VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT AMSTERDAM  
School of Business and Economics  
provides a stimulating and inclusive academic environment for ambitious people who wish to positively impact the world and people’s lives. We believe in science with purpose, and see collaboration, openness, and social responsibility as the way forward—for science, business and humanity.

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The School of Business and Economics (SBE) is one of the largest faculties of Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (VU). SBE accommodates approximately 4500 undergraduate students, 3000 postgraduate students and 500 employees. The academic staff consist of professors, lecturers, researchers and PhD candidates, who are connected to the various departments. The support staff is part of the Faculty Office. The Faculty Board leads the faculty.

Dean Arjen van Witteloostuijn:

‘BEING VISIBLE IN SOCIETY, CONTRIBUTING TO SOLVING SOCIETAL PROBLEMS, IS HIGH ON THE AGENDA’

‘Our school is doing extremely well, actually, in all areas’, says Arjen van Witteloostuijn, SBE’s dean.

When it comes to research, we are moving forward step by step. In the ESB ranking of the top 40 Dutch economists, ten out of forty are from our school. That is quite a high proportion. In the Shanghai ranking, we are at number 40 in the world. That is very good as well. We are also successful in terms of grants. In 2018, we had no less than five Veni, Vidi and Vici1 grants from the NWO (the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research).

And when it comes to education? ‘In terms of teaching, we have very good results in the national survey on teaching quality (NSE, Nationale Studenten Enquête). The bachelor’s programme in Econometrics & Operations Research, and the master’s programmes in Econometrics & Operations Research, in Finance, in Marketing, and in Spatial, Transport & Environmental Economics have been rated as the best programmes within their field of

1 These grants are awarded to talented, creative researchers and are geared to different stages in a researcher’s scientific career: Veni (for researchers who have recently obtained their PhD), Vidi (for researchers who have gained several years of research experience after their PhD) and Vici (for senior researchers who have demonstrated an ability to develop their own line of research).
study in the 2018 NSE. Students have scored these programmes particularly well in the areas of content and teachers. Furthermore, SBE scores well on group size, internship experience and programme timetable.’

Also worth mentioning is the progress SBE has made regarding accreditations: Nine programmes have been re-accredited by the Dutch accreditation agency (NVAO). In terms of the international accreditation from the AACSB, we have taken the next step. This accreditation is necessary to be successful internationally and will make recruiting internationally much easier. Student numbers have grown enormously this year, but mostly with students from the Netherlands. Students from abroad look at whether you have this accreditation or not. If not, they go somewhere else. This is true for bachelor’s, master’s, and postgraduate students. We are more than halfway through the accreditation process now. Hopefully, we will be accredited two years from now.’

All of this is wonderful news, of course. ‘But without the initiative and commitment of our excellent and dedicated staff, none of this would have been possible. They deserve all the praise,’ he adds.

‘We have to see where we can form alliances’

Arjen van Witteloostuijn is Dean of the School of Business and Economics. He is also affiliated with the University of Antwerp. Previously, he worked at Tilburg University, the University of Groningen, Maastricht University, the University of Durham, Utrecht University and Cardiff Business School. Since 2015, he has been a member of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Sciences, or KNAW. He was appointed chair of the Department of Business, Economics, Law & Social Sciences of the KNAW in 2017. Arjen van Witteloostuijn is a multidisciplinary and highly productive researcher in the disciplines of both Business and Economics, as well as the Social Sciences in general. The theme that runs through all of his work is why some institutions (in the broad sense of the word) are successful while others are not, and how institutions impact behaviour and performance.

What are Van Witteloostuijn’s plans for the year to come? ‘As far as student numbers are concerned, I think it would be wise to stabilise. One of the problems in the Dutch system is that the funding comes later. So if you grow, it takes two years before you see the funding. We have to work harder during this period of time because we have to do it within the current budget. In terms of the total number of enrolled students, we will have natural growth anyway, because of this growth in the past: first-year students will become second-year students, second-year students will become third-year students, and so on.’

In terms of programmes, a number of things need to be done, he says. ‘We will launch a couple of new master’s programmes. They are tracks now, but they will be independent programmes. In addition, data science should have a more prominent place in our education programmes. We have worked hard on this already, and now it is time to start implementing it further.’ When it comes to executive education, his plans are even more ambitious. ‘We need to grow and further professionalise. In order to do so, a committee of experts has been set up to advise us on how we can reach the next level.’ And that involves a lot, he adds. ‘We have to carefully consider our portfolio, see where we can form alliances, professionalise all aspects of executive training, and better embed executive training within the broader school. And we need to think about re-branding. The ambition is to launch our new executive training entity in September, after the summer.’

Last but not least, and of the highest importance, is valorisation, not only in terms of teaching but also in terms of research. ‘Being visible in society, contributing to solving societal problems, is high on the agenda. Contract research is vital to this. We need to have much more research financed by stakeholders in society. And valorisation is so important that we need a figurehead.’ Therefore, Frans Feldberg, professor of Data Driven Business Innovation at the KIN research group, has been appointed as the associate dean for valorisation. ‘He has a school-wide responsibility for this specific task. Later this year, we will see the benefit of what he has already done and will continue to do.’

FACULTY BOARD MEETING FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Mirella Maletic (Managing Director), Arjen van Witteloostuijn (Dean), Hans Berends (Vice Dean of Education), Nouri Mabrouk (Student Assessor)
The School of Business and Economics (SBE) of Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (VU) combines high-quality education with excellent research. SBE’s research groups cover all areas of business, economics and econometrics, and enjoy an outstanding international reputation. They all publish in the top journals in their field worldwide.

