

observant

INDEPENDENT WEEKLY MAASTRICHT UNIVERSITY

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editorial

Thirty women and one man

“Good thing I never throw anything away”, I muttered to myself as I stood in front of my overcrowded bookcase, with its stacks of double-parked books. We hold on to too much stuff, so my search for two slim booklets took far longer than I’d hoped. But there they were at last, sitting side by side on the bottom shelf like old friends: *Maastricht in dertig polemieken* [*Maastricht in Thirty Polemics*] and *Maastricht, een ander verhaal* [*Maastricht: A Different Story*].

Both are collections of short stories by well-known and lesser-known Maastricht locals, each writing about an interesting place in the city – from the “inhospitable” intersection of Brusselsestraat and De Kommel to the train station where you enter through “the back door of the town” (meaning the old factory buildings) and De Hoge Fronten, described as the most beautiful garden one could wish for.

Maastricht in Thirty Polemics was published in 1992 as a Studium Generale initiative. In what now feels like an almost comically outdated move, SG invited over thirty men (including my husband and colleague) and just one woman to contribute. Some spirited women felt this called for a response. Nothing too serious, but something light-hearted, “in the form a joke”, as they explained to *Dagblad De Limburger* when *Maastricht: A Different Story* was published in 1993, featuring contributions from thirty women and just one man: Professor Hans Philippen. I was one of those thirty women, writing about the ever-quiet Henric van Veldekeplein, a square tucked away behind the Protestant Saint John Church and the Catholic Basilica of Saint Servatius. A perfect spot for lovers, I wrote – somewhere they could go one step beyond playing footsie under a café table. A place to cherish.

Why this little bit of history? From this week until summer, we’ll be asking students about their favourite spots in the city. This new series has replaced the weekly series in which sexologist Marieke Dewitte answered students’ questions about sex. After twenty instalments, the questions dried up and we went in search of a new topic. In the first instalment, a first-year Economics and Business Economics student from Romania explains why he loves visiting the Bonnefanten Museum. Its local art collection, he says, helps him get to know the city he now calls home. But more than that, art makes him happier: “Art heals both body and soul. It’s essential to learn to see the beauty in the world around you.”

Riki Janssen

Every week, the editor-in-chief writes about what has been happening at the Observant office



series maastricht and me



Photo: Ellen Oosterhof

“I’d rather go to a museum than hang out at a café”



“On one of my first days in Maastricht, my mother and I walked past the Bonnefanten Museum. The artworks I glimpsed through the windows immediately caught my attention, but I waited for a special occasion to visit. That moment came last Valentine’s Day, the first one my girlfriend and I spent in the Netherlands. We met in our home country, Romania, and came to Maastricht together.

From the outside, you wouldn’t guess how influential and important the museum’s works of art are. Its collection is extensive and incredibly diverse, from modern art to Renaissance paintings and medieval sculptures of great historical value, beautifully displayed alongside screens showing videos. In Moldova, where I grew up, I loved visiting a similar museum with an extensive collection of local art. It’s a wonderful way to get to know the place you live, especially through historical artefacts. I find it fascinating to see artworks created centuries ago. At the Bonnefanten Museum, I saw 500-year-old wooden statues of saints and a bishop’s staff from 1240. It tells you something about the people who lived here back then, and about how deeply history shapes the present. It’s important for people to learn about that. I think it’s great how much effort goes into preserving historical buildings and objects in the Netherlands, particularly in Maastricht.

Ștefan Ștefiriță, first-year bachelor’s student in Economics and Business Economics, shares his favourite spot in Maastricht: the Bonnefanten Museum

I have a lot of hobbies and interests, but art is one of my greatest passions. I grew up with it – my parents are very interested in culture and art. I started painting and drawing when I was seven and took lessons from an artist for five years, mostly painting landscapes and still lifes. I eventually stopped as other priorities like studying took over, but I’d love to pick it up again one day. I think I see the world differently from most people. I like to focus on colours, on the way people move.

So why did I choose to study economics, you ask? Because economics is very important to society as well. And I think

it’s good to have a wide range of skills. Leonardo da Vinci wasn’t just an artist; he was also an architect and inventor. People are capable of so much. But I do think it’s important to keep visiting museums rather than just hanging out at cafés. It makes me happier – art heals your mind and soul. It’s essential to learn to see the beauty of everything in the world around you.”

