCHING SPORTS EVENTS FOR SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH (€30 PER MATCH, AN AVERAGE OF TWO TO THREE MATCHES PER WEEKEND)

'I work for the Mulier Institute, which conducts scientific research on sports behaviour. I follow local football and hockey matches at different levels and keep track of the players' behaviour in terms of how sportsmanlike or unsportsmanlike they are. I use a mobile app to do this. I just sit in the stands, and if there's a foul or an altercation, I report it in the app. I also note when a player corrects their fellow players' misbehaviour. Overall, the matches are pretty sportsman-

like. Sometimes fights break out. Watching from the stands, I think: What's all the fuss? But I do understand: I play football myself, and if I was on the pitch, I might react just as strongly.

The craziest thing I ever saw was during a senior football match. The players of the away team were so unhappy with the referee that they even wanted to walk off the pitch. The teams kept calling each other "childish" and ridiculing one another. And that for a match at just veteran level.'



'THE TEAMS KEPT
CALLING EACH
OTHER 'CHILDISH'
AND **RIDICULING**
ONE ANOTHER'

GOING BACK HOME

BECAUSE YOU'VE RUN OUT OF MONEY

Studying abroad is not only an enriching educational experience – but also an expensive one. So, how do the 2580 international students currently enrolled at Radboud University finance their stay in Nijmegen?

Text: Antonia Leise and Mirell Leskov / **Photos:** Bert Beelen

Whether through governmental aid, private loans, scholarships, part-time jobs, or family support – when it comes to international student financing, many roads lead to Rome. Or, more precisely, to Nijmegen. Some student finance is not only notoriously generous, it can also be taken abroad. For a single Icelandic student, for example, the monthly student finance by the Icelandic state that a student can take to the Netherlands amounts to a whopping €1,555.72 per month in 2023 – not including an additional grant to cover tuition fees.

High fees

Many international students, however, don't receive any governmental student finance and are entirely dependent on alternative forms of financing, including scholarships. The latter is especially crucial for non-EU students who

pay the much higher institutional tuition fee that can amount to an annual €22,000 for some studies. Because of that, the most competitive Radboud scholarships are aimed at these non-EU students; these include the Radboud Scholarship Programme and the Radboud Encouragement Scholarship, established in 2008 and 2021 by a decision of the Executive Board. The scholarships respectively offer either partial or full funding of those higher tuition fees, and also cover some additional costs.

Faculty funding

And then there are some faculty scholarships. One of them is the scholarship awarded to international students, either from within the EU or outside of it, in the Research Master in philosophy. 'Sometimes, we have a candidate we would like to offer our faculty scholarship to, but even with the scholarship, they wouldn't be able to come here because it covers only part of the costs,' explains Frank van Caspel, coordinator of the philosophy Research Master.

When the faculty's scholarship isn't enough, the department has opted in the past to combine its own scholarship with a university-wide scholarship like the Radboud Scholarship Programme. This year, four international students are receiving their faculty's scholarship for the philosophy Research Master – quite a high number, considering that only 17 international students are currently enrolled in the programme. ★



PARKER WINKEL (20, USA)
HAS TAKEN OUT A PRIVATE LOAN
FROM A US BANK

'No money for a Master's programme'

'By the end of my first year, my money was running out and I was starting to panic. Until then, I had lived off my savings. In the U.S., we have Federal Student Aid (FSA). Radboud, however, isn't eligible for FSA, because it never applied for it. Other universities in the Netherlands, Maastricht for example, are eligible. So, for my second year, I had to take out a private loan. I finally found just one bank in the entire state of Virginia that would lend me money – without breaking my kneecaps if I couldn't pay them back! This year, I joined the Student Council, partly because I wanted

to campaign for Radboud applying to become an FSA-eligible school. This would make a huge difference for a lot of American students – you can take out a bigger loan, the interest rate is lower than for a private loan and you can defer it. And I believe it would be a financial gain for Radboud as well. More Americans would apply and pay the high institutional tuition fees. You can obviously make the case that we don't have the space and that we're already overrun. Frankly, I think it's perfectly reasonable to cut down the number of students that go to university, but the basis on

which they are admitted should never be their ability to afford it. Right now, delaying my studies is not an option, because I won't be able to lend more money to cover the costs for even a single additional semester. By the time I graduate with my Bachelor's, I will have run up a debt of around 30,000 dollars. If Radboud were to become an FSA-eligible school within the time frame of this year, I would love to stay on for my Master's. But I'm not confident enough to believe that this will happen and that I will be able to benefit from this by next year.'

'It's not a very accessible system'

I finance around 80% of my studies through Bafög, which is the German state's student loan, similar to the Dutch DUO. At present, I receive €720 per month. To apply for Bafög, you have to go through a very extensive procedure, you have to re-apply every year and whether you receive it depends a lot on your parents' income. On top of that, it takes them a very long time to process your request.

