



university of  
 groningen

# Results

## Diversity & Inclusion Office

### January–December 2022

### “Setting Up”

Version 1.3

Version date: December 2023 (revision), first version December 2022

Version management:

- First version: December 2022
- Second version: March 2023 Adapted to IAB feedback
- Third version: December 2023 Separation from 2023 Action Plan

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# Acronyms

BoU	Board of the University
D&I	Diversity & Inclusion
EAB	External Advisory Board
GEP	Gender Equality Plan
IAB	Internal Advisory Board
IC	Intercultural Competence
IDI	Internationalization, Diversity and Inclusion
LANDO	Landelijk overleg Diversity Officers
SER	Sociaal-Economische Raad
TAG	Teaching Academy Groningen

# I. Introduction

## Purpose of this Document

This document, **Results Diversity & Inclusion Office, January–December 2022: Setting Up**, reports on the developments of the D&I Office for January to December 2022. It is based on the 2021 [University Action Plan Diversity and Inclusion. \*Belonging in the University of Groningen\*<sup>1</sup>](#). Please refer to that document for the overall mandate, the definitions of Diversity and Inclusion, positioning in the university, the goals and activities for the short term (2021-2022) and the longer term (2021-2025).

## Document History

The first version of this document was written in December 2022 as a part of the 2023 Action Plan. After internal review and slight revision, in February 2023 it was submitted to the Internal Advisory Board and the Faculty Representatives (the latter only in outline form). The second version of this document (March 2023) incorporated the feedback from the Internal Advisory Board and the Faculty Representatives and was submitted to HR for final review. Finalization of this document prior to submission of the Action Plan to the Board of Directors awaited approval of the HR department. Feedback on the HR related content at the end of October 2023 did not require any further changes to the document. In November 2023, it was decided to separate the retrospective Results Reports from the future oriented Action Plans, as the former do not need HR and Board of Directors approval. Version 3 reflects that separation.

## How to Read this Document

The remainder of this document is organized as follows:

- [Context 2022](#) - This section explains the internal and external factors that affected the D&I Office's plans for 2022.
- **Results 2022** - This section describes the results achieved in 2022. It is divided into the following sections:
  - [1. Setting Up](#) of the Diversity and Inclusion Office and its Infrastructure
  - [2. Getting Started](#): the implementing of initial D&I Activities
- [Conclusion 2022](#) - This section looks back at the year 2022 and briefly summarizes the progress made and the challenges experienced.
- [Appendix](#) - This appendix gives an elaboration of the international, national and local bodies with the D&I Office is represented.

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<sup>1</sup> Referred to as [Belonging](#) (2021) in the footnotes.

## II. Context 2022

### Internal Context

#### Start of the D&I Office

The mandate of the D&I Office was identified and commenced in September 2021. 2022 was the year of “Setting Up.”

Recruitment for the Programme Coordinator was initiated early 2022, partial installation of 0,1 March 2022, and with full installation of 0,8 fte in October 2022. Recruitment for the Communication Advisor was initiated in March, start of the function was in September 2022.

#### University Context

The University’s 2021-2026 Strategic Plan, “Making Connections” emphasizes the core values of diversity, academic freedom, integrity, inclusivity, sustainability and openness. The development of intercultural skills is part of the organizational vision. Clearly, diversity and inclusion are an integral part of the University’s future.

The necessity to safeguard social safety is raised in the Strategic Plan. At the beginning of the year, the Board of Directors made a statement of concern about unacceptable behaviour and social safety, encouraging everyone to call out unacceptable behaviour and drawing attention to the Active Bystander training. Social safety is a necessary prerequisite, but unto itself not sufficient to realize a culture of inclusion. The D&I Office is tasked to link these (and other) areas and develop a coherent D&I policy<sup>2</sup>.

The UG started giving form to the national Recognition and Rewards programme through the following five tracks: teaching career pathways, generic competences, leadership, assessment of research and impact and balance between team and individual. The policy paper “Room for everyone’s talent” ([2019](#)) starts with a commitment to inclusion. The D&I Office supports these developments and at the same time asks for vigilance when using these new instruments to advance equity and avoid the perpetuation of inequalities (e.g. that women generally will advance in the teaching career pathways and men in the academic pathways.)

In 2022 the annual NSE results indicated that international students scored significantly lower on many of the items in comparison to Dutch students<sup>3</sup>. This is also so on the specific item “I experience equal treatment of students.” That international students scored significantly lower

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<sup>2</sup> [Belonging](#) (2021) Appendix item 1.i.

