

Crossing BORDERS

University of Twente - University of Münster



This special is a co-production of UT Nieuws (University of Twente) and wissen | leben (University of Münster).

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Crossing BORDERS

Internationalization is a hot topic at many universities, and so it is for Münster and Twente. Both institutions are looking for partnerships all over the globe. In Asia, Africa and Latin America for example they are signing 'memorandums of understanding' about the exchange of students and common research projects. Contacts and contracts all around the world should attract more (and higher educated) international master students and should bring in funds for large research programmes.

In an ever more globalizing world it is crucial to have intercontinental partnerships. Though, one of your strongest international connections might even be closer than the nearest domestic university. The universities of Twente (UT) and Münster (WWU) have been partners since 1979, being within 45 minutes driving distance from each other. What once started as a cooperation on three biomedicine projects concerning a knee joint simulator, has now grown into a collaboration in 35 individual projects, within a broad range of subjects, from scientific projects to joint degrees and staff exchange.

And still it is rather unknown that Münster and Twente collaborate this much, and that they would even like to strengthen their ties, as you can read in a joint interview with the chairmen of both universities. Collaboration will only be successful if students and staff from both sides find each other. In this special issue we would like to give an impression of the many links between the neighbouring universities. Read for example how students and teaching staff experience studying and working at the other side of the border. Learn about the chances for joint research projects in nanotechnology or health psychology. And discover what Enschede and Münster can learn from each other.

This Crossing Borders special is also an example of cooperation between Münster and Twente itself. The editorial staff of UT Nieuws and wissen | leben met during an inspiring working visit last spring. The idea for a joint magazine was born at that moment. Hopefully the stories about Münster and Twente will give you as much inspiration as we've got. And to conclude: even if you don't have study or work reasons to come to Münster or Enschede, both cities are also worth a visit as a tourist!

Paul de Kuyper, editor UT Nieuws
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COLOPHON

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Interview Ursula Nelles and Victor van der Chijs

REMOVING THE VIRTUAL BORDER

The universities of Münster and Twente have been collaborating since 1979, but in their search for common research funding they still have to deal with the border that lies between them. 'We don't very easily find programmes that are suitable for cross-border collaboration.' By extending the network to Groningen and Oldenburg, chairmen Ursula Nelles and Victor van der Chijs hope to remove that 'virtual border'.

'We love each other very much', laughs University of Twente (UT) chairman Victor van der Chijs when asked how close the ties are between his university and the Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster (WWU). 'So that's the good news', smiles rector Ursula Nelles. Both universities have been collaborating since 1979 in many ways: from research programmes to joint degrees and exchange students. Their relationship might be close, but both partners may not see each other for months. No problem at all, in their opinion. The UT-WWU collaboration is not about two chairmen, it's about the (academic) staff. Van der Chijs: 'The cooperation has always been driven bottom-up. Imposing collaboration in the academic world doesn't work. Let scientists decide whether and how they want to collaborate. That's a natural pro-

cess, and it's growing. Sometimes slowly, even if you wish it would go faster, but definitely steadily.'

'Scientists don't necessarily do what they are told. You'd better make it attractive to them rather than push them', is how Van der Chijs explains the bottom-up strategy. The boards should only have encouraging and supporting roles. Nelles illustrates it with a German saying. 'Man kann leichter einen Sack Flöhe hüten als einen Sack voller Wissenschaftler. It's easier to tend a sack full of fleas than a sack full of scientists.'

BENEFITS

According to Van der Chijs, Twente and Münster both clearly benefit from the fact that they are close together. And he sees more opportunities. 'Münster is the nearest university hospital to Twente, for example.



So far this opportunity has not been used, but it's something that is very well imaginable in the future, specifically for technical medicine.' 'That's exactly the field where I try to push my medical professors', Nelles reacts. 'Do more together with Twente, because our universities are highly complementary, with a strong focus on technology. Twente offers what we don't have and vice versa.'

'In Münster we learned a lot from the way the MESA+ (institute for nanotechnology) was built up', she continues. 'CeNTech, our centre for nanotechnology, collaborates very closely with MESA+. We even made professors from Twente associate professors in Münster and vice versa. We saw that Twente was always trying to poach our scientists and we always tried to get the Twente researchers. So we decided, why not make use of the same researchers?'

INTERNATIONAL NETWORK

Since both universities are in the process of further internationalisation, Nelles and Van der Chijs think they could also benefit from each other's networks. WWU has close ties with several Brazilian universities and could very well introduce the UT in Brazil. Conversely, why shouldn't Münster use the UT connections in Africa and Indonesia, for example? Nelles: 'From an external perspective Europe is a very small continent. I could imagine that we could – just as a vision – look at China together. The Chinese look very carefully for the best European universities to have as their partners. If we could offer them a double package, that could be very strategic.'

BORDER IN MIND

Of course both universities see many more opportunities in the cooperation. 'There is a lot more to do', says Van der Chijs. 'For example, in the field of support staff. There we have hardly done anything together. Obviously, we can learn a lot from each other's best practices. It makes sense to visit each other to see how things are being done, and to benefit from it.'

According to Nelles, it's important to keep in mind that there are no limitations in working together. However, there is a challenge nonetheless, she admits: 'The border in the mind.' That political boundary makes it complicated to get funding for joint research proposals, as the national research organisations, German Research Foundation (DFG) and Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO), are not

oriented towards cross-border consortia. 'We don't find programmes suitable for cross-border collaboration very easily. This makes it difficult for the researchers because they have to try to obtain grants for research programmes that are divided up between the German and the Dutch programme.'

As always, there's also another side of that coin, she adds. 'There is no reason to compete with Twente just because of this virtual border. Being neighbours competing for the same national funds might be more difficult than being neighbours and having to find one's own path towards grants.'

'Twente offers what Münster doesn't have and vice versa'

Van der Chijs adds that in Europe, collaboration is an advantage as well. 'If we submit a proposal to the EU for the Horizon 2020 programme, our transnational character will put it a step ahead.'

LARGER SQUARE

To make it easier to cross the Münster-Twente border, Nelles is launching a plan to build a network of collaboration in the region, starting with the square Twente – Groningen – Oldenburg – Münster. 'So we have two 'Euregios' with two different sources of probable funding.' In a later stage Wageningen, Nijmegen and Dortmund could also be part of the new network, and even Maastricht and Aachen, to make the collaboration even more powerful when applying for research funding. Although the first meeting with Oldenburg and Groningen had yet to be scheduled when Nelles launched this plan just before summer, she seems ambitious about the timing. 'My term of office ends in September 2016. By that time I want to have fixed the square', says Nelles, who has good contacts with Oldenburg. 'I will keep that in mind', Van der Chijs smiles, realising that only one year is left. He continues: 'We already have a close tie with Groningen and Nijmegen. The square will be established, it's just a matter of time.'

High Tech, Human Touch

GET INVOLVED

Anyone from Münster who moves to Enschede to study at the University of Twente has one big advantage: they will feel at home right away. The campus is full of bicycles, and the town is criss-crossed with cycle paths too. So for all newcomers the golden rule is: get yourself a bicycle – and then discover the green campus.