Dennis Vaendel

In this new, weekly series, Observant asks students about their favourite spot in Maastricht

Minister of Education violates agreement, according to UM

Maastricht University resumes international student recruitment



Photo: Philip Driessen

Maastricht University is recruiting international students for a number of new degree programmes, including the bachelor's programmes in Sustainable Bioscience (set to launch in 2026), Brain Science and Regenerative Medicine and Technology. The university is particularly targeting international students from the Euregion, in neighbouring Belgium and Germany.

This is noteworthy because, early last year, Dutch universities collectively agreed – under the umbrella organisation Universities of the Netherlands (UNL) – to largely stop international student recruitment. This decision was in line with the 2022 administrative agreement between higher education institutions and then-Minister of Education Dijkgraaf in which institutions pledged to exercise great restraint

in recruiting international students, in light of the government's intention to curb the internationalisation of Dutch higher education. However, according to UM President Rianne Letschert, the current Minister of Education, Bruins, "broke" this agreement by scrapping parts of it, including starter and incentive grants for researchers. "As far as we're concerned, the agreement no longer exists." As a result, UM has resumed international recruitment, though Letschert stresses that the university remains primarily focused on attracting students from within the Netherlands. Whether national or international, recruitment efforts are needed for the programmes mentioned above – all either recently established or set to launch next year – to reach a "healthy" number of students. That is why, since the start of this year, UM has been pro-

moting these programmes "in the Euregion, mainly through online channels. We're not attending large fairs outside the Netherlands, but we are, for example, visiting schools in Belgium and Germany". Letschert also highlights the need for recruitment in light of the sharp decline in international student numbers. "We must be careful not to let these numbers drop much further."

But does this mean UM is violating its agreements with other universities in UNL? Not according to the umbrella organisation itself. When asked, UNL stated that UM is simply sharing information "a bit more widely" about degree programmes "related to sectors experiencing labour shortages".

Peter Doorakkers

UM embraces alternatives

University critical of rankings: questions about methodology

Dutch universities, including Maastricht University, are increasingly stepping away from rankings like the Times Higher Education and QS World University Rankings. They question the methodologies behind these lists – how do they actually arrive at their conclusions? The UM Executive Board has now embraced an alternative called More Than Our Rank.

Rector Pamela Habibović recently shared this development during a University Council committee meeting. UM is following the recommendation of a national working group of experts who looked into international university rankings such as Times Higher Education (THE), QS and the Shanghai Ranking. They concluded that capturing an institution's performance – encompassing both research and teaching – in a single overall score is nearly impossible. Rankings also conflict with the principles of the national Recognition & Rewards programme. Perhaps most crucially, the methodologies behind these rankings are often not transparent. As a result, the expert group has called for

a "culture change" that "encourages responsible use and avoids opportunistic use", as stated in a memo to the University Council.

For UM, this change does not mean a complete rejection of all rankings. Visitors to the university website, particularly those interested in English-taught or economics and business-related programmes, will still see various references to them. For example, University College Maastricht continues to prominently display its status as a "top-rated programme" in the Dutch University Guide. Some programmes also highlight that UM ranks tenth in THE Young University Rankings, which list the world's best universities that are 50 years old or younger.

Data

UM is still debating whether to continue submitting data to rankings like THE. In 2023, Utrecht University (UU) decided to stop submitting data due to dissatisfaction with the ranking system. As a result, UU was not included in THE World Rankings 2024 – "a calculated risk", according to the memo to the University Council. UM is considering making the data it shares with THE and

QS publicly available, but this will depend on the position taken by other Dutch universities. The UM Executive Board has embraced an alternative called More Than Our Rank. This global initiative from the International Network of Research Management Societies (INORMS) sends a clear message: quality cannot be expressed in a single number. UM has also decided to stop sharing email addresses with ranking organisations for university-wide surveys.

Risk

Krithik Rock, a student representative on the University Council, raised concerns about the potential impact of this change on the recruitment of international students. "That's a risk", admitted the rector, but she also pointed out that not all prospective students consider rankings in their decision-making process. Habibović also emphasised the importance of "clearly communicating why we are doing this, alongside all other universities [in the Netherlands]".

Wendy Degens



Pun-ctuat-i-onforp-eace



"To the memory of the striking Bolshevik printers of St Petersburg who, in 1905, demanded to be paid the same rate for punctuation marks as for letters, and thereby directly precipitated the first Russian Revolution."