<sup>3</sup> Particularly on the themes of: content and design of education (7/8 items), testing and assessment (6/6 items), and general (7/12 items). In total, on 28/69 of the items, the international students scored significantly lower than the Dutch students. Under the general category are items such as: “How satisfied are you with your education in general?” and “Based on my experience so far, I would choose this programme again.”

than Dutch students on the item on equal treatment (despite the generally high score) and the general tendency of a significantly lower score by international students concerns the D&I Office. Seen through an intercultural lens, recognising that there are cultural differences in responding to surveys, this concern is exacerbated<sup>4</sup>.

In October 2022, the Language Centre informed the head of the Intercultural Competence section that they intended to cease the provision of Intercultural Competence training within the University. Uncertainty about the future of the Intercultural Competence section required the D&I Office to advocate on behalf of the continued necessity for the delivery of Intercultural Competence training. Intercultural competence is a necessary skill to address the cultural diversity of this internationalized university.

## External Context

After a final lockdown during December 2021 and January 2022, all Covid measures restricting work and study at the University were lifted. 2022 was the first year that we returned fully back to normal though quarantine when sick, hybrid working, blended learning, concern about mental wellbeing of students and the effects of long-covid continued to influence the University and the Diversity and Inclusion office.

Shortly thereafter, the world was shocked by the Russian invasion into Ukraine. A day later, a statement was made by UNL and the University in alignment with the statements and decisions of the national government. The UG experienced pushback on this due to a perceived lack of recognition of other conflicts in the world. The war contributed to a worldwide energy crisis and the UG introduced energy reducing measures to mitigate the rising costs of energy.

## III. Results 1: Setting Up the Diversity and Inclusion Infrastructure

In 2022, the D&I Office realized the intended infrastructure and organizational form<sup>5</sup> - establishing not only the core D&I team (Chief D&I Officer, Programme Coordinator, Communication Advisor, and Student Assistant) but also the designated support bodies (Internal and External Advisory Boards and Faculty D&I Representatives). 2022 was the year of “Setting Up.”

### The D&I Office

In October 2022 the D&I Office established the core D&I team:

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<sup>4</sup> See for example Nuffic (2013) [Grading systems in the Netherlands, the United States and the United Kingdom](#) or Johnson, T. P., Shavitt, S., & Holbrook, A. L. (2011). Survey response styles across cultures. In D. Matsumoto & F. J. R. van de Vijver (Eds.), *Cross-cultural research methods in psychology* (pp. 130–175). Cambridge University Press.

<sup>5</sup> [Belonging](#) (2021) Appendix item 1.i.

**Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer (0,4 fte):**

[Gerry Wakker](#) (she/her)

also professor of Greek Language and Literature

**Programme Coordinator (0,1 - 0,2 fte Spring 2022, 0,8 fte October 2022)**

[Michaela Carriere](#) (she/her)

also Intercultural Competence section head at the Language Centre (0,2 fte)

**Communication Advisor (0,5 fte since September 2022)**

[Emi Howard](#) (they/them)

also translator & editor at the Language Centre

**Student Assisant (since December 2022)**

Derya Kockaya (she/her)

And for collaborations on specific topics:

**Policy Advisor HR,**

[Frank Nienhuis](#) (he/him)

Topics: HR issues, esp. gender balance and diverse recruitment

**Policy Advisor International Strategy and Relations**

[Anita Veltmaat](#) (she/her)

Topics: Rosalind Franklin Fellows and Aletta Jacobs community

Once the D&I team was in place, the further infrastructure around the office was established.

## Internal and External Advisory Boards

In the fall of 2022, the D&I Office installed two advisory boards: an internal and an external advisory board. The advisory boards provide solicited and unsolicited advice to the D&I Office regarding developments, critiques, and desires regarding D&I within the UG and externally.

### Internal Advisory Board<sup>6</sup>

The internal advisory board is made up of University of Groningen staff members and students who have academic or strategic interest in diversity and inclusion. They provide advice addressing how they are directly affected by the UG's D&I policy. The internal advisory board is composed of the following people as of the end of 2022:

Name	Position
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<sup>6</sup> [Belonging](#) (2021) Appendix item 4.i and 5.1.

Charlotte M'Doe	International Marketing Coordinator
<a href="#">Kees Aarts</a>	Professor of Political Institutions & Behaviour, Dean, Faculty of Behavioural and Social Sciences
<a href="#">Maarten Goldberg</a>	Privacy & security coordinator, secretary of Research Ethics Review Committee, Faculty of Law
<a href="#">Manda Broekhuis</a>	Professor of Operations Management, Vice Dean, Faculty of Economics and Business
<a href="#">Ryanka Hazekamp</a>	Senior HR advisor, University Services and University Library
<a href="#">Sahar El Aidy</a>	Associate professor of Host-Microbe Metabolic Interactions, Faculty of Science and Engineering
<a href="#">Susanne Täuber</a>	Associate professor of HRM & Organizational Behaviour and RFF fellow, Faculty of Economics and Business
Ivi Kussmaul	Student member
Hanna Jeung	Student member
Lilia Boyadzhieva	Student member

This information is kept up to date [on the D&I Office Website](#).