Actually, campus life is something that fascinates both visitors and freshers alike. There is everything here that the heart desires – from the supermarket with an extra wide range of beers to the hairdresser, the obligatory bicycle repair shop and the prayer room. Anyone who wants to join in sporting or cultural activities can choose from 39 sports clubs and 18 cultural associations. ‘What’s important for the Dutch is that students get involved in something’, says Mara Kaldeweide, who moved from Ostbevern to the University of Twente. Whether it’s a student body, sport or culture – the main thing is to get involved and be dedicated in what you do, she says.

19 BACHELORS, 36 MASTERS

Dedication is something that is seen as being very important in studies, too, of course. The University of Twente has a motto – ‘High Tech, Human Touch’ – which pervades seminars and lectures. Every technical development is to be looked at from a socio-scientific angle. There are 19 bachelor and 36 master courses to choose from, covering technology, management, administration, health and behavioural sciences. The bachelor course consists of twelve modules. To remain as close as possible to the practical world, each module includes a practical task which is as interdisciplinary as possible.

The campus at the University of Twente is recognized as being a source of innovative ideas. Every year, an average of 50 to 70 new, young companies are started. Anyone who completes their studies faster than stipulated, and with an above-average grade, can take part in special programmes which get the maximum out of participants’ own particular talent. ‘A lot is demanded of students, and especially at the

beginning it is very hard work’, says Katharina, who is studying psychology, ‘but the teaching staff and the students are open-minded and warm-hearted, and there is a very personal atmosphere here.’ High Tech, Human Touch in fact. |

University of Twente Facts and figures (2014)

Foundation	1961
Location	Enschede
Organization	5 faculties and 5 research institutes
Students	9,614 in total 5,627 bachelors 3,987 masters 20 % foreign students 234 exchange students
Education	19 bachelor’s programmes 36 master’s programmes with 93 specializations in total
Staff	2,948 employees in total 1,676 academic staff 1,272 support staff 22 % foreign staff
Alumni	More than 40,000
Research output	244 doctoral degrees 88 M€ research funding 3,098 publications
Rankings	#210 Times Higher Education Supplement #212 QS World University Rankings #370 Shanghai Ranking
Spin off companies	approximately 1,000 since 1984
Student life	5 student associations 18 study associations 18 cultural associations 39 sports associations
Campus	360 acres 2,125 student apartments

Cycling through Münster

'LIFE IS PRETTY'

The Schlossplatz is easy to reach by foot or by bike through a green promenade, built where once the city wall encircled Münster. The former castle now serves as the home of the Executive Board of the University of Münster, the student administration, the press and information department and several lecture halls. The famous Botanical Garden lies just behind it. A great place for a nice walk or to study in peace.

After a short viewing of the garden and castle, the bike will be today's means of transportation to explore the university town. With Julia Nüllen, alumna of the university and employee at the press department, as our guide we travel

to the Aasee, a lake at the edge of the city centre where the mensa is located as well. It's lunch hour and the area's thick with students. And with bikes. 'Münster is a real bike town,' Nüllen explains. 'Bikes are dominating the town.' How could it be otherwise with 43 thousand students? 'The university buildings are located all over the town centre,' Nüllen continues. 'Small degree programmes have even been housed in the shopping district.'

The exact sciences faculties are located in the western part of town, with the medicine faculty as largest education institute. Situated around it are countless laboratories. Adjacent to it are the buildings for natural sciences and to the north are the buildings for physics, chemistry, mathematics, geo-informatics and biological sciences. 'Next to the castle lies Kuhviertel. This is where the very first student bar arose: Cavete Munster, or be aware of Münster in Latin.'

SWIFT STUDENT LIFE

And that's just how it is. A tour of the town shows that the swift student life has mixed completely with the old town. Students on bikes are passing you left and right, gather in parks or make music.

On to the library. Here Anna (26) from Dinslaken, a town a hundred kilometres away from Münster, is sitting on a bench outside. She is studying Latin and biology. 'Why Münster? Life is pretty and beautiful and fun there. The town isn't that big. You're where you need to be within ten minutes. It's easy to meet that way.'

Not a bad place, this Münster. For anyone who wants to have a whiff of foreign experience it's certainly worth consideration. It's an hour away from Enschede by train, practically in our backyard. But it's just a little bit different from our little country. |

University of Münster Facts and figures (2014)

Foundation	1780
Location	Münster, North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany
Organization	15 faculties Plus: 2 Clusters of Excellence, MEET Battery Research Center, 7 Collaborative Research Centers, 1 Max Planck Institute, 1 Fraunhofer Institute, 1 Helmholtz Institute
Students	2014/15: 43,084 students
Teaching	over 120 subjects in more than 280 degree courses
Staff	6,850 members of staff 548 professorships 4,550 other research and teaching staff
International	3,375 international students 1,200 Münster students abroad 700 visiting academics 550 partner universities
Alumni	2013: around 7,400 graduations 10,000 members of the Alumni Club
Research output	2013: 790 doctoral degrees 4,741 academic publications
Budget	€621 million of which: €144 million in third-party funding
Rankings	"Times Higher Education Supplement": ranking group 251-275 "QS World University Rankings": 249th position "Shanghai Ranking": ranking group 151-200 "Nature Index 2015 Global": 102nd position



Cooperation since 1979

WHERE APPLIED AND BASIC RESEARCH **MEET**

One of the universities doesn't have it, but the other does. There are a lot of good reasons why the Universities of Münster and Twente have been collaborating closely for years now – even though they could hardly be more different. Münster offers all academic and scientific disciplines, with the exception of Engineering, whereas Twente is a technical university which focuses on Engineering. 'So we really complement each other,' says Anke Kohl, Head of the International Office at Münster.

Collaboration between Twente and Münster can look back on a long tradition. On Friday, 11 May 1979, the chairman of the Administrative Council at Twente, A. Hooites Meuring, travelled to Münster, where he and the then rector of Münster University, professor Werner Müller-Warmuth, both signed a partnership declaration in the University Senate Hall. The declaration provided for reciprocal research stays and student exchanges, with each university offering extensive recognition of academic achievements gained at the other. At that time, collaboration was concentrated on bio-medicine – to be precise, on three large-scale projects which dealt, among other things, with examinations of the knee joint by means of a simulator at Twente. But even at that early stage the management bodies of the two universities agreed on extending 'collaboration to other areas of teaching and research, in particular Business Studies, Administration and Educational Studies.'

35 INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS

The increase in collaboration planned at that time has taken great strides in the past 36 years. Today, in around 35 individual projects, it comprises a broad range of subjects and takes in a variety of administrative and organizational fields. It extends from joint double-degree study programmes and joint teaching to the supervision of Bachelor theses, Master theses and doctoral dissertations, as well as

agreements as part of the Erasmus programme, student exchanges and collective research projects.