SBE’s motto is ‘Science with Purpose’. In addition to collaborating with national and international academic communities, the School also fosters many joint research initiatives with partnering companies, non-profit organisations and government institutes. We are open to and eager to take on new challenges, with our research always aimed at improving the world around us.

The School’s research policies aim to stimulate talent and strive for the highest possible impact. We offer an internationally competitive PhD and tenure track programme, and embrace scientific integrity and transparency in all fields.

RANKINGS

SBE’s high-quality research and education is demonstrated by its excellent performance in international rankings. The best-known international rankings are the CWTS Leiden ranking, the Times Higher Education World University Ranking, the QS World University Rankings and the Shanghai Ranking. These rankings give a good impression of the quality of research and education of higher education institutions worldwide. Each ranking uses a different set of indicators. As a result, the position of a particular university or institute may vary, depending on the ranking’s methodology.
Below, an overview is provided of the aforementioned international rankings, which includes the position of VU by subject.

UNIVERSITY RANKINGS OF 2018/2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th>By subject</th>
<th>2018/2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CWTS Leiden Ranking</td>
<td>Social Sciences and Humanities</td>
<td>32 (out of 555)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shanghai Ranking</td>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>40 (out of 500)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Administration</td>
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<td>51-75 (out of 600)</td>
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<tr>
<td>THE World University Rankings</td>
<td>Business and Economics</td>
<td>124-150 (out of 195)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QS World University Rankings</td>
<td>Social Sciences and Management</td>
<td>182 (out of 500)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HIGH-QUALITY RESEARCH

Of all universities in the Netherlands, the VU has the most economists (10) in the ESB top 40 Dutch economists list.

The ESB top 40 ranking is published annually by the Economisch Statistische Berichten (ESB). Ten VU researchers are in the top 40 economists list, of which nine are affiliated with SBE. New this year in the list are Jan Rouwendal (36), and Mirjam van Praag (28). The other SBE researchers on the list are:

4  Siem Jan Koopman
8  André Lucas
10 Albert Menskeld
12 Erik Verhoef
13 Jos van Ommeren
15 Pierre Koning, also affiliated with Leiden University
17 Pieter Gautier
25 Bas van der Kleauw

The VU is in the Top 3 of the Institutes Top 2018 ranking, where all the employees are considered.
### SBE Research Highlights

**DEPARTMENT OF KNOWLEDGE INNOVATION AND INFORMATION: RESHAPING WORK CONFERENCE**

The flagship event of the Department of Knowledge Innovation and Information (KIN)—the annual Reshaping Work Conference—was launched in 2016 and is scheduled to take place again in 2019 on 24 and 25 October in Amsterdam. The 2018 conference was held on 25 and 26 October and was attended by more than 200 experts, including academics, business leaders, policy makers, labour union representatives and platform workers, who all discussed the future of work in the platform economy.

The concept of the conference is unique in terms of attendees, as it gathers the entire range of stakeholders concerned with the topic, as well as in terms of the format, which is specifically designed to promote synergies among these diverse groups.

The event was attended by distinguished professors from universities such as Harvard, Oxford and ESADE Business School, governmental institutions such as the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs, the European Commission, the Dutch Ministry of Social Affairs; and by labour union and international organisations such as FNV, APV, IWGB and the OECD; and partnership organisations including Uber, Randstad, Amsterdam Economic Board, the University of Amsterdam, the University of Leiden, Takeaway.com, Uber Eats, Tempar, Roamlab, lamsterdam, Dulloflo and KPMG. The most important sessions of the conferences are filmed and significant attention is given to attracting press, which landed the conference a mention in Forbes last year.

Due to the great success of the Reshaping Work Conference—Platform Economy Edition, KIN is organising an AI @Work conference on 5 and 6 March 2020 under the Reshaping Work brand, which will adopt the same concept of a multi-stakeholder event, but will cover the pressing challenges related to labour and artificial intelligence.

**DEPARTMENT OF SUPPLY CHAIN ANALYTICS**

**NWO TKI DINALOG GRANT**

In 2018, the Logistics Research Group of the former Department of Information, Logistics and Innovation and the Operations Research Group of the Department of Econometrics and Operations Research obtained an NWO TKI Dinalog grant on unlocking the improvement potential of a new type of sensors that capture information on both container equipment and cargo.

State-of-the-art sensors, such as the ones developed by project partner Iride Mobile, capture multi-dimensional data from shipping containers (e.g., temperature, light, pressure and movement differences). This information is traditionally used to monitor product quality in containerised freight transport. Intensive discussions with project partner ORTEC, amongst others, confirmed that the industry lacks appropriate algorithms to accurately identify which changes in multi-

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### Staff Numbers Including Externally Contracted and Guest Personnel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Number of Staff (Academic)</th>
<th>Number of Staff (Support)</th>
<th>Externally Contracted &amp; Guest Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information, Logistics &amp; Innovation</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management &amp; Organisation</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>57</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
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<td>Finance</td>
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<td>Marketing</td>
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<td>Econometrics &amp; Operational Research</td>
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<td>Executive Education</td>
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<td>Zijlstra Centre</td>
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**TOTAL** 132