### External Advisory Board<sup>7</sup>

The external advisory board is made up of people with D&I or associated functions in other complex organizations that are comparable and/or are of strategic interest to the University of Groningen. They serve as a mirror for the UG's D&I office and enable the comparison of our challenges, and the exchange of good (and bad) practices. The external advisory board is composed of the following people:

Name	Position
Brigitte Prieshof	Programme manager, Diversity & Inclusion, Utrecht University
Charlotte Wekker	Diversity & Inclusion Initiator, Hanze University of Applied Sciences PhD student at the University of Groningen
Elina Hamstra-de Boer	Project Manager Diversity & Inclusion, HR, Gasunie
Marise Warner	Legal staff advisor, University Medical Center Groningen
Nagesh Rao	Special Advisor Inclusion and Faculty Affairs, Ohio University

<sup>7</sup> [Belonging](#) (2021) Appendix item 4.i and 5.1.



	Professor and Chair, Department of Social Medicine
Shervin Nekuee	Senior Policy Advisor Diversity & Inclusion, Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment

This information is kept up to date [on the D&I Office Website](#).

## Faculty D&I representatives<sup>8</sup>

In accordance with performance indicators agreed upon with the Faculty Boards on Diversity and Inclusion, there is a D&I contact person within all faculty boards, and most UG faculties (and UMCG) have appointed their own faculty diversity and inclusion representatives<sup>9</sup>. These staff members are current academic or support staff members who dedicate (part of) their time to D&I matters within the faculties. Their tasks are to assess the state of diversity and inclusion in their own faculties, to determine what has to be tackled within their faculties or at a central level, to implement D&I programming suggested by the D&I office, and to learn from one another. Some faculties are still busy with recruiting and appointing D&I representatives. The following D&I representatives were in place as of the end of 2022:

Faculty	D&I representatives
Behavioural and Social Sciences	<a href="#">Sabine Otten</a>
Economics and Business	<a href="#">Ella Sebamalai</a>
Campus Fryslân	<a href="#">Nick Emlen</a>
Law	<a href="#">Beth Yoder</a> <a href="#">Janet Jackson</a>
University College Groningen	<a href="#">Marian Counihan</a> <a href="#">Maria Ioannou</a>
Science and Engineering	<a href="#">Liza ten Velde</a> <a href="#">Eloise Daumerie</a>
Spatial Sciences	<a href="#">Louise Meijering</a> <a href="#">Björn de Kruijf</a>
University College Groningen	<a href="#">Marian Counihan</a> <a href="#">Maria Ioannou</a>
UMCG	<a href="#">Laura Damiano</a>

<sup>8</sup> [Belonging](#) (2021) Appendix item 1.iii.

<sup>9</sup> These roles may be named differently across the faculties. E.g. at the Faculty of Law, they are named 'Wellbeing, Diversity and Inclusion Officers'. At FSE, this is an additional task added to the Internationalization Policy Officer. At the Faculty of Medical Sciences/UMCG, a D&I team with a coordinator has been appointed. At UCG, Campus Fryslân, and Spatial Sciences, they are representatives of the D&I Committee.

This information is kept up to date [on the D&I Office Website](#).

## IDI Council<sup>10</sup>

The IDI Council, as given form in January 2022, is made up of policy officers (from education, research, international strategy and relations, and various functions within HR) with tasks related to Internationalization, Diversity and Inclusion. It meets every 6-weeks and addresses topics such as definitions, inclusive education, Advisory Committee for people with a functional impairment (ACF), including the (physical and digital) accessibility project, Language and Culture policy, preparation for various significant days (e.g. Women's Day, Diversity Day, Purple Friday), the ECHO awards. The purpose of the IDI council is to align existing initiatives, stimulating collaboration and developing D&I policy and embedding this in newly developed and existing instruments.

## Internal Collaboration<sup>11</sup>

As D&I is linked to many themes, the D&I Office has initiated close collaboration with various internal stakeholders, including, among others:

- Confidential advisors
- Ombudsperson
- Integral security
- Programme Leader Integrity
- Accessibility project leader
- TAG D&I community of practice<sup>12</sup>

## Strategic meetings with Rector Magnificus

Every 3 months, a strategic meeting about gender balance and other diversity issues takes place between the Rector Magnificus, HR (F. Nienhuis), and the Chief D&I officer.

## Annual Faculty Boards Meetings<sup>13</sup>

After the presentation to the College of Deans early 2022, (semi-) annual meetings with the Faculty Boards were instituted. The introductory meetings, which took place early 2022, established pertinent performance indicators for both the Faculties and the D&I Office.

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<sup>10</sup> [Belonging](#) (2021) Appendix item 4.i.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. Appendix item 3.viii, 4.i and LT4

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. Appendix item LT2

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. Appendix item 4.i.