This is the dedication in the book *Eats, Shoots & Leaves* (2003) by Lynne Truss. I was reminded of this book when I received a WhatsApp message from my 19-year old grandson recently. It was rather like reading James Joyce, a stream of consciousness about the everyday, with a casual approach to punctuation. (It really wasn't like reading Joyce.) The message contained no punctuation, no capital letters, and it was in Dutch. I can read Dutch quite easily but punctuation helps. Many years ago, during one of my Dutch lessons, we were given a newspaper article from which all punctuation and capitalization had been removed. Our task was to put back the commas, question marks, full stops and capital letters. This was surprisingly challenging, and an excellent learning experience.

Back to that WhatsApp. In my boomer way, I complained to family members in their 40s about what I considered to be a barely literate message. They explained that young people regard punctuation as aggressive, especially full stops at the end of a message. I understand those might be considered not strictly necessary, but aggressive? Apparently they are seen as closing down discussion. I would like to suggest – gently – that the absence of punctuation is hostile to older people and even more so, in this case, to non-native speakers of Dutch.

The subtitle of Truss's book is not so gentle: *The Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation*. I'm totally with her on this, and her book is full of great examples of the sometimes life-threatening confusion arising from the absence or misuse of punctuation. The main title – *Eats, Shoots and Leaves* – refers to a gun-toting panda bear.

Commas save lives. There is an important difference between 'Let's eat, Grandma' and 'Let's eat Grandma'.

Please read the book, and use punctuation correctly in memory of Bolshevik printers and to save the lives of grandmothers everywhere.



Sally Wyatt,
professor of Digital Cultures

series sing, fight, cry, pray, laugh, work and admire

/ Thomas Frissen
(Rotterdam, 1989)

/ Assistant professor of
Digital Technology and
Society; coordinator BA
Digital Society

/ Lives in Maastricht

/ Has two sons with his
partner, Lola



Photo: Joey Roberts

“ I just thought,
“What am I doing?” ”

How many hours per day do you spend on your phone? Let me check. [Checks phone] Today, it's 1 hour and 45 minutes. Last week, it was more like 6 hours per day, but that was for work. As the coordinator of the Bachelor's program in Digital Society, I manage our Instagram page together with a student ambassador. I don't use the platform personally; I realised just how much data it collects and sells, and how little control you have over it. And, of course, there's a lot of nonsense out there. I remember once posting a picture of my lunch – an avocado sandwich – and getting ten likes from my friends. I just thought, “What am I doing?” and deleted everything.

What's your dream project? [Thinks] I've already partly achieved it: The Plant, a digital lab where students can experiment. Think 3D printing, Virtual Reality lessons, coding, or analysing big data online. We call it a playground where you're free to explore. I think it's so important that students enjoy being there – learning will follow naturally. It's not that everything has to be fun or feel like a game, but a positive experience always helps. My non-academic dream project? Maybe one day performing on stage, playing the piano in front of an audience...

that's my biggest dream. I took some acting classes for fun and used a piano for one of the assignments. It turned into a bit of a mini performance, and it was so cool. I taught myself to read music using an app, and I can already play *Yellow* by Coldplay. [Laughs]

I met my partner at a dance class. I'd signed up for a “Lindy Hop” swing dance class in Brussels. At the time, I was working in Leuven, doing my PhD. Lola and I were in the same group but never spoke. We finally got chatting at a social dance event, and after that, things moved very quickly. We were talking about vacations, and she said she wanted to go to Switzerland to ski but had no one to go with. Well, I also wanted to go and didn't have a ski buddy either. So, I spontaneously asked her if she wanted to go with me, and she said, “Yeah, why not?” After that moment, we didn't talk anymore, except for me sending her the details of when we would leave. I didn't even know if she had a boyfriend. But anyway, she became my ski buddy, and later on that trip, also my girlfriend. And now, our ski trips are the best vacations of the year.

I'm fascinated by... how people come to believe in something, how convictions form

and the role of media in manipulating people. For my PhD, I studied jihadist propaganda – how does someone become radicalised? How does a boy who grew up in Brussels end up setting off a bomb there? It was the kind of work you take home with you. I was doing content analysis of videos of beheadings – horrific footage, filmed Hollywood-style. It made me quite cynical. You really need something to balance that out in your personal life, to recalibrate you. When does a joke go too far? While cooking, I'd grab a courgette, chop off a piece and shout “Allahu Akbar!” Lola wasn't amused: “Don't do that – what if Arthur [our son] copies you at school and gets into trouble?”