### Employees with an International Background

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**NUMBER OF ACADEMIC STAFF PER DEPARTMENT, INCLUDING EXTERNALLY CONTRACTED & GUEST STAFF AS OF 31 DECEMBER 2018**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Academic Staff</th>
<th>Externally Contracted &amp; Guest Staff</th>
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<td>Information, Logistics &amp; Innovation</td>
<td>50</td>
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<td>Accounting</td>
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<td>Marketing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Econometrics &amp; Operational Research</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>115</td>
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<tr>
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<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zijlstra Centre</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
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**DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATION: INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON MEANINGFUL WORK**

On 14 and 15 June 2018, the VU Center for Meaningful Work, in cooperation with the Department of Management and Organisation (M&O) and the Faculty of Social Sciences (FSS), hosted the 3rd International Symposium on Meaningful Work. Evgenia Lysova (assistant professor of Careers and Organisational Behaviour) and Jitske Both-Nwabue (researcher at FSS) were the main organisers of this year’s symposium, which followed up on the successes of the previous years of the symposium, organised by the University of Oxford (UK) and Auckland University of Technology (NZ).

The topic of this year’s symposium was “Meaningfulness and Sustainability: How can Meaningful Work Contribute to Sustainable Ways of Doing Business?”. The first day of the symposium focused on an academic programme, including a panel session with the experts—Prof. Marjolein Lips-Wiersma (Auckland University of Technology, NZ) and Prof. Jean-Pascal Gond ( Cass Business School, UK). The second day focused on discussions between academics and practitioners. The day was co-sponsored by Reali lawyers and Food for Flow and brought together representatives of diverse companies, including Shell, P&G and Reaal.

The SER advises the Dutch government and parliament on the main lines of the socio-economic policy that should be pursued. The SER also carries out activities that arise from administrative duties and self-regulation. In addition, the SER offers a platform to discuss socio-economic issues. Independent crown members, employers and employees work together in the SER. Crown members function from their expertise as bridge builders between the members who are employers and those who are employees.

Maarten Lindeboom: “The labour market, healthcare and social security are my fields of work—exactly the core business of the SER. First of all, I will focus on the SER survey on the affordability of healthcare. Dutch healthcare expenditure has risen sharply in recent decades and is also expected to grow faster than the economy in the short term. All in all, these expenditures account for an increasing share of total collective spending. What are the consequences for our economy and the labour market? Are there limits to rising healthcare costs and what policy options are there? Let’s start with a thorough analysis of the problem. I can probably contribute to that. I will start carefully, step by step. This is how I work.”

**DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING: PHD RESEARCH OF ANNELIES BRINK**

Annelies Brink successfully defended her PhD dissertation on 23 January 2019. The subject of her study is an auditor’s liability under Dutch civil law for errors in a statutory audit. In addition, the study defines the most important and valuable laws and regulations for the auditor in the exercise of his or her profession, in particular when carrying out a statutory audit. Annelies Brink’s research concluded that the greatest potential liability risk to which auditors are exposed under current laws is the risk of being unable to demonstrate that sufficient appropriate audit evidence was obtained, and therefore to be held liable for planning and conducting a statutory audit with insufficient depth and an insufficiently professional and critical attitude. The liability risk can be diminished through specific and verifiable criteria to determine when audit evidence is sufficient and appropriate for the circumstances. The AFM, the NBA and academia must agree on these criteria. The criteria have to be workable, within the objective of the statutory audit of...
### Gender Distribution of SBE’s Academic Staff as of 31 December 2018

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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Professor</td>
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### Gender Distribution of SBE’s Academic and Support Staff

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### Age Distribution of SBE’s Academic Staff as of 31 December 2018

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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td>5</td>
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**Albert Menkveld**

In 2018, Albert Menkveld, Professor of Finance, received the prestigious Vici grant from the NWO (Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research). Menkveld received the €1.5 million grant for his research proposal entitled ‘Financial Technology’s (FinTech’s) Disruptive Impact on Financial Markets: Social Costs and Benefits of an Emerging New Architecture’. The grant is for five years.

The NWO Vici grant is intended for highly experienced researchers who have successfully demonstrated the ability to develop their own innovative line of research and can act as a coach for young researchers. The Vici grant provides researchers with the opportunity to build their own research group, often in anticipation of a tenured position as professor.

Albert’s research focuses on robotic trading. FinTech (Financial Technology) disrupts the way agents interact in markets. For example, robots not only facilitate trading, they increasingly also do the trading. The project develops an economic perspective to analyse whether the new architecture is desirable and, more importantly, what new systemic risks arise and how to avoid them.

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**DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE: VICI GRANT FOR ALBERT MENKVELD**

Luca Rossini began working as a Marie-Curie researcher at the Department of Econometrics on the project called MultiNetMetrics, supervised by professors Siem-Jan Koopman and André Lucas. The project aims to develop new models and measures for risk measurement of the European financial system. Two of the new perspectives that come together in the project are the dynamics of banking networks through turbulent periods like the European sovereign debt crisis, and spillovers across multiple network layers, such as lending cross-exposures versus derivatives cross-exposures. The project was initiated under the new SBE Research Office initiative to link Marie-Curie prospective fellows to SBE experts and guide them through the process of writing a successful grant application.