'These links have grown over time,' says Anke Kohl, who worked at Twente for ten years before moving to Münster, 'through academics coming together and agreeing joint research projects or teaching collaborations. They weren't given instructions by the university management, but they were given support by the Rectorates at both universities.' And she adds that, 'In the 1990s we started having regular meetings with Dutch students and organizing workshops on, for example, European policy.'

In the winter semester of 2002/2003 the first joint degree course in Public Administration was offered – which has now evolved into a Joint-Degree Bachelor's Programme entitled 'Public Governance Across Borders', with lectures and seminars being held alternately at Münster and Twente, in both German and English. From 2017/2017 students can opt to take the Double-Degree Master's Programme 'Comparative Public Governance'. The course is set to last 18 months, with students dividing their time equally between Enschede and Münster.

'The plans the two partners have for the future,' says Anke Kohl, 'include more intensive collaboration in the field of Medicine, as well as the possibility of professors being appointed simultaneously to both universities.'



'MAYBE GERMANY'S BEST STUDENT TOWN'

Tom Heuser (20) is studying Business Administration at the Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität in Münster. He grew up in Mülheim an der Ruhr and moved to Münster two years ago, mostly because of the university's reputation in this field of study.

'Münster is a great town for students, it may be the best student town in Germany,' according to Tom. 'Because of the many great achievements in the field of education it can be rather difficult to get the best possible grades. However, the university's reputation ensures that someone who's successfully completed the Business Administration programme in Münster is interesting for potential employers.'

Tom's average day starts around 8 or 10 in the morning, with two to four classes. After classes he studies or works, or

spends time with his friends. 'It's actually a typical day for a student,' he says. His degree programme is mostly theoretical with several practical aspects. However, in Münster they encourage him to take internships, to get relevant professional experience.

Tom's making plans to study a semester abroad, in Bern. 'It can be a great opportunity,' he says. 'Not just to get to know different cultures, people and countries, but especially to shape my own personality.'

Two German students, both studying Business Administration, but at a different university. The reputation of the Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität immediately spoke to the imagination of Tom Heuser, while Alena Kaiser was already in love with the idea of a real campus. She decided to move to Enschede to study at the University of Twente.



'UT CAMPUS IS VERY POPULAR'

Alena Kaiser (21) is a second-year student of International Business Administration (IBA) at the UT. After spending a year in New York she was sure she wanted to do an English-language degree programme. She couldn't find one in Germany so she quickly refocused her efforts to the UT.

'Perhaps I've seen too many American movies,' Alena begins explaining, 'but I was immediately enamoured by the idea of a real campus. The UT campus is very popular, in Germany as well.'

The biggest differences lie mostly in the practical approach. 'In Germany, everything's very theoretical and you don't really have much contact with teachers. Often it's just sitting, listening and especially not asking any questions.' Alena continues: 'Here it's a lot more informal, especially the contact with the student assistants who are very helpful.'

The close ties with the corporate sector also appeal to Alena. 'Every month we meet real managers and we have to analyse real problems. In addition you see a lot of initiative from the students outside classes, they are given the freedom to develop themselves.'

She wasn't prepared for the Twente Educational Model (TEM). 'In Germany you don't have to take any exams for half a year and then you have to take a lot all at once. In TEM you actually have exams all the time.' That does cause a lot of pressure, Alena agrees. 'But you know what you're doing it for. It's not easy, but it gets you where you need to go.'

Complementary nanotechnology research

'THE CHEMISTRY'S RIGHT HERE – AND SO IS THE PHYSICS'

Nanotechnology is an example of the Universities of Münster and Twente complementing each other with successful research. 'There are certain questions in which it is frequently complementary aspects that interest us. We often use the same methods in Münster and Twente, so it makes sense to use each other's instruments', says Twente professor Willem Vos.

For many experts, nanotechnology is a key technology for the future. At the Universities of Münster and Twente, both national and international researchers are engaged on intensive work on just this future, and many of them are working closely together. 'I keep in touch with a lot of colleagues in Münster,' says professor Klaus Boller, head of the LPNO ('Laser Physics and Nonlinear Optics') research group at Twente. His work with his colleague Carsten Fallnich from the Institute of Applied Physics is particularly successful.

This is just one example of the exemplary collaboration in the field of nanotechnology between Münster University and the Dutch university in Enschede. This collaboration has been going on for about ten years now and both sides benefit from it. Joint research, joint projects – and also joint training. 'That works very well in Münster and Twente,' says professor Cornelia Denz, Director of the Institute of Applied Physics at Münster. Her field of research is optical information processing and nano-biophotonics. And as Pro-Rector for International Affairs and Junior Researchers she is more than satisfied with the positive developments being made in this 'complementary research', as she calls it. 'The chemistry's right here – and so is the physics,' she adds. In Münster the focus is on basic research, she says, while the colleagues in the Netherlands are more applications-oriented.

NEW TYPE OF CHIP GENERATION

Good relations at the level of the two cities involved are also an important condition for attracting relevant institutes, as well as for productive collaboration, says Denz. The mayors and the local business development organizations in both cities are all pulling together, she adds.

Analysing material at the molecular and atomic levels and being able to make specific changes to it is something that scientists have long dreamt of. In nanotechnology this dream is starting to come true.