## Representation at International, National and Local Bodies<sup>14</sup>

The D&I office represents the University of Groningen in the following consortia and collaborations:

- The Guild's Gender and Diversity [Working Group](#),
- Coimbra's [Equality and Diversity Working Group](#),
- The National Network of Diversity Officers ([LanDO](#)),
- The Sociaal-Economische Raad (SER, the socio-economic council). The UG is signator of the SER's Diversity Charter (aimed at meeting the requirements of the 2022 laws '*ingroeiquotum en streefcijfers*').
- Noorderlink

A more detailed description of these international, national and local bodies can be found in the [Appendix](#).

## Advocacy Groups<sup>15</sup>

Finally, Faculty Boards suggested a change in approach to the proposal to install advocacy groups as a part of the D&I Infrastructure, as per the 2021 Action Plan. The original proposal was to establish approximately 6 advocacy groups (e.g. LGBTQ+, first generation staff/students, people from minority/cultural minority groups, staff/students with different abilities, young researcher and staff) the chairs of which would regularly meet with the D&I team. More elaborate discussion of this with the Faculty Boards and both the internal and external advisors recommended not a proactive top-down approach, but one supporting (existing) bottom up initiatives.

In conclusion, establishing the office and surrounding infrastructure was a crucial part of 2022. This work satisfied the 2021 Action Plan goal: "A properly functioning virtual D&I office is in place, where experts from various departments work together on implementing the D&I vision and the D&I action plan."

## IV. Results 2: Getting Started

While establishing the office was an important element of the work at the beginning of this year, and establishing the infrastructure around the office was an important element of the second half of the year, the D&I office also began implementing activities related to the Action Plan's focus points for 2021-2025. Those focus points, as formulated in the [University Action Plan Diversity and Inclusion. \*Belonging in the University of Groningen\*](#), are:

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid. Appendix item 3.vii.

<sup>15</sup> [Belonging](#) (2021) Appendix item 1.ii.

1. We will communicate that the visibility and urgency of the theme of diversity and inclusion is a precondition for academic success and is part of the UG's Strategic Plan.
2. We will raise awareness of the added value of diversity and the existence of privilege and bias to achieve a change in culture towards more inclusion.
3. We will pursue an active diversity and inclusion policy to help create equal opportunities for everyone; we will involve and consult the various stakeholders.
4. We will carry out a baseline measurement and monitor the effectiveness of the D&I policy and actions by introducing a monitoring system or by using an existing one.

The Diversity Office's primary modality is acting as intermediaries in formulating and implementing diversity and inclusion policy, ensuring that this policy is transparent, that various stakeholders can provide critical input and that the approach is as comprehensive as possible. The D&I Office connects the D&I initiatives and the D&I stakeholders throughout the university. To this end, the activities implemented in the first half of 2022 were focused on continuing to coordinate several existing multi-year or annually recurring projects. In the second half of the year, an initial focus on strategic priorities was defined. Throughout the year, the office was asked to advise, collaborate or advocate on ad hoc activities.

Therefore, the activities of the D&I Office in 2022 were made up of:

- multi-year or annually recurring projects,
- the year's strategic priorities and
- ad hoc activities.

## Multi-year or annually recurring projects

### Monitor Implementation of the Gender Equality Plan<sup>16</sup> (GEP)

In September 2021 the University of Groningen put its Gender Equality Plan ([GEP](#)) into place. It includes a gender quota, the (further) development of the [Rosalind Franklin Fellowships](#) and the [Aletta Jacobs chairs](#), research on and monitoring of gender balance, the development of a recruitment guide, the implementation of the 40 principles of the Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, awareness of and new programmes on work-life balance, gender bias trainings<sup>17</sup>, and the prevention of an individualistic and competitive culture. The GEP (and KPIs emergent from it) was discussed during the meetings with Faculty Boards. Developments in the European Commission around the GEP are followed through participation in the meetings of the Guild Gender and Diversity Working Group.

### Facilitate Rosalind Franklin Fellowship programme<sup>18</sup> ([RFF](#))

Setting up & supporting the RFF Community, in close collaboration with Anita Veltmaat and the fellows themselves. The first activities organized, took the form of RFF cafés.

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<sup>16</sup> [Belonging](#) (2021) Appendix item 3.i, 3.x, LT4 and LT5

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.* Appendix item 3.ix.

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.* Appendix item 3.v.

(One of these four meetings in 2022-2023 was co-organised with the Aletta Jacobs Chairs.)

#### Aletta Jacobs Chairs<sup>19</sup>

The 17 Aletta Jacobs Chairs were appointed in 2021; a mentoring and training programme was set up and accomplished in 2022, in collaboration with Anita Veltmaat and HR. On International Women's Day (8 March 2022) the chairs and the Chief D&I Officer launched a video message about the programme.