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**DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMETRICS AND OPERATIONS RESEARCH: MARIE CURIE GRANT**

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**DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING: JOINT PHD PROJECTS WITH THE INDUSTRY**

The Department of Marketing is successful in setting up joint PhD projects with third parties. In 2018, two PhD candidates graduated after completing joint projects with consulting agency VODW. Anne Kranzbühler explored consumer behaviour at various touchpoints in the customer journey, including both pre-purchase (online reviews) and post-purchase (attributions of service failures) responses, while Arianne van der Wal’s project looked at the promotion of sustainable consumer behaviour through strategies based on, for example, social motivation and gamification. Both graduates published multiple papers in top-tier journals, showing that collaborations between academics and professional...
practice can be both rigorous and relevant in professional practice.

The year 2018 also saw the start of a new collaboration; in a joint project with market research agency Validators, PhD candidate Noud Schartman is working on developing better brand metrics for professional practice and academics. The initial results are promising, and the researchers are looking forward to the outcomes of this and future projects. Their approach has developed into a proven strategy for harnessing the value of academic research for business and society.

DEPARTMENT OF SPATIAL ECONOMICS: FINAL IP-SUNTAN WORKSHOP ON SMART SOLUTIONS FOR URBAN TRANSPORT PROBLEMS

How do we keep urban areas navigable and liveable, in a sustainable way? This is, in short, the question that the IP-SUNTAN research team has been addressing for the past three years. Research groups from Amsterdam, Stockholm, and Vienna worked together on this ever-hot topic. All of the groups received ongoing media attention, in particular project leader Erik Verhoef and PhD candidate Davi Brands from SBE’s Department of Spatial Economics.

IP-SUNTAN developed and investigated smart solutions for urban transport problems. Smart, in this sense, means that the group used innovative technologies, and that they developed and evaluated ways to stimulate people to change their behaviour or adopt technologies. The project considered road transport, cycling and walking, and public transport. It looked at a broad range of tools, including electronic fare cards, real-time public transport information, automated tracking of vehicles, and data from innovative pricing and rewarding experiments. The group in Vienna especially looked at new ways of parking that would make better use of the urban infrastructure. The Swedish research group focused on the refinement of public transport pricing and on the existing congestion charging schemes in the cities of Stockholm and Gothenburg. The Dutch group at the Department of Spatial Economics worked on the issues of smart incentives and tradeable peak hour permits.

On 15 March 2019, the results of the research were presented during a successful final workshop, held in Amsterdam. It is not so difficult to solve problems like congestion, pollution, parking shortages,’ says Erik Verhoef. ‘The outcomes of our research have clearly shown that. The study delivered new and more robust insights into the potential of pricing instruments in spurring behavioural change in urban mobility, and how this depends on the technical design, including the differentiation of pricing, and thereby the type of behaviour changes it seeks to stimulate, as well as the availability of alternatives. However, politically this remains a volatile field. Pricing instruments are not popular.’

Related projects within the Department of Spatial Economics are U-SMILE, a Dutch SURF project that specifically looks at the development and testing of tradeable permit systems. BREATHE is also related to IP-SUNTAN, although not as strongly. BREATHE also deals with environmental challenges in urban transportation. All of these projects try to obtain synergy as much as possible.

1 Innovative Policies for Sustainable Urban Transportation. The project website can be found at https://sbe.vu.nl/ip-suntan.
2 Urban Smart Measures and Incentives for Quality of Life Enhancement. The project website can be found at https://sbe.vu.nl/u-smile.
3 Building Resilient Economic Agglomerations addressing Transportation and Health Effects: Urban form, location choice and transport solutions for high air quality and low-carbon cities. The project website can be found at https://sbe.vu.nl/breathe.
VALORISATION OF RESEARCH

The research conducted at SBE has an impact on society in many ways. There is a lot of cooperation with companies (contract research), education is provided to practitioners within the Executive Education, and a lot of research is picked up by the media and shared with the public.

Recently, the Vrije Universiteit introduced the use of Altmetrics to measure impact of its research in a different way. Altmetrics are metrics and qualitative data that are meant to be complementary to traditional, citation-based metrics. Altmetrics analyses online data to provide information about how often journal articles and other scholarly outputs like datasets are discussed and used around the world.

The papers below from SBE researcher's that were published in 2018 were shown to have the biggest impacts. The Altmetric score that these publications received gives an impression of how much attention they have received online. The attention is demonstrated by the number of times the article was mentioned or accessed in tweets, news sites, blogs, Facebook pages, Google+ posts, uploaded videos, Wikipedia pages, Reddit posts, citations on Dimensions, policy sources, and mentions on Mendele.


Altmetric score = 1044: 7 blogs, 254 Twitter users, 108 news outlets (National Geographic, Le Figaro, Der Spiegel, News Tribune, NRC), 28 Mendele readers, 5 Facebook pages, 1 Google+ user.


Altmetric score = 255: 18 news outlets (World Economic Forum, Health Medicinet, Science Newsline), 4 blogs, 189 Twitter users, 1 Google+ user, 1 research highlight, 23 citations in Dimensions, 158 Mendele readers. In the top 5% of all research outputs scored by Altmetric.


Altmetric score = 255: 18 news outlets (World Economic Forum, Health Medicinet, Science Newsline), 4 blogs, 189 Twitter users, 1 Google+ user, 1 research highlight, 23 citations in Dimensions, 158 Mendele readers. In the top 5% of all research outputs scored by Altmetric.


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Altmetric score = 129: 115 Twitter users, 7 news outlets (Bloomberg, Yahoo!, Health Medicine), 1 video uploader, 1 citations in Dimensions, 34 Mendele readers. In the top 5% of all research outputs scored by Altmetric.