This rapidly growing cross-sectional technology opens up new pos-

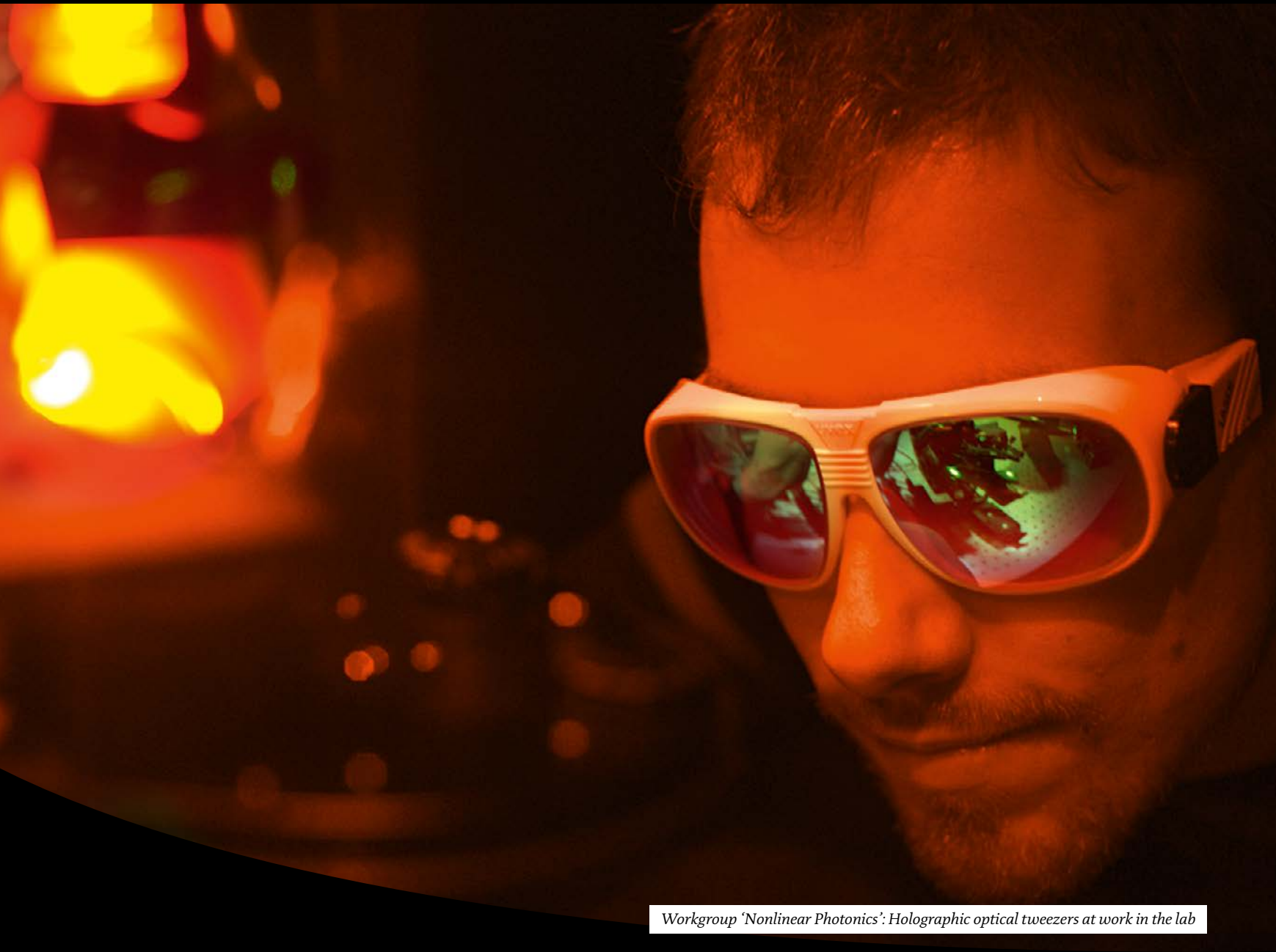
sibilities in practically all technical areas, including medical and environmental technology. Further examples of applications are surface refinement, intelligent nano-scale materials, faster electronics, optics, sensors and nano-motors.

The world of nano-particles is one which is unimaginably small. One nanometre is a million times smaller than a millimetre. It is the effects of quantum physics that dominate this world – and these can be completely different to the phenomena we know from our macroscopic world.

For the investigations and specific manipulations that they carry out, nano-researchers today use special microscopes with atomic resolution. In this field, the classic optical microscope is a thing of the past. And they are developing new strategies in nano-photonics to make particles visible and manageable.

'What is needed for joint projects, is third-party funding'

New processes and materials are being added constantly. Experts expect there to be a boost for innovation in many areas. Nano-photonics, for example, will provide optical tweezers to make it possible to systematically arrange and steer a large number of nano-particles. Information will be transferred in extremely small nano-chips, with light playing a special role. What is emerging in nano-photonics is the development of a new type of chip generation in which data processing will be based on light and no longer on electronics. This will mean an enormous increase in data transfer speeds, with very low energy consumption and on an extremely small area.



Workgroup 'Nonlinear Photonics': Holographic optical tweezers at work in the lab

EXTENDING COLLABORATION

The high degree of cross-border cooperation between the nano-researchers is something that professor Harald Fuchs, director of the Physical Institute at Münster, can confirm only too well – especially as he is the scientific director of the Center for Nanotechnology (CeNTech), a non-university research institute in which not only the city of Münster and the State of North Rhine-Westphalia but also Münster University are all engaged. Since it was set up in 2003, the Center has made a decisive contribution to establishing nanotechnology as a central area of research at Münster and beyond. 'There have been contacts between Münster and Twente for a long time now – in particular because of the MESA+ nanotechnology centre established in Twente. Right from the beginning both centres were looking at European and international science and research.'

Specialist laboratories with the requisite equipment, as well as rooms for workshops and meetings, are quite consciously being opened up – across borders – to start-ups and to people looking to set up their own businesses, so that, using technology transfer, they can turn the insights from their research into marketable products. What is important for Fuchs is the interdisciplinary approach in the research work being done. 'There are a lot of questions that can no longer be answered today without collaboration between physics, chemistry, biology and medicine,' he says.

Professor Willem Vos, who is head of the 'Applied Nanophotonics' cluster and a physicist at the MESA+ Institute on the campus at Twente, adds, 'There are certain questions in which it is frequently complementary aspects that interest us. But we often use the same methods as in Münster, so it makes sense to use the instruments there.' With his group, Vos is working on photons, focusing on information transfer and, together with Cornelia Denz, on innovations with light. Both jointly supervise doctoral students, who can benefit from both institutes during their studies. MESA+ is one of the world's largest research institutes in the field of nano-technology – and the biggest in Netherlands – with 525 scientists undertaking top-level research to an international standard.

Klaus Boller and Willem Vos believe that the collaboration with colleagues in Münster can be extended even more. 'What is needed for joint projects is third-party funding. But unfortunately there hasn't been any so far for such innovative, cross-border collaboration – in the middle of Europe,' is a criticism that Vos has. All previous attempts to apply for relevant funding failed, he says – so, instead, they built up personal contacts with Münster, focussing on assisting junior researchers. Nevertheless, says Boller, he would 'really like to see a cross-border association of optical researchers.' Which explains his wish for the future: 'It should be promoted much more heavily.' |



Joint degree programme European Studies

NO CLASS AT **9:00 AM**

Public Governance Across Borders is the name of the joint degree programme offered by the University of Twente and the University of Münster. It replaces the old European Studies double degree programme. The course of study is particularly popular among German students.

René Torenvlied has been the education director for the joint degree programme on the UT side for the last year. On the Münster side, this is handled by Norbert Kersting. Torenvlied considers it quite logical that the study - which attracts some 50 German bachelor's students to UT each year - is so popular on that side of the border. 'It's a broad education. German students consider that attractive. In Germany, education is organised quite differently. In addition, UT offers all sorts of opportunities to head across the border - in the form of internships, minors or Erasmus exchanges, for example. The German students in Münster aren't familiar with this variety.'

In addition to the introduction of the TOM model (Twente Educational Model) 2 years ago, the decision was made to make the double-diploma European Studies/Public Administration major a

joint degree programme. It is the culmination of decades of close co-operation. And it now comprises the following: a single diploma for a course of study in which you spend your first year in Münster and your second and third years at UT. Torenvlied thinks that the study is attractive to German students because of the opportunities it provides for international experience and because of the facilities that the campus offers. 'Furthermore, our education is on a smaller scale, and that ensures good support for the student.'