Gender dashboards and Research Pay Gap were presented to and discussed with the Rector Magnificus (together with Frank Nienhuis), and, separately, with some of the faculties concerned.

#### Coordinate the nomination and selection of ECHO award entrants<sup>20</sup>

The ECHO (Expertise Centre for Diversity Policy) award is for successful students with a non-Western background who stand out because of their entrepreneurial spirit, organisational skills, active social involvement and constructive approach to challenges related to exclusion. In 2022, the D&I Office received 13 applicants from 6 faculties. After a jury review, the D&I Office submitted 5 nominees for the ECHO award, from the Faculties of Law, Arts and Fryslân. One nominee, Yasmine Bourozraa, studying for her LLM Legal research, reached the finals.

#### Organize and Host the Developing Across Differences Summer Schools<sup>21</sup>

In 2022 the D&I Office was co-organiser of the Developing Across Differences (DAD) Summer Schools. The DAD offers a multitude of [courses](#) (1-, 2- and 3- days long) within and across the Differences fields - intercultural communication, diversity & inclusion, global learning and global citizenship. These courses are led by guest faculty, contemporary thinkers, practitioners and facilitators in their respective fields, using experiential and project-based learning methods to support participants' learning and development. Topics include such subjects as *Depolarising Dialogue*, *Experiential Perspective Taking*, *Collaborating through DEI*, and *Intersections* - where the connections between the Differences narratives are leveraged for greater impact.

#### Organize Diversity Week<sup>22</sup>

The week from October 3 to 6, 2022 was dedicated to diversity and inclusion. The following were organised or collaborated upon:

- 4 October: the Chief Diversity Officer was a panel member during the I-BSS kick-off [meeting](#).
- 4 October: the [opening](#) of the Centre of Expertise 'Interactions in Diverse Classrooms' was held.
- 6 October: a panel discussion on [Accessible education at the UG](#) and the signing of the UN

Declaration of Intent was organised by the Diversity Office, the Advisory Committee for Students with Functional Disabilities (ACF) and the Teaching Academy Groningen.

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<sup>19</sup> *ibid.* Appendix item 3.v.

<sup>20</sup> [Belonging](#) (2021) Appendix item 3.iv

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.* Appendix item 2.ii.ii and 3.iv

<sup>22</sup> *ibid.* Appendix item 2.ii.ii and 3.iv

- 6 October: a [seminar](#) entitled 'Equal Opportunities in Organisations' was given for Noorderlink by Gerry Wakker and Charlotte Wekker.

- During this week, the [flow chart](#) providing an overview of all D&I initiatives within the University was published.

- The inaugural meetings of the internal advisory board and of the faculty D&I representatives took place.

- A RFF café was held.

- [Weekly](#) announcements addressed various aspects of D&I for UG students and staff: attention for the Utrecht University's Dilemma game, the use of pronouns, and recommended Diversity and Inclusion podcasts, and referrals to Noorderlink's offerings.

- The rainbow flag was raised for the entire week.

- The D&I Communication Advisor took over the UG Twitter account for a week to give insight into the work on diversity and inclusion.

### Hold Annual Faculty Boards Meetings<sup>23</sup>

As a follow-up of a presentation to the College of Deans early 2022, in the spring of 2022 meetings were held with all the Faculty Boards. The following concrete (measurable) KPIs/targets resulted from those meetings:

Objective	Status 2022
By summer 2022 each faculty will appoint a contact person within each FB. This contact person is either the dean <sup>24</sup> , the dean and treasurer together, <sup>25</sup> or the treasurer <sup>26</sup> .	Realized
By the end of 2022 each faculty has its own D&I officer, representative, or working group <sup>27</sup> .	Pending
Each faculty will, in principle, recruit for functions and 'roles' in an open and transparent procedure. This will be monitored by HR and the D&I Office.	Monitored
In all selection committees (as well as for admission, educational and exam committees) there is sufficient diversity (broader than min. 2 women), dependent on the situational context. This will be monitored by HR and the D&I Office.	Monitored
Per faculty, a target for number of female professors is formulated (per year) and discussed with the board of the university.	Embedded
The overall aim is to have a diverse staff population so that each student is able to find a role model within the staff.	Overarching goal
In the first months of 2023 D&I office will publish guidelines inclusive language ('handreiking').	Planned for 2023

<sup>23</sup> [Belonging](#) (2021) Appendix item LT5

<sup>24</sup> Faculties where the Dean is the contact person: UCG, UCF, FL, FWB, FRG, FMW, FEB, FSE, GMW, FRW.

<sup>25</sup> Faculties where both the Dean and the Treasurer are the contacts: FSE, FWB.

<sup>26</sup> In FRCS and GGW the contact person is the treasurer.