Guilty pleasure? Hmm... cinnamon buns, I suppose? I'm not sure that counts as a guilty pleasure, but for my girlfriend it does – she thinks they're too expensive. I have them every weekend, and a few during the week too. Banditos does great cinnamon buns, but the other day I saw a food influencer on Instagram say the ones from Ginnies are the best. And it's true.

I can't stand it when students... come to class unprepared. I think it's disrespectful – not to me, I get paid either way, but to their classmates who did put in the effort.

Unfortunately, there are always a few students like this. They'll say “I skimmed the readings” when they downloaded the readings but didn't actually read them. I try to be understanding – maybe it's a post-Covid generation thing; they spent two years learning online without setting foot in a classroom. But some students won't even watch assigned YouTube videos! That frustrates me, and I let them know it. It can put a damper on the atmosphere, but, well, I'd rather they just didn't show up at all.

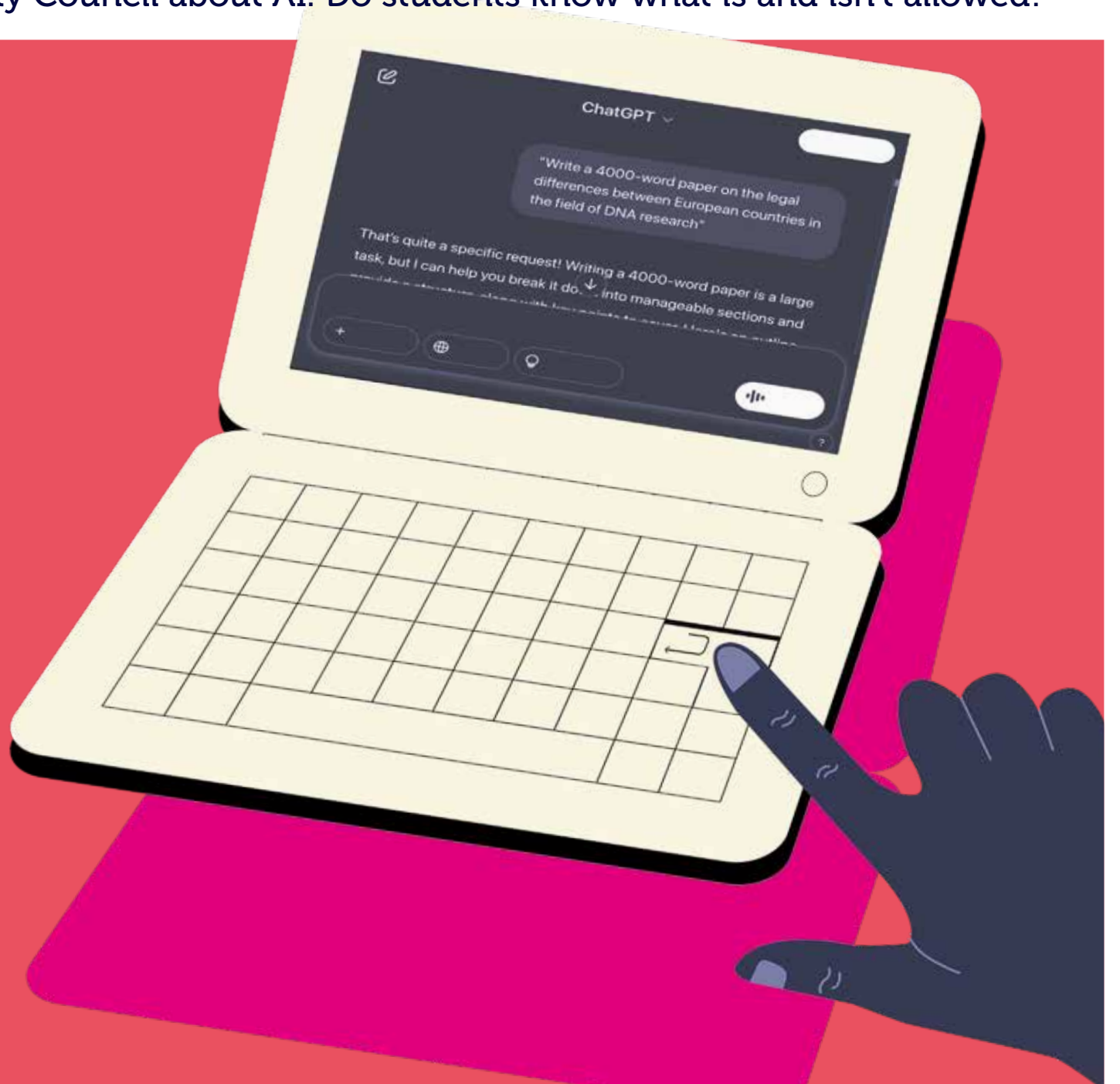
If you had a time machine, where would you go? Ancient Roman times, I think. *Gladiator* is a fantastic film – it inspired me. But just to be clear, I wouldn't want to be a gladiator. Nor necessarily rich, or dirt poor. I'd just want to walk around as an average Roman citizen, with a garden. It was a completely different world, and I'd love to know what it was really like. Or somewhere else – my own neighbourhood, around Orléansplein, at the start of the twentieth century. Our old neighbour once described what our street looked like seventy or eighty years ago: “There was a pharmacy here, a bottle shop there, a bakery over there, and a woman gave piano lessons here.” Ever since, I've wondered from time to time about the people who used to live in our house. When I walk down the street, I imagine the smell of fresh bread, and piano music drifting through the air. Life seemed simpler back then. Now it's a student neighbourhood, and you hear scooters zooming around all day, but I actually like that liveliness.