DISCIPLINED AND MOTIVATED

The education director calls the German students very disciplined and motivated. 'I've experienced a student with a broken nose who first came to me to tell me he couldn't make the class before he went on to the hospital.' According to Torenvlied, the integration with the regular



students, such as those from European Public Administration, also works well. 'The first TOM modules, in the second year, were quite a culture shock for the German students. Coming from a very structured environment, where they were used to working individually, they ended up in a completely new education model in which projects were paramount. They didn't get grades just for themselves, but for the groups. The mid-term exams also caused stress since they weren't familiar with this phenomenon. But they are now quite positive about this.' Torenvlied said that extra sessions were then held in order to introduce the German students better. 'We now ensure that the preparation for the study at UT is more expansive, so that they know what they're getting into.' But the process of fine-tuning is still underway, he says. 'For example, we now know that it is much more pleasant if we don't schedule classes right away at 9:00 AM. After all, many students come to class from Germany and have already put in the miles to get here. It's pleasant for them if they don't have to wake up at the crack of dawn every day.'

'What is the value of your grade in the joint degree diploma?'

You also see the results of cultural differences during evaluations. In Germany, the highest grade is a 1; in the Netherlands it's a 10. So what is the precise value of your grade in the joint degree diploma? For the German employment market, grades are very important. Nonetheless, one annoying result of this is that students express considerable criticism of this grading system via the National Student Survey. The

'QUITE FASCINATING'

Norbert Kersting, Professor of Municipal and Regional Policy and responsible for the 'German portion' of the joint degree, calls the collaboration with UT 'quite fascinating', since it already enjoys such a long history. 'This is truly unique and the University of Münster maintains such a collaboration only with UT.'

According to Kersting, it was a logical next step for a joint degree to arise from this intensive collaboration. 'And this is also running quite well', underlines the professor. 'Naturally there are cultural differences that must be bridged. Sometimes, this is just a question of adjustment. One of the biggest differences is the organisation of the two universities. People in the Netherlands are more dependent on politics and must sometimes respond to changes more quickly. So, in that case, new educational programmes are created. That doesn't happen in Germany. There is more autonomy at our universities, which - in my opinion - provides for more stability.'

Kersting sees no differences between the German students and the Dutch students. 'We see many international students here in any case.' In the future, he would like to see more Dutch students flow into the bachelor programme. 'That's why we want to make this bachelor programme more attractive to this target group.'

team from Twente has found a solution together with the German team. They are now busy with the German accreditation of the joint degree. Torenvlied: 'And the Flemish Accreditation Organisation is waiting in the wings. But I'm confident about this accreditation.'

INTERNSHIPS ARE POPULAR

In terms of content, the joint degree is especially attractive to students due to the broad connections that the education provides to scientific disciplines. It's not just about comparative governance. Political science, law and sociology are covered extensively. 'And this is less of an issue in Germany', according to Torenvlied. The internships are also popular because there is the opportunity to do an internship at such non-profit organisations as Amnesty International or the United Nations. The possibility of doing a minor in another department is also unknown in Münster. 'In our department, we offer field-expanding minors, for example.' Torenvlied is convinced that it is precisely these things that make studying at UT so attractive. 'We have a relatively small university, but this makes much more possible. That's the message I always want to get across.' |

Haus der Niederlande

'BIRTHPLACE OF THE NETHERLANDS'



The 'Haus der Niederlande' in the city centre of Münster

Located in a historical building at the edge of Münster's city centre is the Haus der Niederlande. Once the peace between the Netherlands and Spain was signed here, after the Eighty Years' War (1568-1648). Now the building houses, amongst other things, the Centre for Dutch Studies. Director Friso Wielenga explains.



What's the function of the Haus der Niederlande?

'The house isn't just our accommodation, it also shelters the Dutch Language and Literature Institute, where Dutch teachers are educated, and the library. Though we are part of the University of Münster, the Centre operates rather autonomously. We're not part of a faculty, but answer directly to the Executive Board. Together with the teacher training programmes there are about 600 students, we have about 300 and so do the teacher training programmes. We provide an interdisciplinary bachelor's and master's programme Dutch and German studies that focuses on history, politics, economics, language and culture. In addition we try to make information on the Netherlands available to a broad audience.'

What kind of students does the Centre for Dutch studies produce?

'At the bachelor's programme we mostly see students from the area. In the master's programme, the ratio of Dutch and German students is about fifty-fifty. Our students are proficient in both languages. During the third year of the bachelor's programme there's an exchange in the Netherlands for half a year. A lot of students go to Nijmegen. For our master's programme, we have a joint degree with the Radboud University. Our students end up at, for instance, consultancy agencies, Euregio offices, Chambers of Commerce, media companies or at trans-border Dutch-German companies.'

How important is it to make the Netherlands visible in Germany?

'As the director of the Centre for Dutch Studies I will of course say that it's very important. The Netherlands is a very important political and trade partner for Germany. But it's not just that. Germany is the most important country in the European Union. If that's the case it's very important that you, as one small neighbouring country of many - the Netherlands is one of nine surrounding countries - are visible and maintain good relationships.'

How do you create this visibility as an institute?

'In addition to academic publications and research, we organize events: exhibitions, lectures, conferences and we provide topical news coverage. During elections for the House of Representatives we organize election nights. When in January 2013 it was announced that Queen Beatrix would abdicate, we immediately published it on our website, NiederlandeNet.'

We offer information not just for an academic audience, but also for journalists, the corporate sector, the government and the general public. If something has happened in the Netherlands, the German media always know to find us for commentary.

In addition we have an exposition hall. Recently we held an exhibition on seventy years of freedom, 1945-2015. The doors of the hall open at noon every day. We're in a beautiful historic building where, in 1648, the very important Peace of Münster was signed. If you look at it like that, our house is a birthplace of the Netherlands.'



REFRESHING SEMESTER

Studying in Germany. How would that be? In the months before the semester would start in Münster that was a question that crossed my mind several times. My ideas of studying there were partly based on prejudgements and the stories of fellow German students at the University of Twente. 'It will be very 'punctlich'' and 'during the lectures you will be lectured by the professors and you will not be able to express your opinion' were some of the thoughts I had.

After this semester I can say I was wrong. The professors were flexible and there were plenty of opportunities to express my opinion on topics like the Greek crisis, immigration and the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. At most

courses the teachers even asked what we thought about these topics as a Dutch citizen.

Not only the teachers, but the practical issues were relatively flexible as well. So were late enrolments for exams still possible. I even dare to say that the system in Twente is more 'punctlich' than in Münster.

The courses I followed were taught by lecturers with different nationalities and most of the students had different nationalities as well. This provided an international environment in which various distinguished views were present. Add to that the different political perspectives from which is taught in Münster and you get a different and refreshing semester which I will never forget.

STUDENT COLUMNS

Double degree students enjoy student life at both universities. We invited two of them to write a column about their cross-border experience. Sjoerd Kremer (22) is a Dutch master student in the double degree programme in European Studies. He followed six courses in Münster during the first semester of 2015. Bachelor student Ariadna Bicajanu (26) found her time in Enschede as wholly motivating and the study experience enriching.

text: ARIADNA BICAJANU | photo: PETER GREWER



A DIFFERENT RHYTHM

During my studies so far I've had the good fortune to become acquainted with educational systems and universities in three countries. Of course, it isn't easy to compare these with each other – but the University of Twente certainly presents a special environment.