<sup>27</sup> End 2022 the following faculties have a diversity officer / representative or chair of D&I group/ committee: FEB, GMW, UCF, UCG, FRG, FRW, FSE, FMW. The following faculties are still considering how to implement this: Arts, Philosophy, Theology. An overview (up-to-date) is available [here](#).

As mentioned above, a number of Faculty Boards recommended against installing advocacy groups<sup>28</sup> (e.g. LGBTQ+, first generation staff/students, people from minority/cultural minority groups, staff/students with different abilities, young researchers and staff) as a top-down measure, but instead to support bottom-up initiatives. The D&I office has chosen to adopt this advice.

## 2022 Strategic Priorities

In the fall of 2022, the D&I Office formulated more specific strategic priorities, clarifying the focus on specific diversity domains, communication goals, and projects with HR.

### Diversity Domains

Yearly, the D&I Office will shift attention to specific diversity domains. In the second half of 2022, the existing developments enabled or warranted that attention went to Accessibility and Cultural Diversity.

#### Accessibility Awareness

During the panel discussion during the Diversity Week on [Accessible education at the UG](#), together with the project manager for functional impairment, the D&I Office focused attention on digital and physical accessibility within the UG, addressing questions such as - what are the experiences of employees and students with disabilities and how can these experiences be improved?

#### Cultural Diversity

It was necessary, as the implications of the changes within the Language Centre would result in loss of intercultural competence training<sup>29</sup> and therefore the capacity to develop cultural competence within the University, to address this concern. Therefore, in consultation with the Language Centre and HR-Experts, a proposal was prepared for submission to the Board of Directors. This proposal was in line with the Language Centre's proposals and to be submitted simultaneously to the Board (December 2022). Retraction of that proposal was requested by HR-Experts due to their internal processes, with the request to await further developments.

### Communications

With the installment of the D&I communication advisor, the D&I Office is represented at the strategic communications '*overleg*' which enables D&I to be more prominent on the communications agenda. The appointment, however, ends 31 August 2023. Discussion with Corporate Communications is ongoing whether the D&I communication function can be embedded in corporate communications (in accordance with the decision of the Board in September 2021).

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<sup>28</sup> [Belonging](#) (2021) Appendix item 1.ii.

<sup>29</sup> [Belonging](#) (2021) Appendix item 3.ix

Update website and provide content for social media<sup>30</sup>

The [website](#) of the Diversity Office plays an important role in disseminating information on Diversity and Inclusion within the University. On the updated website the following information can now be found:

- Relevant University policy documents,
- Current and upcoming initiatives and projects on or around D&I within the University, and
- An updated list of the relevant actors - whether in the advisory boards or the faculty representatives.

In addition, for the individual seeker, the following has been curated:

- a list of all available training on D&I topics,
- networks and interest groups, and
- other resources of relevance to D&I.

The intention is to further develop the website as an informative awareness raising platform.

Social media (twitter) was used as an awareness raising medium during the Diversity Week. Current limitations of sustainability make it difficult to maintain a long-term social media presence though this would be desirable.

## With HR

Yearly, a number of projects are implemented in close collaboration with Human Resources. In 2022 these were:

- I. The diversity & inclusion text accompanying vacancies<sup>31</sup> was updated. The new text now reads: “The University of Groningen strives to be a university in which students and staff are respected and feel at home, regardless of differences in background, experiences, perspectives, and identities. We believe that working on our core values of inclusion and equality are a joint responsibility, and we are continuously working on guaranteeing a socially safe environment. Diversity among students and staff members enriches academic debate and contributes to the quality of our teaching and research. We therefore encourage all interested candidates to apply. For more information, see also our diversity policy webpage.”
- II. The D&I Office worked with HR and ABJZ to draft supplemental [HR policy](#) on child care for researchers attending conferences or travelling abroad and for incoming visiting researchers.
- III. The Chief D&I Officer participated in the monthly *Voordrachtenoverleg*<sup>32</sup> (rector magnificus, two prorectores and HR) to give advice to the Board of the University on the professorial nominations and the awarding of the ius promovendi. Broader D&I issues are discussed here before their discussion in the Committee of Deans. Special attention

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<sup>30</sup> *ibid.* Appendix item 6.i

<sup>31</sup> [Belonging](#) (2021) Appendix item 8.i

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.* Appendix item 3.i, 3.x and LT4.



is paid to the gender balance, notably in higher positions and to the ways in which faculties try to influence a better gender balance.

- IV. The D&I Office was asked to review the questions on diversity and inclusion for the staff satisfaction survey<sup>33</sup>. In consultation with the D&I Officers at the Faculty of Law and that of Behavioural and Social Sciences the D&I Office suggested a few adaptations, bringing the questions more in line with those in the Dutch Inclusivity Monitor (NIM). This was done in the context of researching the existing possibilities for carrying out a baseline measurement, where it became rapidly apparent that there is insufficient budget to use an externally-validated instrument such as the *Nederlands Inclusiviteit Monitor*. This research for an appropriate instrument to measure diversity and inclusion will be a strategic priority in 2023<sup>34</sup>.