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Altmetric score = 939: 115 Twitter users, 16 news outlets (La Mondo, National Geographic, Huffington Post, The Guardian, Washington Post), 14 blogs, 2 policy sources, 7 Facebook pages, 2 Google+ users, 25 citations on Dimensions, 164 Mendele readers. In the top 5% of all research outputs scored by Altmetric. One of the highest-scoring outputs from this source; #3 of 3,227. High attention score compared to outputs of the same age (99th percentile) and source (99th percentile).


Altmetric score = 129: 115 Twitter users, 7 news outlets (Bloomberg, Yahoo!, Health Medicine), 1 video uploader, 1 citations in Dimensions, 34 Mendele readers. In the top 5% of all research outputs scored by Altmetric.


Altmetric score = 80: 93 Twitter users, 1 blog, 1 policy source (World Bank), 3 citations on Dimensions, 68 Mendele readers. In the top 5% of all research outputs scored by Altmetric.


Altmetric score = 80: 93 Twitter users, 1 blog, 1 policy source (Analysis & Policy Observatory), 4 citations on Dimensions, 25 Mendele readers. In the top 5% of all research outputs scored by Altmetric.


Altmetric score = 186: 236 Twitter users, 3 blogs, 3 news outlets (ForScience.no, The Verge, Genomeweb), 1 Facebook page, 4 Google+ users, 12 Mendele readers. In the top 5% of all research outputs scored by Altmetric.
PHD DISSERTATIONS


Over the years, she has also been a visiting scholar at the Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei in Venice (as a European Commission Marie Skłodowska-Curie fellow), the University of Gothenburg in Sweden, the London School of Economics, the University of California (Santa Barbara) and the Centre for Advanced Study of the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters, among others. And now: Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (VU).

What brought her to VU? ‘I’ve always appreciated the style and quality of life in Europe. I had just spent a sabbatical in Italy and was heading back to Washington, thinking about what to do next. I wanted to continue my research and perhaps provide policy advice to a second Clinton administration... But, unfortunately, then came the elections, and that really changed the tone of the environmental policy debate in the U.S. So I thought back on how my friend and former co-author, Cees Wirtz, had asked me if I might be interested in taking his position at VU, as he was retiring. And to be honest, there are not too many places that would have been a good fit. VU happens to be one that really is. It is a very good university, with a strong programme, in a department with a real focus on applied economics, with great colleagues, great students, and in a fantastic city that happens to be very well connected to all the other places that I need to visit.’

Recently, Fischer and an interdisciplinary group of colleagues had their article on ‘Policy design for the Anthropocene’ published in *Nature Sustainability*, a special edition of *Nature*. In it, the authors investigate the complexities of designing policies that can keep Earth within the biophysical limits that are favourable to human life. What does Fischer consider essential in order to save our planet? ‘In the Anthropocene, it is essential for hard scientists and social scientists to really communicate and work together, and to communicate with policy makers. First, we need to better understand what the physical boundaries of our ecosystem are. And then we have to really appreciate that human behaviour is what is driving a lot of stress on the ecosystem’.

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2 *Nature* is one of the most recognisable scientific journals in the world, and is ascribed an impact factor of around 40, making it one of the world’s top academic journals.

3 Anthropocene is a proposed epoch dating from the commencement of significant human impact on the Earth’s geology and ecosystems, including, but not limited to, anthropogenic climate change (source: Wikipedia).
recognise that human behaviour is what is driving a lot of stress on the ecosystem. And that’s why it’s necessary that social scientists come in and help us understand how we can best influence human behaviour, so that we can respect our planetary boundaries. We don’t expect social scientists to do the physical modelling (or vice-versa), but it is essential for us to understand the interactions, especially since the stressors of different planetary boundaries and their policy responses can be intertwined. There is a need for better science communication overall, not just among academics of different disciplines but also with decision makers and the people pushing them to make decisions.

What is Fischer’s view on the UN Katowice Climate Change Conference, held in December 2018? That round was mostly focused on the practicalities of implementing the Paris Agreement. Countries are offering their nationally-determined contributions, so the focus of this Conference was: How do we make things transparent? How do we make reporting uniform? It’s about putting in place the mechanisms so that countries can trust each other, that they are living up to what they promised. So there is progress. But the big elephant in the room is that the contributions that have been offered thus far are nowhere near what we need to really meet our targets of a global temperature rise below 1.5 °C (or even 2 °C) by the end of the century. So it remains to be seen how well this process that has started with Paris will be able to really raise the level of ambition over time—and quickly enough, so that we can stay within our boundaries.

Science and politics are not always pursuing the same goals, says Fischer. ‘One would hope that all parties are inspired to bring about sound policy-making to improve the public welfare, but you see very few researchers actually going into politics. That might be telling. And I think it’s natural for politicians to have different objectives than researchers. It is interesting for me to be in Europe, where you tend to have proportional representation and a lot of small parties, and a more consensus-building kind of model to get enough of a majority to create policy. Whereas in the American system, we really just have two parties. So, it is one or the other. And politicians in each party are playing much more to their base, meaning the more extreme-leaning voters have a louder voice, and policies get made for this share of the majority party, which is a minority of society. Whereas politicians, by nature, are concerned about their voters or supporters, as researchers, we tend to be more abstract, to step back and try to think of ways that make society as a whole better off.’