I'm taking the double degree course in 'Public Administration with Emphasis on European Studies', and so I've spent some time at Twente. Staying there provided a lot of variety in my studies. That wasn't only because of the new environment – it was also due to a lot of other things such as the interdisciplinary range of courses on offer, the students and lecturers from different countries, or the demanding content of the courses themselves. Life on the campus had a

different rhythm too. All of these things motivated me to immerse myself in student life at Twente University and enjoy it to the full.

The course itself and the atmosphere at the University encourage students to put their own academic ideas into practice. The various study projects which you regularly work on gave me the feeling that I was making my own little academic contribution and designing something special. Many of these projects are practice-related and demand not only a high level of independent work, but also the willingness to work in teams with other students. For me, the important thing wasn't just the material I needed for exams, but also the experience that I gained. |

A man with glasses and a checkered shirt is smiling and looking to the right. He is standing in a bicycle workshop, with a large bicycle wheel in the foreground and various tools and equipment in the background. The image has a teal overlay.

Entrepreneurship in Münster and Twente

'WE SHOW THAT AN ALTERNATIVE CAREER IS POSSIBLE'

Start-up 'Leeze' showing its bicycle wheels at one of the networking events in Münster

When Wilhelm Bauhus, head of the Arbeitsstelle Forschungstransfer (AFO), the innovation agency in Münster, visited his colleagues at Kennispark Twente, he was very impressed. 'Twente's enterprising culture is amazing. You can feel, taste and smell it.'

'The focus is still very much on research'

- Janita Tönnissen



Wilhelm Bauhus makes no secret of his enthusiasm, but immediately adds that the collaboration between Twente and Münster in the area of entrepreneurship is still in its infancy. The innovation agency of the University of Münster, the so called Arbeitsstelle Forschungstransfer, focuses mostly on advice, networking and events for potential entrepreneurs. AFO also offers support in drawing up a business plan and fund-raising, but particularly tries to convince scientists and students from Münster of the opportunities that accompany starting up a business.

AFO casts a sidelong glance at Twente in all this. 'Enthusiasm and interest are the most important conditions for successful academic entrepreneurs,' says Bauhus. 'Münster is a traditional university of about 235 years old. At our university you are trained to become an excellent employee and our alumni often end up at large, successful companies, but we show our students that an alternative career path is also possible. In Twente it almost seemed like a career within an existing company was the alternative career path.'

START-UP AWARD

In order to increase that awareness, Janita Tönnissen of AFO together with the Fachhochschule Münster gives lectures on entrepreneurship every year. Tönnissen advises enterprising academics while they're setting up a company. The focus lies on students more and more in the past few years and that appears to be a resounding success. 'Academics, students or doctoral candidates, everyone requires the same set of skills. Every semester we reach hundreds of students with the lecture series. We also deem it important that our teachers and professors are open minded and support entrepreneurship. For that reason we have established a start-up award for entrepreneurs and professors this year. The start-up receives 20,000 euros, but the supporting professor is also granted a considerable sum of money. We have noticed that the focus is still very much on research. That's shifting. Two of our faculties, namely Information Systems and Biochemicals and Nanotech, increasingly see entrepreneurship as the best opportunity to bring science to the market. A beautiful development.'

SUCCESS STORIES

Twente currently has about 900 start-ups, while Münster checks in at about 250. Every year there are ten new start-ups. 'That's not a lot yet, but the success rate of our start-ups is very high, about 80 percent,' says Bauhus. 'The financial system is great and the German government offers excellent programmes, such as a high-tech start-up fund. The government and investors each invest fifty percent in the early starting phase of companies. The investment varies from half a million euros to two million euros. With this fund about five hundred companies from all over Germany have been supported during the start-up phase.'

At the AFO they are familiar with student companies from Twente that grew up to be big boys, such as Demcon, Takeaway.com and Booking.com. Münster also has several success stories like that. Biotech start-up Cysal is a successful spin-off of the biotechnological institute. Scientists Ahmed Sallam, now managing director, and Martin Krehenbrink saw their company develop into a big player. The early-stage fund Gründerfonds Münsterland supported Cysal at their founding in 2012. Bauhus and Tönnissen are proud of the success of Cysal.

LANGUAGE

In order to get more of those success stories off the ground and to achieve additional growth of the start-up culture in Münster, Tönnissen mentions a simple yet important aspect: the language. 'We often invite our students to attend the network events by Powered by Twente and Kennispark Twente. The official language there is always English. Our events are mostly in German, but we are shifting to English more and more. Successful start-ups often operate on the international market and it's essential to have a proper command of the English language. We see this in those ten start-ups that are established here every year, their official language is English. We're working on getting that start-up culture together, step by step.'

LECTURES ON THE TRAIN

In the past few years the AFO and Kennispark Twente regularly visited each other. An old idea that AFO would love to implement are classes about entrepreneurship on the train between Enschede and Münster. A train ride is often rather boring and a lot of students travel back and forth between both cities, according to the AFO, and this connection is both literally and metaphorically a great opportunity.

According to Pieter Dillingh, board member of Kennispark Twente, there are some great starting points to improve business at both Twente and Münster from a strong knowledge position. 'We are currently exploring the possibility of a joint positioning in the field of advanced and smart materials,' Dillingh explains. 'The Fachhochschule and the university in Münster as well as the University of Twente and Saxion university of applied sciences certainly have the desire for trans-border collaboration in this field in which we both excel. Think of, for example, the knowledge and experience that Twente has in the field of new materials, thermoplastic composites or textile innovations. This fall we'll meet up again for a sequel. I have noticed that in Germany, strengthening this knowledge position mainly focuses on existing business, while we focus more on start-ups.'

SEARCHING FOR **SAFE HEALTHCARE** TOGETHER

For years, Twente professor Lisette van Gemert-Pijnen has worked together intensively with professor Alexander Friedrich of the University of Münster and with the University Medical Centre in Groningen. Together, they're doing research on the boundary between safety and healthcare. This is even attracting support from the government and from the German-Dutch Chamber of Commerce.



The collaboration between the two professors came about during the period that they met when Van Gemert-Pijnen received her Ph.D. for research into the functioning of infection protocols. 'A relatively large number of infections occur in our region - the MRSA bacteria, for example - because there are many exchanges of patients between Germany and the Netherlands. Protocols exist in both countries, but we saw primarily that doctors, nursing staff and patients dealt with this differently in both countries,' says the UT professor of Persuasive Health Technology.

'Alexander Friedrich, who was then the Hygiene Department head, showed interest in my research. This ultimately led to our setting up the MSRA-net project, with the goal of developing new protocols for doctors and patients. For example, there is a very strict protocol in Germany, full of references to legislation, and in the Netherlands the safety regulations are checked stringently for compliance. The government plays a role by assigning more responsibility for working safely to the health care providers.'