Lena Reichel

Weekly personal interview with a student or employee

Discussion in Law Faculty Council about AI: Do students know what is and isn't allowed?

Artificial intelligence, or AI – last month, the subject was raised during a meeting of the Law Faculty Council. Chair and associate professor Agustin Parise asked whether there was a more in-depth way of informing students about its use. AI is here to stay, ChatGPT can be 'freely' used. Are students aware what is and isn't allowed?



What students should know about the pros and cons – think about the ease with which ChatGPT can summarise a text or develop an idea, but also the danger of inaccurate or incorrect results – is one thing, said Sjoerd Claessens, associate dean of education, but there is much more at play with AI. Privacy problems, for example. The Dutch Data Protection Authority recently warned about using Deep Seek, a Chinese chatbot, after concerns about its privacy and reliability. SURE, the ICT cooperative of education and research in the Netherlands, had this to say about Microsoft's alternative, Copilot: 'Don't use it', also due to privacy concerns. What about Open AI's ChatGPT? That last one is an American company with no interest in European laws and regulations, is the conclusion in the Law Council. And what about aspects such as sustainability? Training and using generative AI tools lead to an enormous amount of CO2 emissions. And another thing: finances. What if, in the future, UM purchases an AI tool that does comply with European guidelines, what would a licence cost? Forty euros per student per month? The council wants to know if the organisation would be willing to pay that.

Brainstorm session

Mark Kawakami, council member on behalf of academic staff, wondered aloud whether individual lecturers are allowed to use ChatGPT, for example, for an assignment in their own teaching groups. "There is a need, a wish," he emphasised. "And it also has to do with employability. We want to educate students

"If we do nothing, we stand still, and ultimately, someone will suffer"

well. If we do nothing, we stand still, and ultimately, someone will suffer as a result." Anke Moerland, associate dean of research, understands the urgency. "We have to teach students how to use it. They have to know that you can't just upload any and every document. So, let's invest in AI skills." Teachers also have a part to play, she added. They can explain to students at the start of a course what they can and can't do. So, not generating a text for a written exam, but maybe for a brainstorm session, for example.

Training

First and foremost, the discussion in the Law Faculty Council is by no means the only discussion about AI at UM recently. The subject has featured in other faculty council meetings, too, such as the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, where the need for more oral exams

was raised.

While there has been a university-wide 'policy guideline' – which according to the description, is a document "which describes UM's position regarding generative AI and sets out general guidelines" – for some time, it doesn't offer much advice, the University Council complained a few months ago, when the document was subject to discussion. All the while, the university community is desperately looking for something to hold on to, they warned. How are students, lecturers, but also Boards of Examiners, supposed to tackle urgent AI issues? What should be decided in the faculties and what should be done 'centrally'? The Executive Board would have liked to develop a uniform AI policy for the whole of UM, but that was seemingly impossible. So instead, it is up to the faculties to work out the exact details. But the U-Council wanted to know whether there will be 'central' money and

guidance available to safely and responsibly implement AI. And what about training staff and students, who is responsible for that? Another important point raised, just like in the Law Faculty Council: which AI program will UM choose, because everybody should use the same version to avoid inequality. After all, the paid version of ChatGPT offers more options than the free version. At the time, the Executive Board said that UM was 'too small' for offers from tech giants. They were hoping for a collective purchase, so together with other institutions, through ICT organisation SURE, for example. It is unclear whether there has been any progress regarding the purchase of an AI program. At time of publication, the spokesperson for UM had not answered *Observant's* question.

