



The breakdown of higher education

In the autumn, WOinActie, FNV, AOb, CNV and LSVb made it clear that we disagree with the proposed cuts to higher education. The fact that 25,000 people were at the Malieveld had an impact; the long-study fine is off the table. Campaigning works!

But by no means are we satisfied, There is still a cut of 1.1 billion on the table, of which more than 500 million euros on higher education. These cuts come on top of the financial shortfalls and sky-high workloads that already play a major role in the lives of our students and everyone working at, for or on our educational institutions. Hence, universities, hbo's and mbo's across the Netherlands are resisting this breakdown of our education and have started relay strikes from this week on.

As a city, Tilburg is intertwined with its educational institutions. The hbo, mbo and university not only have a prominent physical location, but there is also a strong presence of our educational institutions in city life. In the form of partnerships around Mindlabs or the redevelopment of the "Kenniskwartier", but also in the financial income for the city through housing, emerging entrepreneurs and revenue from the hospitality industry (to name a few). The announced cuts will therefore have a huge impact, not only on educational institutions and their students and staff, but also on Tilburg as a city.

The breakdown of our knowledge

The foundation of any educational institution is knowledge. After all, educational institutions support and facilitate research, which is then passed on to students and Dutch society as a whole. This knowledge ensures that educational institutions can take a critical stance towards society and then also help adjust said society. Knowledge is the foundation of education and society, and it will be firmly cut back on!

A large proportion of researchers depend on grants to do research. The recently introduced start-up and incentive grants would give young researchers the time and space to conduct thorough and independent research. This is meant to ease the pressure on these researchers. This is needed, as more than 70% of the employees at universities reported experiencing stress due to the already high workload.

The government is breaking contract by making substantial cuts to the just-introduced start-up and incentive grants. In the process, because some scholarships have already been granted and are ongoing, universities will have to add 4 million a year to meet the commitments already made. That money has to come from somewhere, from reserves, for instance, or it has to be gained by making (more) cuts elsewhere.

Apart from the deficits that will be created by the elimination of start-up and incentive grants, it has already been established in 2024 that some of the services offered by the university are short of money and thus need to be cut. So if, due to the removal of start-up and incentive grants, further cuts have to be made, the financial pressure will only increase. This could have various consequences, such as temporary contracts not being renewed or even more difficult choices having to be made in the services offered. This not only impacts the services themselves but also - once again - the quality of teaching and research.





The breakdown of student life

These cuts will greatly affect the quality of knowledge and education at the university, and this affects all students who take up and study this knowledge at the university. But besides the quality of education, these cuts will have many other effects on students' lives.

The lack of finances affects the services students use. These are important services like IT, the library, student psychologists, etc. These services will have less resources/time to assist students who need it. But besides services, the university will also have to cut back on new construction of housing for students in Tilburg, among other things. In the process, association life will also be affected by the possible reduction in the number of board grants that boards receive for their work and the reduction of facilities for study/student associations. As a result, these associations will find it more difficult to facilitate informative, innovative and/or social activities that enrich student life. Students will therefore lose out in both the quality of education, and the quality of student life.

The breakdown of our international community

The “Wet Internationalisering in Balans” (WIB) is a bill designed to limit the intake of international students and force programmes to switch from English to Dutch. This has huge implications for the diversity, knowledge, and culture of our educational institutions. The WIB has a huge impact on the international character of our institutions. Moreover, fewer international students means less revenue, while the cost of reforms is added. This way, the impact of the WIB will be felt by every student and every employee at a university or college.

The WIB puts international students and staff in an insecure position. They make very important contributions to knowledge and education. Programmes are not given time and resources to properly organise the transition, since the measures are to take effect as early as 2026. This uncertainty is compounded by unclear plans and recent political adjustments, such as the Bontenbal amendment. International students and staff, who contribute greatly to our educational institutions and the city, can hardly prepare for the major (potentially life-shattering) consequences of the WIB due to all the uncertainty.

Stand up against the breakdown!

These cuts to higher education will be felt by all students and staff. That is why we as AOb, FNV, WOinActie and student union F.U.S.T. are standing up together against this destruction of Tilburg's educational institutions and will therefore take action!

But taking action (from striking, to protesting, to even filling out a petition) can only be done with the help of **everyone who cares about our education!** -> **Help out!** Only by standing up together against this breakdown can we send a clear message to this cabinet!

With activist greetings,
AOb, FNV, WOinActie and student union F.U.S.T.