Having spent time in many countries, Sweden, in Fischer’s opinion, is the most environmentally-aware country in which she has lived. There is a lot of concern about ecology. The Swedes have the ambition to put in place the mechanisms so that countries can trust each other, and that they are living up to what they promised. So there is progress. But the more extreme-leaning voters have a louder voice, and policies get made for this share of the majority party, which is a minority of society. Whereas politicians, by nature, are concerned about their voters or supporters, as researchers, we tend to be more abstract, to step back and try to think of ways that make society as a whole better off.

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Fischer’s research explores questions of environmental policy instrument design. She applies microeconomic theory and other modelling techniques to a variety of environmental and resource management issues, including climate and renewable energy policies, carbon leakage, technological innovation, eco-certification and wildlife conservation.

very high carbon tax in some sectors. So in terms of ambitions, in their willingness to use incentive-based mechanisms, and in the variety of green-labelled products, there seems to be a very high level of concern and willingness to cooperate in improving the environment.

Fischer is positive about future generations: ‘I think that the younger generation is coming up now is much more concerned about the environment than their elders. It is very exciting to see the activism that is coming out, in particular in Europe, but also in the States. You see young people protesting for much more rapid change than is being planned at the moment—children are the ones that are going to be suffering the consequences. So that gives some hope.’

Carolyn Fischer’s strong environmental engagement is not only part of her professional life, but also of her private life, through folk music. As a singer and songwriter, she is ‘known for pairing powerful, intelligent lyrics with a clear voice and layered arrangements of harmonies and acoustic instruments’. Her debut album, A Rumor in the Mill, released in 2013, features songs that tackle subjects such as the Donora smog, endangered species, and other social issues.

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EDUCATION

Growing student numbers

The School of Business and Economics (SBE) is ambitious and works hard to provide challenging education programmes. The School offers a wide range of bachelor’s programmes, minors, master’s and research master’s programmes, and postgraduate programmes. Over the past two years, SBE has initiated activities that aim to further improve its educational programmes and to attract more students. The School’s efforts are certainly being rewarded. Whereas student intake at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (VU) increased significantly (13%) in 2018, SBE’s student intake increased by 26%. Nationally, student intake grew on average by 6%. Despite this enormous increase in student numbers, the School succeeded in maintaining its high-quality teaching, by efficiently managing two major challenges: staffing and classroom allocation.

Accounting and Control student Inken Kröger won the VU Master’s Thesis Award for The Triangle of Life, Family and Career for Women in the Big Four. According to the jury, Inken took a unique social sciences approach to a relevant auditing problem. The jury report praises her thorough theoretical basis, exceptional data analysis and surprising insights.

Puck Terpstra won the SBE Best Student Award in 2018. She finished her bachelor’s and master’s programmes with high marks, while also making time to contribute to society. She combined her Duisenberg Honours Programme in Financial Markets and Regulation with volunteering in a project that guides children in their transition from primary school to secondary school.

FIVE TOP-RATED TEACHING PROGRAMMES

The bachelor’s programme in Econometrics & Operations Research and the master’s programmes in Econometrics & Operations Research, Marketing, Finance and Spatial, Transport & Environmental Economics were awarded the title of ‘top rated programme’ by the 2018 edition of the Keuzegids. This guide provides an overview of all programmes per subject area, including comparative descriptions and quality assessments. Eighty percent of the assessment is based on student feedback in the National Student Survey and twenty percent is based on the assessment by the NVAO, the national accreditation organization for higher education. The Keuzegids bases its assessment on criteria such as academic and practical orientation, challenging education, and quality of the teachers. Students scored the programmes particularly well in the areas of content and teachers.

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Master of Business Administration student Zakaria Laaraj won the VU Student Initiative Award for his project Studie-Samen (StudyTogether). The Student Initiative Award was presented for the first time this year. The University Student Council nominated student initiatives that connect VU Amsterdam students with each other and with the university. Laaraj’s project won the popular vote. His initiative involves building a community where students help each other by studying together, after establishing contact on an online platform.

GROWING NUMBER OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

The School’s efforts to strengthen its international position are paying off. Currently, 32% of the first-year students in English-taught programmes have an international background. Students with 87 different nationalities have enrolled at SBE over the past three years. Of the bachelor’s programmes, International Business Administration has the highest number of international students. In 2018, 24% of the first-year bachelor’s students in International Business Administration have been educated abroad. Of the master’s programmes, Marketing (50%), Business Administration (44%), and Spatial, Transport & Environmental Economics (42%) have the highest percentages of new students with an international background.

BACHELOR’S AND MASTER’S STUDENT NUMBERS 2018–2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>First-year students</th>
<th>Enrollments</th>
<th>International students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B Business Administration</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>850</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Econometrics &amp; Operations Research</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>B Economics &amp; Business Economics</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>503</td>
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<tr>
<td>B International Business Administration</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>709</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M Accounting &amp; Control fulltime</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M Accounting &amp; Control parttime</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>M Business Administration</td>
<td>644</td>
<td>829</td>
<td>317</td>
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<tr>
<td>M Business in Society (joint degree)</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M Econometrics &amp; Operations Research</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M Economics</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M Entrepreneurship (joint degree)</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>34</td>
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<tr>
<td>M Finance</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>199</td>
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<tr>
<td>M Marketing</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M Spatial, Transport &amp; Environmental Economics</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>M Tinbergen Institute Master of Philosophy in Economics (research)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>2371</td>
<td>4507</td>
<td>861</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*B=Bachelor of Science, M=Master of Science
EXECUTIVE EDUCATION

The year 2018 was yet another successful year for executive education. Frans Roozen, Head of Executive Education, goes over the facts: ‘Student numbers in the executive education programmes increased by about 30%. This growth primarily involved the short programmes, which experienced an increase of more than 171%. Revenues increased by about 11%. It is interesting to see that the largest growth came from the Markets in Financial Instruments Directive programme, or MiFID.’