Last year, I re-applied for my Bafög in July, as I wanted to receive it by the time the new study year started in September. In the end, I had to wait until February before I got any money – and I'm not the only one who had issues like that. I had to live off my savings, ask my parents for help, and borrow money from my stepsister. I wanted to do an Erasmus

exchange during my third year, but because I'd used up my savings and didn't know when I would receive the money, my financial situation was too insecure to apply for it. I can't even imagine what this must be like for people who don't have any savings or supportive parents. Even during the application process, you need a lot of information from your parents – and that can put unnecessary pressure on young people who aren't on good terms with them. I think the application process being so complicated stops a lot of people from getting the financial help they deserve. It's not a very accessible system. It sometimes almost feels as if it's working against you – they don't want you to get the money you are legally owed.'



Lisa Adler (22, Germany) receives German student finance (Bafög)





Tanima Nigama (27, India)
studies on a Radboud
Encouragement Scholarship

'I can't really put money aside'

'Financial support was the most important factor determining my choice of study. I'm originally from India and I'm currently doing a Research Master in philosophy fully funded through the Radboud Encouragement Scholarship. That means that my tuition is paid for the duration of the programme and that my visa, immigration and residence permit fees and student insurance package are all covered. In addition to that, I also get a stipend of €960 per month to cover my living expenses.

Being awarded a scholarship can be very competitive because there is only a certain number of placements for each faculty. I got the only one that was available for the Faculty of Philosophy, Theology and Religious Studies. And you do, of course, have to do some extra work and submit a separate application for the scholarship in addition to your application for the Master's.

Despite the scholarship covering quite a lot, money can still be tight. I can't really put any money aside for emergencies. One way to save up is to work, but as a non-European citizen, you need to apply for a work permit, which takes time. You also need to have basic Dutch health insurance to be able to work and the premium for that won't be covered by the scholarship.'

Did you know?

Some international students from within the EU are also eligible for Dutch student finance (DUO). Internationals enrolled at a Dutch university are, for example, eligible if they have lived in the Netherlands for five consecutive years, work for at least 32 hours a month or have an income of at least 50% of the social security norm (in 2023, 50% of the norm is €597.83 per month, €147.60 if you are younger than 21). For more information, visit the DUO website.



DESEM'S (CHRISTMAS) MENU

THREE COURSES FOR A MEASLY €30

At Vox's request, Tobias van Slooten of Pizzacafé DESEM put together a cheap and not too complicated three-course menu. Ideal for anyone on a tight budget who still wants to impress their friends and family.

Text: Ken Lambeets / Photos: Johannes Fiebig

Because of inflation, a lot of students are struggling to make ends meet. How can you cook a tasty Christmas menu for your friends with little money? Tobias van Slooten can help. He is the owner of Pizzacafé DESEM. 'We make sourdough pizzas with local grains from the mill around the corner, plus a few other dishes,' he explains in the kitchen of his restaurant on Smetiusstraat. 'We serve beer and natural wine to accompany our pizzas.'

What is his favourite pizza? 'I've eaten so many pizzas in my life, but at the end of the day a simple Margherita tastes the best.'

Schnitzel paradise

In his previous life, Van Slooten was a student at Radboud University. 'I once tried to study political science, but one exam was enough to make me realise that it wasn't my thing,' he says, laughing. The restaurant owner then switched to history, and earned himself a Bachelor's degree.

But much more than the lecture hall, the catering industry is Van Slooten's natural habitat. At 14, he already had a job at a Balkan grill restaurant in Groningen. 'A schnitzel paradise, so to speak. I loved it.'

Towards the end of his studies in Nijmegen, Van Slooten worked as a sommelier at De Nieuwe Winkel, which has since twice been named best vegetable restaurant in the world and has two Michelin stars. It was here that the idea

of starting his own restaurant came to fruition. He joined forces with a colleague who had similar plans, and opened Pizzacafé DESEM.

'When the pandemic hit and the restaurant had to close for a while, I wondered if I'd made the right decision. At the time, we were still a start-up, so it was pretty stressful. But fortunately, pizzas also lend themselves to takeaway service. It was an incredibly boring period, but we came through it fairly well.'

Frozen pizzas

During the pandemic, they also had the idea of making and selling frozen pizzas in addition to takeaway. 'Five years ago, I would have laughed at the suggestion, but we ended up doing it. We now sell frozen pizzas in several shops in Nijmegen, Arnhem, Utrecht, Tilburg and Ede.'

Would he advise other people to start a pizzeria, from a financial point of view? Van Slooten laughs loudly. 'No way. But I studied history, which is also not recommended if you want a healthy financial future.'