RESISTANT BACTERIA

MRSA-net turned out to be an eye-opener for Germany. For the Netherlands, it was high time that the protocols became digitally available. The result was the establishment of the EurSafety Health Network, or EurSafety Health-net. In this, cooperation takes place from the northern Netherlands (University Medical Centre in Groningen, UMCG) to the southern Netherlands (the universities of Maastricht and Nijmegen) in order to find solutions to antibiotic-resistant bacteria in the border regions. 'Furthermore, it's not just about research in this collaborative partnership', says Van Gemert-Pijnen. 'For example, we also want to use e-learning to teach students to handle antibiotics and bacteria safely during their medical training. This, too, is a way of combating resistance.'

'In Germany more time to acclimate is required'

The collaboration that once began on a relatively small scale between Van Gemert-Pijnen and Friedrich has now grown into a solid, unique network, with which 8 universities, 117 hospitals, 350 nursing homes and 25 laboratories and more than 3000 doctors in own practice are affiliated. That's why EurSafety Health-net received the healthcare prize for innovation in 2012 and was designated as a star project for the innovative use of technology in healthcare by the European Commission EurSafety in 2013. The EurSafety Health-net project was also designated a flagship project by the European Parliament in 2013, for which it received a prize. UT now participates by means of various Ph.D. projects. New studies have since arisen from the EurSafety Health in the area of animal infections.

HEALTHICARE

The Healthicare project, which builds on the successful EurSafety Health-net, is currently in preparation. The goal of Healthicare is to strengthen the cross-border innovative capacity of the business com-

munity in the area of safety and healthcare. Van Gemert-Pijnen: 'With an intensive collaboration, including Münster, Bielefeld and Groningen, UT wishes to function as a catalyst for bringing about cooperation between SMEs, science and healthcare. The goal is to develop innovative technologies for monitoring health and safety. Applications for e-learning for healthcare providers (medical and veterinary), for example, and persuasive technology for supporting the public and professionals in the prevention of infections.'

For the European regional collaboration, the German-Dutch Chamber of Commerce has provided support. Industry leaders (Twente Board) and Minister of Public Health Schippers also recognise the urgency of safe healthcare.

GRÜNDLICHKEIT

The two professors, Van Gemert-Pijnen and Friedrich, meet regularly. Van Gemert-Pijnen also works with Friedrich in the UMCG. In the meantime, there is regular contact via Skype and e-mail. 'At the start of our cooperation, things took a bit of getting used to. I had to get used to the hierarchical German culture, and especially that of hospitals. In Germany, the relationship between doctors and nursing staff is really quite different from that in the Netherlands.'

The Dutch professor also learned to prepare herself very well. 'The culture is more formal. You really have to learn to take this into account. For example, we suggest solutions right away.' But in Germany, more 'time to acclimate' is required. She, in turn, learned diplomacy from her German colleagues. 'And learning to think across borders'. And then there's 'gründlichkeit'. 'The meetings are well prepared, and always with optimally organised catering. This emphasises that you're welcome there and that the collaboration is taken seriously.'

NEW VIEW ON GUIDELINES

Alexander Friedrich, professor Medical Microbiology and Infection Prevention: 'The nice thing is that it is a collaboration across all kinds of borders. I am a medical microbiologist with expertise in healthcare-associated infections and antimicrobial resistance. I know a lot about the microbes, but for prevention of infections with such microbes you need to communicate the risks of this invisible world to professionals, to patients and to other citizens. Here, our limitation of experts in microbes became very soon visible. The collaboration with Lisette opened a whole new world for us. With Lisette, an expert in communication and behavioural science helped us to understand what exactly professionals and patients want to know, how they want to be informed and how we can organize that they get the needed information in the most proper and rapid way. This gave us experts a totally new view on our guidelines, our way of communicating.'

I think that together with Lisette and the other project coordinators we created a unique crossborder network. Next to the work across the border between two countries and the working across different disciplines, now is also the time for enlarging the network across the sectors. The collaboration between health, science and business is the next challenge.'



'HIGH LEVELS OF MOTIVATION'

Political scientist Oliver Treib teaches students in both Münster und Enschede

2011 was an exciting year for professor Oliver Treib. It wasn't just that he was new at Münster University, taking on a professorship at the Institute of Political Science, but he also undertook teaching and examination duties for two courses – 'Public Governance across Borders' and 'European Studies'. 'I was curious to see what it would be like, teaching in an environment that was not only international but also intercultural,' he remembers. After four years, in which the 44-year-old Treib has often visited the University of Twente, he says that there are hardly any differences between German and Dutch students. 'They all have high levels of motivation and performance.' Although both groups have a lot in common, says Treib, seminars are enriched by having students from two countries in them.

'People contribute examples from their own countries, and that produces more variety in discussions.'

There are some differences, though. When Oliver Treib visits the University of Twente he is always impressed by the open office culture there. 'The architecture radiates transparency,' he says. 'The offices have glass walls, and in the corridors there are seating groups for spontaneous meetings.' Final exams are also organized differently than at a German university. 'Here in Germany, the public are excluded from exams. In Enschede visitors are welcome. When students give a presentation on their final thesis and have to answer examiners' questions, their family and friends are sitting in the auditorium. That produces a very nice atmosphere.'

Staff exchange is one of the pillars of the cooperation between Twente and Münster. German scientist Oliver Treib hardly notices any differences between both student populations; Dutch lecturer Erwin Folmer, however, does.



text: PAUL DE KUYPER | photo: ARJAN REEF

'GERMAN STUDENTS IN ABSORPTION MODE'

In addition to his job at the Kadaster, Erwin Folmer is performing part-time research into linked data, the task of connecting large data sets, at the UT. In 2013 and 2014 he worked one day a week in Münster.

The University of Münster is 'a hidden gem' according to part-time researcher Erwin Folmer, who obtained his doctoral degree at the UT in 2012. 'There are very few people who even know how big this university is, or their incredible expertise in the field of ICT. They have an enormous amount of high-quality doctoral degrees. It's the envy of us over here.'

Folmer, who was still working at research institute TNO and the UT at the time, initiated several joint research projects in Münster in 2013. 'It struck me that money wasn't an issue. We were in the middle of the financial crisis, the Dutch universities were cutting of funding, but in Germany there was a lot of innovation.'

Münster and the UT are very, very different, says Folmer. 'A culture shock, certainly, but a lot of fun. The hierarchy is a big thing if there are guests present. Then you say *Herr Professor*. However, as soon as the guests have left, it's the same as in the Netherlands.'

'I gave a lunch lecture once. Everyone attends those. Even the professors, who then want to talk to you about the content of your lecture.'

His lectures were 'a bit more ponderous' in Münster than in Twente. 'German students require more of a challenge. If you don't ask them questions, there won't be any interaction. They're even further into absorption mode than the students here.'



Internationalization

SUPPORTING, NOT STEERING

In the age of the Bologna process, the name given to the reform of higher education in Europe, internationalization is sweeping through universities at all levels. This is true for Münster as much as for Enschede, with a focus on the 'mobility' of degrees.

Joint and double degrees are becoming increasingly important,' says Inge Broekman, Coordinator Internationalization Student Affairs & Services at the University of Twente 'both for us and for our partner universities, whether they are in Indonesia or Belgium.' It means that a student at Münster University can spend a semester at Twente, or take part in the double degree programme. After all, the aim is to be well prepared to enter a jobs market that is becoming increasingly international. 'We educate our students to become global citizens of the future,' says Sander Lotze, Head of International Affairs at Twente.