## Ad Hoc Activities

Alongside the multi-year and strategic activities, the Diversity Office is regularly consulted for ad hoc advice, collaboration or advocacy. This is an overview of a number of those activities.

**Parliamentary Investigation Committee** (*Parlementaire Onderzoeks Commissie*). On 25 February 2022 the Chief D&I Officer was interviewed on the effectiveness of the anti-discrimination law.

**ACLO**: We were requested to advise the ACLO on activities they could do to enhance inclusivity in sport. In alignment with our advice, they are currently busy setting up a focus group to see what they can do to improve their accessibility and will be in dialogue with the members of the expertise centre for LGBTQ+ affairs.

**Progress Flag**<sup>35</sup>: Together with Facilities, the D&I Office recommended replacing the rainbow flag with the updated progress flag and coordinated that the dates that the flag is to be flown are at least:

17 May on the International day against homo-, trans- and bi-phobia,  
4 October on Diversity Day, and during the entire Diversity Week that includes the day,  
11 October on Coming out Day  
19 November on Trans Remembrance Day, and on  
Purple Friday, the 2nd Friday of December.

Faculties are recommended to fly the flag on other days on which they want to emphasize the inclusive nature of the University, e.g. Introduction weeks and on Open Days. As there are various versions of Pride day/week/month celebrated in Groningen, the Faculties can choose to commemorate them as they see fit.

**Zwarte Piet**<sup>36</sup>: In line with the decision of the Groningen municipality, the D&I Office sent the Faculty Boards the following reminder:

Dear Faculty Boards,

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<sup>33</sup> *ibid.* Appendix item LT2.

<sup>34</sup> [Belonging](#) (2021) Appendix item 4.i and LT1.

<sup>35</sup> *ibid.* Appendix item 2.ii.viii.

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.* Appendix item 2.ii.vi.

As the holiday season approaches, and celebrations associated with this time of year are being organized, we would like your attention for the following.

The arrival of Sinterklaas in Groningen takes place on 19 November, Sinterklaas is celebrated 5 December.

As a university that strives towards a sense of inclusion and belonging for all, understanding that Zwarte Piet is often associated with discrimination that people of colour encounter, we encourage you to implement alternative portrayals of Piet - Piet in a multitude of colours, Piet without colour, or as Sooty Piet (roetveegpiet) - instead of the more traditional Zwarte Piet.

This is in line with the 2019 decision of the municipality to phase out the tradition of Zwarte Pieten during the ceremony, which was fully implemented by the 2021 edition.

In this way, the Sinterklaas tradition can be a joyful one for everyone.

Sincerely, on behalf of the Diversity Office of the University of Groningen,

**Advise Vastgoed Symbols:** The Diversity Office was asked to advise on signage throughout the university.

**Resilience and Self- Defense project:** The D&I Office was a financial (co)sponsor of this project that was initiated by S. Täuber and B. van Hoven. The project offered workshops on mental and physical resilience to 60 persons (all genders, staff and students), and was concluded by an evaluation (questionnaire and interviews) whether it can contribute positively to participants' resilience. Given the positive evaluation, the D&I office advised the organizers to discuss the possibilities to offer this on a more permanent basis through ACLO and/or GMD.

In conclusion, the implementation of activities started to address the 2021 Action Plan's goals on visibility of the theme of diversity and inclusion, and awareness raising.

## V. Conclusion 2022

In looking back at the year 2022, establishing the office was an important element of the work at the beginning of this year, and establishing the infrastructure around the office was an important element of the second half of the year. This work satisfied the 2021 Action Plan goal: "A properly functioning virtual D&I office is in place, where experts from various departments work together on implementing the D&I vision and the D&I action plan."

In addition, the D&I office also began implementing activities, whether in the form of longer, multi-year projects, or annual strategic projects. These started to address the 2021 Action Plan's goals on visibility of the theme of diversity and inclusion, and awareness raising.

In conclusion, significant progress was made, and challenges were encountered.

## Progress

An overview:

- The D&I office's visibility and embedding in the university has increased by:

- setting up the office, advisory boards, meetings with faculty D&I officers, IDI meetings, representation RUG in (inter)national and local gremia, and by
- (co-)organising activities related to different diversity groups.
- The D&I office has established connections between people and initiatives, enabling better alignment of the initiatives within the university, and positioning for the D&I Office to provide ad hoc advice and support to various persons and groups within the University.
- Despite the focus of the year being on setting up the D&I office and the infrastructure, a significant number of additional activities related to the ongoing focus points were realised.
- The D&I office (together with HR, ABJZ, ACF) helped further develop University policy.
- There is a growing awareness within the university that diversity is important for the university and that inclusion is an important objective.