With the aim of further growing and professionalising, the Koedijk committee was established in 2018. ‘Their evaluation indicated that the core programmes are more or less stable and that there is not much growth potential there. This is one of the reasons why we have reconsidered our portfolio. We need new programmes to be developed, primarily in the management domain. We need to reposition ourselves. Presently, we are oriented towards specific professions. But there is market demand for more general career programmes, programmes that allow people to broaden their knowledge and experience, in order to develop themselves.’

He adds: ‘Right now, we are very much known for our individual programmes. We are not, however, known for the collective centre for executive education. Therefore, we need to distinguish ourselves. So there is a clear need for re-branding.

This will allow us to better position ourselves in the market, to help make our plans work, and to compete with other executive education schools.’

Also, the addition and professionalisation of support staff are high on the agenda. ‘Not only the back office, but also increase marketing capacity, communications and student recruitment staff. These staff need to be dedicated to the students we are aiming to attract.’

Roozen is actively looking for alliances. ‘We are working on an Executive MBA in Finance & Control together with Aalto in Helsinki, Finland and NHH in Bergen, Norway. The programme will be marketed in the spring of 2019. The first cohort is expected to start in the spring of 2020. Also, we are exploring cooperation opportunities with a Belgian business school, which would allow us to offer programmes together.’

Frans Roozen is looking forward to the coming months. ‘This coming September, we expect to be ready for the future. That is when our re-branded executive education entity will be launched.’

STUDENT NUMBERS IN EXECUTIVE EDUCATION

TOTAL 3004
Mirella Kleijnen, professor of customer experience management:

‘PERSONAL CONNECTION IS IMPORTANT’

As per 1 March 2018, Mirella Kleijnen was appointed professor of customer experience management at the department of Marketing. Nine months later – on 1 January 2019 – she became Vice Dean of Education at the School of Business and Economics (SBE).

Mirella Kleijnen studied Marketing at the School of Business and Economics at Maastricht University. She soon discovered that doing research was her passion. It was more or less self-evident that she decided to undertake a PhD. In 2007 she obtained her doctorate at the same university. During conferences she met Ruud Frambach, head of the Marketing department at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (VU) at the time. He persuaded her to come to the VU. ‘That was a good decision,’ she says, ‘I felt at home at the marketing department, with great colleagues. I loved doing research and teaching.’ But after a few years, I wanted to broaden my horizon and move beyond the comfort of my own department, preferably in an area where I could put my insights from research to use in my own organization.

And that opportunity came in 2012, when Mirella Kleijnen - with innovation as a specialization - was asked to become secretary of the Committee Van der Wel. This committee gave the educational programmes a substantive makeover, that garnered a lot of praise. ‘Especially the co-creation process for revising the bachelors was a great success’, says Kleijnen. On 1 March 2018, she was appointed professor of Customer Experience Management. The fact that she is Vice Dean of Education seems a logical step in her career.

Given the current shifts in education - the increasing digitization and internationalization - we asked Kleijnen about her vision on the future of education.

‘At the core, we remain a campus university that seeks the connection between teacher and student.’

She adds: ‘Studying at VU is not only about what you do, but also about who you are. We try to create value for both parties. Why do you want to work here and why do you want to study here? That personal connection is important. Exactly how we are going to do this, also in the context of the growth we are currently experiencing, is that an important point of development. In this context, the initiatives that are being developed at VU level are important, such as the concept of the Mixed classroom, an innovative education concept that stresses the unique features of inclusivity and perspective taking, but also the idea of A Broader Mind as a concept and how to shape that in a way that it really has visible [demonstrable] impact on our students. Who is the typical VU student? Who is the typical SBE student?’

There has been much ado about English instead of Dutch as language at Dutch universities. Kleijnen has a strong opinion on this: ‘For me, this discussion is about a common language that allows multiple nationalities to participate in our education. If you look at it from that angle, it is about the content and not about the language. We want to grow internationally, the opportunities are there, the need is there from the market. Students like courses that offer international challenges, and you can do that with a homogeneous group, but it becomes much more interesting if you have an international group of students, but also teachers who can interact and learn from each other. You need a common language for that, and that happens to be English. That is the core.’
STUDENT LIFE

The VU has one campus for all of its study programmes. This way, students not only easily get to know other areas of interest, but also students from other programmes. With student residences around the corner, a coffee corner, supermarket, a range of café’s and restaurants, and extensive sports and cultural programmes, the campus is a place to study, meet and work out. VU’s goal is to make its nearly 25,000 students with various religions, cultures and beliefs, feel at home.

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (VU) and the School of Business and Economics (SBE) aim at providing the best possible education for students. But there is also life outside the classroom.
LIVING AT CAMPUS UILENSTEDE
Campus Uilenstede, with around 3,400 residents, is the largest student campus in Northern Europe. In addition to living and studying, there is much more to experience at Campus Uilenstede: restaurants, a modern sports centre, and a cultural centre offering performances and an extensive range of courses. Uilenstede is located about 2.5 kilometres from the main VU Campus.