So it's better not to ask Van Slooten how to get rich, but rather how to make devilled eggs, gnocchi, or panna cotta. He shares his recipes with the Vox team like an accomplished TV chef. 'Personally, I always enjoyed watching Jamie Oliver the most,' he says. 'He made cooking look like so much fun. And he also made really tasty dishes. I'm curious to see if I can do the same.' *

**WANT TO SEE HOW
VAN SLOOTEN
PULLED IT OFF?**

You can watch
the cooking video
on Voxweb





THE RECIPES

(for four people)

STARTER

Devilled eggs

INGREDIENTS: 8 EGGS, MAYONNAISE, PAPRIKA, CHIVES, PEPPER AND SALT.

Preparation: Boil the eggs for eight minutes and peel them. Cut the eggs in half and remove the yolks with a small spoon, or with your hands. Mix the yolks with a spoonful of French mayonnaise, salt and pepper. Put the mixture in a piping bag and fill the egg whites with it. Garnish with paprika and chives.

MAIN COURSE

Gnocchi with mushrooms

INGREDIENTS: 400 G BOILED FLOURY POTATOES, 180 G SEMOLINA, 500 G MIXED MUSHROOMS, SAGE, BUTTER, GARLIC, PARMESAN, CRÈME FRAÎCHE, SALT AND PEPPER.

Preparation: Boil the potatoes until tender (until they fall off your fork or knife when you prick them) and drain them. Mash them with a fork; if you want extra tasty gnocchi, press them through a sieve with a spoon. Mix with the semolina and knead for 10 minutes to form a smooth, not too sticky dough. Roll the dough into a ball and let it rest in cling film for 15 minutes. Divide the dough into four equal pieces. Roll these pieces into long sausages, from which you cut the gnocchi. Let the gnocchi rest on a plate under a towel.

Now make the sauce. Quarter the mushrooms and finely chop the sage. Heat a pan on the cooker. Put in lots of butter (or olive oil). Add the mushrooms and sage to the pan and fry the mixture for a while on a high heat. Turn down the heat a little and add the garlic. Add salt and pepper.

Cook the gnocchi in liberally salted water. The gnocchi are ready when they float up to the surface. Add the gnocchi to the sauce together with a spoonful of crème fraîche, Parmesan, and some cooking liquid. Let the sauce thicken for a while. Serve with some more Parmesan.

INVITATION

Have you tried the Vox menu and are you proud of the results? We'd love to hear about your findings, and to see photos of the dishes, so don't hesitate to email them to redactie@vox.ru.nl.



Chicory salad

INGREDIENTS: 5 CHICORY STALKS, CRÈME FRAÎCHE, OLIVE OIL, VINEGAR OR LEMON JUICE, PEPPER, SALT, CHIVES.

Preparation: For the dressing: Mix one tablespoon of crème fraîche, olive oil, vinegar (or lemon juice) and salt and pepper in a large bowl. Remove the leaves from the chicory, add them to the dressing and stir. Arrange the chicory in a tower on a plate. Garnish with chopped chives.

DESSERT

Buttermilk panna cotta

INGREDIENTS: 200 ML SINGLE CREAM, 315 ML BUTTERMILK, 2 GELATINE LEAVES, 40 G SUGAR (FOR THE PANNA COTTA) AND EXTRA SUGAR FOR THE CARAMEL SAUCE, VANILLA POD (OPTIONAL, AS MORE EXPENSIVE).

Preparation: Soak the gelatine in cold water. Heat the cream with sugar and stir the gelatine into the mixture. Remove from the heat for a moment. Mix in the buttermilk and add a vanilla pod if you want. Pour the panna cotta into pretty cups and let it set in the fridge for at least six hours. Shortly before serving, make the caramel sauce. To do this, caramelize the sugar in a pan. Heat the whipping cream and pour it into the caramel. Then pour the caramel over the panna cotta. Allow to cool briefly and serve.

POEM

CAMPUS CAPITAL

The headlines in the *Vox* have become DIY:

“_insert faculty/institute/students_ have to save money.”

I've only been able to collect and revise some advice,
which I think you need to heed:

we all need to pitch in,
so for one no oat-milk lattes in their kitchen
and no particle accelerator for the other.

We shouldn't even bother with all those books
and go for downloads, to book some profit
and load up on internet, let go of
printer ink, because I couldn't think
of a worse expense than colour posters.

And we'll pose even less of a problem with drastic daily sacrifice,
only one cromptouce a week, two frikandel-fritters (vegetarian, of course)
and one juice box tops,

you'll see that we're not shopping for water-waste
so the way forward is bring-your-own-water-toilets
and will let our top researchers start a million-dollar search
for the way our money should be spent.

That's how we learn to fend for ourselves
and deal with our campus capital.

THIJS KERSTEN
CAMPUS POET 23/24

COLOPHON

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