## Challenges

At the same time, the D&I Office encountered challenges on a number of fronts. Specifically:

- The organizational embedding of the D&I office within the university is not optimal. Whereas the Chief Diversity Officer falls directly under the Board of Directors of the University, the rest of the D&I Office falls under HR Experts (though the office is responsible for addressing the needs of both staff and students). This construction has significant flaws in implementation. There is currently no satisfactory solution to this. Discussions are still ongoing.
- The delayed start due to the recruitment procedure, termination notice and an extended period required to transfer tasks, and limited availability of current staff (e.g. due to work pressure, illness), with a large demand on our tasks.
- It is already clear that the mandate of the D&I Office is broad and the capacity and budget, both for staffing and for programming, are limiting
  - The most challenging point is the finite budget for a communication officer (foreseen to end August 31, 2023) whereas the communication needs are ongoing. Continuation for the entire D&I period is desirable either in the D&I office itself or within Corporate Communication.
  - Limited budget for programming will have influence on e.g. the possibilities for baseline measurement as the NIM, recommended in the National Action Plan.

## VI. References

The following references were consulted to develop this Action Plan:

- [University of Groningen Strategic Plan 2021-2026](#) (2021)
- [University Action Plan Diversity and Inclusion. \*Belonging in the University of Groningen\*](#) (2021)
- [Nationaal actieplan voor meer diversiteit en inclusie in het hoger onderwijs en onderzoek](#) (2020)
- [Ruimte voor ieders talent](#) (2019)
- Rapport Nationale Studenten Enquête (2022)

## VII. Appendix

### Elaboration of International, National and Local Bodies

The D&I office represents the University by participating in the following consortia and collaborations

**The Guild** (twenty-one of Europe's most distinguished research-intensive universities in sixteen countries) is dedicated to enhancing the voice of academic institutions, their researchers and their students. The Guild is committed to the pursuit of excellence, the importance of truth-seeking and trust-building as the foundation of public life, and the creation of new knowledge for the benefit of society, culture, and economic growth.

The Guild's Gender and Diversity [Working Group](#) is composed of representatives from the member universities who oversee the development and implementation of Gender and Diversity institutional strategies. Activities include:

Benchmarking Gender & Diversity among The Guild's member universities

Sharing institutional best practices and supporting institutional standards across The Guild network

Discussing gender-related aspects in education, research and innovation policies at the EU level

Developing Guild positions on Gender & Diversity

The **Coimbra** Group is an association of long-established European multidisciplinary universities of high international standard. The Coimbra Group is committed to creating special academic and cultural ties for the benefit of its members.

The [Equality and Diversity Working Group](#) strives to support and promote networking across Coimbra Group universities in the area of inclusive education and leadership, equality between men and women, diversity and intersectionality. Equality and inclusion is of crucial importance in

facilitating long-term improvement of the quality and excellence in research and innovation, and for that reason, the ED Working Group focuses its primary attention and activities in this direction. Ongoing and forthcoming activities include:

Sharing of experience and knowledge about the implementation of Gender Equality Plans at Coimbra Group Universities and beyond.

Reflection on academic freedom in relation to the woke movement.

Collaborative workshop with other Working Groups on the EDI dimensions of their activities.

Developing the ED Working Group as a “think tank” for sharing good practices, jointly thinking through the EDI agenda in the Coimbra Group member universities in international and EU contexts, and serving as an EDI advisory body for the leaderships of our respective universities

The **National Network of Diversity Officers** ([LanDO](#)) aims to create a platform of knowledge and experience related to the development and implementation of policies on diversity. In addition, the network can serve in an advising, agenda-setting and strategic function in the development of policies at national level. Almost all Dutch universities are represented. LanDO regularly meets with the [Advisory Committee](#) Diverse and Inclusive Higher Education and Research.

The **Sociaal-Economische Raad** (SER, the socio-economic council) is the main advisory council for government and parliament on socio-economic issues. ‘Diversity at Work’ is a SER project aimed at stimulating diversity and inclusion at the workplace and actively helps companies and organisations develop, execute and monitor their diversity plans. They are the initiators of the Dutch Diversity Charters, of which the UG is a signatory, and they support signatories in meeting the requirements of the 2022 law ‘ingroeiquotum en streefcijfers’. We attended their sessions on [measuring diversity and inclusion](#), [and employee networks](#).

**Noorderlink** is a network organisation of over forty large organisations in the North of the Netherlands, coordinating HR related activities to make and keep the labour market in the North attractive. The [Platform Diversity and Inclusion](#) encourages regional collaboration on an inclusive organisational culture with equal treatment and fair opportunities for all.