The figures show that the courses on offer are popular: 20 percent of students at Twente come from abroad – many of them from Germany, followed by China and Indonesia. At Münster there were around 3,200 students from around 120 countries in 2014/2015. Besides

'We educate our students to become global citizens of the future'

Europe, which is covered by the Erasmus Programme, the most important partner countries for exchange programmes and academic collaborations are China, India, Japan and Brazil. Both universities – Twente and Münster – are committed to even stronger internatio-

nalization. For example, Sander Lotze and Anke Kohl, who is head of the International Office at Münster, advise university departments on how they can make their curricula more international. 'Our task is to provide support for such natural processes – but not to steer them,' explains Anke Kohl.

BUDDY PROGRAMMES

One of the measures being taken at the two universities to make them more attractive for students from abroad is that from 2018 teaching staff at Twente will be giving their seminars and lectures in English – not only for Master's but also for Bachelor's courses. Münster currently offers eight Master's courses and one Bachelor course completely in English – from 'Human Movement in Sports and Exercise' to an MA in 'British, American and Postcolonial Studies'. Other courses offer individual modules in English or another foreign language. At Twente there are currently six Bachelor degree courses that can be taken in English, including 'International Business Administration' and 'Advanced Technology'.

To help students feel comfortable so far away from home, the International Offices help them to find accommodation and provide practical assistance on questions relating, for example, to residence permits. Also, both universities have a kind of 'buddy programme' to support integration, in which students look after fellow-students from abroad in various free-time activities and are generally available as someone they can contact. In this way, friendships for life can develop quite naturally – which is the best kind of internationalization. |



Students working in the 'Study Information Centre' in Enschede.

Study Information Centre in Twente

FINDING YOUR WAY IN THE LABYRINTH

In the Study Information Centre (SIC) at the University of Twente (UT) around 30 students from all over the world help their fellow students who are far away from home. They also visit schools in Germany and look after young people who are interested in studying at UT.

'My job is great,' says Adrian Benjamin Haeske, who comes from Hanover and is in his third year at the University of Twente, studying psychology. He has been working for almost two years in the Study Information Centre (SIC). 'I can help other people, learn new things myself in the process, and grow with my tasks.'

Adrian and his colleagues are active at university fairs, for example, or they visit schools in the Ruhr Area, Hanover or Bremen, where they offer guidance to young people who are often overwhelmed by the wide range of courses on offer. Among other things, the university delegates explain what interesting subjects UT offers and how studies are structured. 'Before we started we were all given intensive training,' says Adrian. 'Especially in presentation skills.' During opening times there is a German contact at the SIC – either by phone or via a chat on the UT homepage. 'Parents often want to know everything about enrolment. Prospective students are also interested in how and where they can find a room, and what life is like here,' explains Mara Kaldeweide, who is in her third year, studying Health Sciences.

EXPERIENCE THE ATMOSPHERE

Another important issue is how to finance being at university. For 2015/2016, the 'collegegeld' (tuition fees) amounts to 1,951 euros. On top of this there are the costs for rent, journeys home and everyday

needs. German students can apply for a grant to study abroad, irrespective of what their parents earn, or they can apply for a Dutch educational grant. 'It's relatively easy to find a part-time job here in Enschede, and especially within the university,' says Mara. 'You can work at the SIC, as we do, or help on the Open Day.' If all else fails, the campus has its own small job centre to provide help.

'It's easy to find a part-time job within the university'

The SIC recommends anyone interested in studying at UT to book a taster day or come by on Open Day. This gives visitors the opportunity to listen to lectures or seminars; also, they will be accompanied all day by an experienced student. 'This offer is very popular, and people are taking it up more and more frequently,' says Undergraduate Studies Advisor Ingrid Groenewegen-van den Hul. Any language barriers that have to be overcome are, she says, of secondary importance. 'A lot of people want to experience the atmosphere here in order to decide.' Just like Mara: After she had been to an Open Day at UT she was certain that she had found the right university. |

Student housing

COUCHES FOR FRESHERS

Whereas in Enschede it is quite easy to find a room, in Münster it is much more difficult to get student housing. The city and the university even run campaigns with names like 'Your couch for a fresher', which are designed to help students find places in private houses.



ENSCHEDÉ



MÜNSTER

Lisette Groeneveld is lucky: she lives where others 'only' study – on the campus of the University of Twente. She can be at her place of work at the Students' Union in the 'Bastille' in just a few minutes, and it's only a few steps farther to the sports centre or the theatre. Also, Lisette can use the extra-fast campus WiFi.

It's not really difficult at all for students to find a room in Enschede if they start looking early enough. Anyone who wants to get hold of one of the more than 2,100 rooms on the only university campus in the Netherlands can keep a lookout for free rooms either on the website of the Acasa housing association, through the 'Kamersite' run by the Student Union or via housinganywhere.com. If it's a room in a house-share you're looking for, then a preliminary 'Kamerzoek-gesprek', a kind of interview with existing tenants, is obligatory, and at least half of the residents must agree to the new tenant. Students here pay between 224 and 722 euros a month in rent (including heating) for a room about 10 to 67 square metres in size.

Around 1,000 rooms in the town are administered by the SJHT organization, the Stichting Jongeren Huisvesting Twente, which leaves it up to the tenants in a house-share to find a suitable newcomer. Students pay between 250 and 300 Euro warm rent in a shared flat. A single room in a house-share costs between 330 and 380 euros (including heating) per month. It can, however, take half a year for one of these rooms to become available.

ACCOMMODATION CAMPAIGNS

Tim Kortendieck's run of bad luck changed in the end. When the

18-year-old was looking for a room in Münster, where the housing market is difficult anyway, he was rejected by every single house-share he tried, who told him he was too young. The law student subsequently found a room at the Episcopal Seminary 'Borromaeum', not far from St Paul's Cathedral.

The Diocese of Münster has been offering rooms in the Seminary since the beginning of October 2014. For 300 euros a month, eight male students each currently have a small room with its own bathroom, plus lunch and an evening meal. Telephone and internet costs are also included in the price.

The Housing Department in the City of Münster expects an increased demand for student accommodation until at least 2020. There are a number of campaigns in existence – run by the city, the university and students' unions – with names like 'Wohnen für Hilfe' ('Pay for a room by helping in the house'), 'Studierzimmer' ('Offer a room in your house to a student') or 'Deine Couch für Erstis' ('Your couch for a fresher'), which are designed to help students find places in private houses – at least for an interim period – and make it easier for new undergraduates to find somewhere to live.

Students who start looking early enough can find places offered by church, charitable and commercial organizations, or can enlist the aid of the largest provider of accommodation, the Students' Union, who currently have around 5,620 places on offer in 23 apartment buildings, with rents (including heating) starting at 221 euros. For single rooms there is a waiting time here too of half a year – and in some buildings it can be anything up to 24 months. |