Safety and security adviser Paul van Eekeren set to retire

“Everything that goes wrong in society happens at the university, too”



After 23 years, Paul van Eekeren, Safety and Security adviser, will bid farewell to Maastricht University. What incidents have stuck in his memory? And what has changed in the field of safety? “What I used to do by myself, we now do with eight people.”

Text: Dennis Vaendel

Photo: Joey Roberts

Whit Monday 2008. A UM staff member who wanted to take advantage of the day off to sort something in her office in the building at Debyeplein 1 notices an odd smell. It turns out there is a fire on the third floor, but there is no fire alarm. “We found out afterwards that the fire detection system wasn’t working because the electronics had burnt through,” Van Eekeren remembers. “There was a significant amount of damage, over a million euros.” The fact that – were it not for this accidental discovery – things could have been much, much worse is made readily apparent the very next day, when a building at TU Delft completely catches fire and partially collapses.

Or that day in the summer of 2016, when it could have gone very wrong at the university building at Tongersestraat 53, after road workers accidentally hit a high-pressure gas line. “We had to rapidly evacuate four buildings, including painters and the workmen working on the roof. If anybody had lit a cigarette by the gate...” And then, of course, there was the cyber attack during the 2019 Christmas period, during which all the internal UM systems were taken offline. “That meant that cameras and fire alarms, for example, were also cut off from the outside world. We set up our own control room in less than two hours. Those were a hectic couple of days, with lots of people working overtime.”

All of them are incidents that have stayed with Van Eekeren since he started at UM in 2002. For much of that time, he was the head of emergency organisation (HCO): the person in charge of large-scale incidents at the university. Anything from fires and reanimation (“over the last few years, we’ve had to use the AED three times, all successful, thankfully”),

to suicides and bomb threats – such as the one at the city centre university library in 2022, which turned out to be a false alarm. “They are situations where you have to make a lot of decisions in a short space of time.”

Private life

It is a role that has a significant impact on your private life, says Van Eekeren. “You always have to be available and be able to get to the incident location within a quarter of an hour – evenings, nights, weekends. That means no drinking, no trips to the theatre or weekends away. That has an impact on the people around you, too. It’s fine if they ring me at night, but my wife is right there next to me.”

“For six or seven years, I was the only HCO. And when I did go on holidays, when there was a replacement, people would often still call me. I once resolved an issue over the phone whilst on a beach in Venezuela – I’m just glad I didn’t have to pay the phone bill!” Nowadays, there is a team of eight people who each take on the role of HCO for a week at a time. “That’s much better. You can’t do it the way we used to anymore. [Laughing] Although, according to the Working Hours Act, you shouldn’t have done it then either.” The role itself has also changed, says Van Eekeren. “For example, I sometimes used to have to deal with interpersonal issues between students, or stalking. Now there is a whole social safety team that deals with that instead.” And there are now also a coordinator for knowledge security and a team for cybersecurity. “You notice that security is taken much more seriously. People are more aware of all the dif-



ferent dangers, not least because of everything that's happening around the globe."

Labradors

The fact that there are now more security positions doesn't immediately translate to less work for Van Eekeren. "There are more cases of vandalism and theft. Cars that are stripped or stolen from car parks, heavy fireworks that shattered windows on Zwingelpet, and pro-Palestinian demonstrators who destroyed thirty toilet groups and scrawled on the walls." Protests are something "we didn't used to have to deal with much. Maastricht has always been a little more 'sleepy' in that sense." A turning point was the years of demonstrations against animal testing at the Faculty of Health, Medicine and Life sciences (FHML). Vehement protest by animal rights activists eventually led to the decision to stop experimenting with labradors in 2015. "Since then we've started monitoring more: what could happen? When Russia invaded Ukraine, for example, we

watched to make sure Russian and Ukrainian students wouldn't start fighting each other, which in the end, was not as bad as expected." Last year, a tent camp and the occupation of a building at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASoS) by pro-Palestinian protesters formed a new chapter. "The coordination and management of the protests was much better, we hadn't encountered it to that degree before. Thankfully, we do have contacts throughout the country, so we are kept up to date on any potential issues. We're more alert."