AMSTERDAM: THE NUMBER 1 STUDENT CITY
Amsterdam is the number one student city in the Netherlands. From campus, students are 15 minutes away from the bustling city centre with its many shops, nightlife, museums and parks. Thanks to the unique location of the VU, students also benefit from our close contacts with companies in the Zuidas business district and in the rest of Amsterdam and the surrounding area, where many internships and jobs are offered by appealing companies and organisations. The location offers good opportunities for students to get to know the lively city of Amsterdam during their studies!

SBE STUDY ASSOCIATIONS

Aureus Board of 2018-2019
From left to right: Jochem Hoogesteijn, Azra Talic, Loeloe van Dam, Thomas van Benthem, Denise de Ruiter, Bob van der Driessen, Maxime Boelen, Rachael Nederveen

KRAKET Board of 2018-2019
From left to right: Marit van Velzen, Jesse Wagenaar, Martijn Smink, Dave Houtenbos, Robin van der Huizen

Aureus is the faculty association for all students in Economics and Business Economics, Business Administration, International Business Administration and the associated master’s specialisations at VU Amsterdam. Founded in 1948, it now has more than 4,000 members and is one of the largest and most active organisations of its kind in the Netherlands. Aureus’ mission is to provide SBE students with extra study-related and professional benefits through a range of services and activities. Acting as an intermediary between students, the faculty and the business world, one of the main goals of Aureus is to connect students with the professional community.

Kraket is the study association for Econometrics and Operations Research at VU Amsterdam. The name Kraket stands for ‘Kritische Aktuarissen en Econometristen’, meaning critical actuaries and econometricians. Kraket unites students and the business community by organising Case Days, In-house Days and the annual National Econometricians Day (Landelijke Econometristendag). In addition, Kraket organises study trips abroad.
In the spotlight:

PHILIPP KOELLINGER

Philipp Koellinger is professor in Social Science Genetics at SBE’s Department of Economics. He researches questions such as: How do genes influence economic behaviour? And how can insights into the genetic architecture of behavioural outcomes inform social and medical research?

‘Social science genetics is a collaborative effort of social scientists, including economists, psychologists, sociologists, political scientists, together with the medical research community, including genetic epidemiologists, statistical geneticists, as well as with computer scientists. We are all working together. The data, the methods, the papers that we write, it is all highly collaborative, spanning across all these various fields. And the results we come up with are also relevant across all these various fields’, says Philipp Koellinger.

EDUCATION

• 2002–2006 PhD in Economics and Management Science, Humboldt-University Berlin (summa cum laude)
• 1997-1998 Bachelor of Science in Economics, Freie Universität Berlin, Vordiplom VWL

EXPERIENCE

• 2018–present: Full Professor at the Department of Economics, School of Business and Economics, VU Amsterdam
• 2015–2017: Full professor at the Department of Complex Trait Genetics, VU Amsterdam
• 2013–2015: Full professor at the Amsterdam Business School, University of Amsterdam
• 2012–2013: Associate professor at Erasmus University Rotterdam
• 2004–2009: Tenure at Erasmus University Rotterdam
• 2006–2012: Assistant professor at Erasmus University Rotterdam
• 2002–2006: Research fellow at the German Institute for Economic Research, DIW Berlin

More specifically, his research focuses on issues that are of interest to social scientists, such as education, occupational choice, risk taking and happiness. Twin studies have shown that these things are all partially heritable. But until recently, very little was known about the molecular architecture underlying this heritability. In our research, we try to identify which specific genetic variants are associated with these outcomes and what they might teach us. An example of this type of research is a study on educational attainment, which was published as article in Nature Genetics in 2018. ‘We identified more than 1000 genetic loci that are linked to the highest educational degree people obtained. Many of these genetic variants are also linked with other traits such as general cognitive performance or personality, but also to factors such as mental health, BMI, fertility and longevity.’

TWITTER STORMS

The article had a huge impact. ‘When it came out, it was all over the news. The New York Times had no less than three opinion pieces that talked about our work. There were Twitter storms about it, giving it the highest Altmetric score1 of any Nature Genetics publication ever.’

Social science genetics is not an entirely new field. ‘The idea of taking genetics seriously as a potential factor that influences why people are different from one another and why they have different life outcomes, health issues, or why they differ in education and income, is not new. That idea has been around for many decades. What is new is that we can now look at molecular genetic data at the individual level and we can do that with samples of millions of individuals. In the past, researchers had to use identification strategies that were making assumptions about genetic.

1 Altmetrics is an alternative way to measure research impact, primarily through measuring social media attention and how much the media and the public are mentioning a research article online (see also pp. 20-21).
differences between people rather than actually measuring them.' To investigate the molecular genetic architecture of socio-economic outcomes, Koellinger co-founded the Social Science Genetic Association Consortium (SSGAC) in 2013 to bring together researchers from various fields and more than 100 datasets from around the world.

Koellinger’s research is highly relevant. ‘There are a lot of ways in which our work can influence our society as we move forward. But, most importantly, our research challenges the way people look at the world. Our work and what we are doing may actually have its biggest impact simply through changing how people think about individual differences and where they come from. Changing the perspective of people could influence a lot of things across society. For example, how fair is it that some people have very high incomes partly because they got lucky in the genetic lottery – a lottery they did not even decide to participate in?’

But powerful new ideas and insights could possibly be used for good or bad purposes. ‘Societies and policy makers need to start having an informed debate about how they want to use these insights, who should be allowed to have access to genetic data for which purposes, what types of applications we will welcome and which ones we will want to avoid. The decisions we will make about this will shape the societies we will live in.’