Online threats

Another new development: threats to researchers on social media. "It's very easy to send a quick "You need to die" to someone online. Is that a threat or just a pathetic person? We try to monitor that, aided by others, like the police. The Executive Board is also very alert to threats to researchers. Where necessary, we step in," says Van Eekeren, refraining from discussing any specific

examples.

Aside from 'our own' people, there are guest lecturers or visitors who require the necessary security measures. Such as when the then-head of the Netherlands National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM) Jaap van Dissel – who had received serious threats from conspiracy theorists during and after the pandemic – was awarded his honorary doctorate at UM in 2021. Or the visit by Israeli and Palestinian ambassadors in 2016. "People like that often bring their own security teams, but you do have to take extra measures yourself, too. It happens more often now, which does actually get rather pricey. You do notice that the people at UM who organise events like that know where to find us now. They don't want to run the risk of anything going wrong."

Nagging

Still, Van Eekeren thinks that the response to incidents could be faster in general. "The

university is a reflection of society: everything that might go wrong in society happens here, too – from fraud to violence. But you do notice that reputation is increasingly important. Things that people could be prosecuted for are frequently covered up. Maybe I'm just old school, but in my humble opinion, I think that sometimes it's better to stop attempting de-escalation or leniency, and just intervene." However, emphasises Van Eekeren, the role of the Safety and Security team is always to advise. Whether that concerns deploying security personnel or how often evacuation drills should be scheduled – after all, the team also facilitates the training and organisation of emergency responders (BHV). "In the end, the responsibility lies with the directors, the property managers, the event organisers. Some value it more than others. We can't force them to do anything, but we do always emphasise the importance. For some people, there's a very thin line between advising and nagging. They'll ask you, 'Is that really necessary?'"

news

It is still unclear when the Senate will vote on the plans

Relay protest against education cuts starts, Maastricht joins on April 15

Teachers, staff, and students from at least ten universities will take turns striking over the next few weeks. They are protesting the education budget cuts, which are yet to be voted on by the Dutch Senate. Maastricht University will join the relay strike on April 15th.

It is still unclear what the day in Maastricht will look like and what activities will be organized. The unions WOinActie, AOb, FNV, and LSVb will discuss this next week. "Based on that, we will then determine what applies at UM," said a spokesperson for the university.

The relay strike was launched on Monday in Leiden by nearly three thousand teachers, staff, and students. They called on the Senate not to approve the education budget, although it is still unclear when the plans will be addressed.

Paying for it themselves

On Tuesday, teachers and students from Utrecht University, the University of Humanistic Studies, and Utrecht University of Applied Sciences (HU) went on strike. Staff members from the university who joined the action had to take a day off or rely on the strike fund of their union. In this way, the management, which did not participate in the strike, would follow the national guidelines set by the Association of Universities of Applied Sciences.

"Colleagues feel unsupported by HU because of this," said Douwe Dirk van der Zweep, a board member of the AOb union. "If you strike, you generally don't get paid," he acknowledges. "But this is a strike against government policy, which HU also disagrees with, not against the employer. They can withhold wages, but they don't have to. They are making union members bear the burden."

According to him, it is also important to note that education staff usually go to great lengths



One of many protesters in Leiden Photo: Roland Pupupin

to avoid disadvantaging their students. This is also what the HU management is asking staff to do. "In that case, a salary deduction feels very unsympathetic."

The only one

As far as known, HU is the only institution that intends to withhold wages from strikers.

Van der Zweep: "The chairman of the board at Leiden University of Applied Sciences was on the protest stage during the strike and expressed support. We haven't heard anything about wage deductions in other cities." The Utrecht University of Applied Sciences has since announced that no wages will be withheld from employees who have participated in

the strike for less than two hours.

The relay strike will last until mid-April – Maastricht is currently scheduled to be last – and will be concluded with a national demonstration. The date and location are yet to be announced.

HOP/DB

THE ANNOUNCEMENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY, FACULTIES, SERVICE CENTRES AND STUDENT ORGANISATIONS CAN BE FOUND ON WWW.OBSERVANTONLINE.NL

Agenda
academic
ceremonies

Aula Minderbroedersberg 4-6



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www.maastrichtuniversity.nl