Jury report VU Education Awards
2023-2024

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Jury composition

The VU Education Awards are judged by a jury that consists of several sub-committees. These committees each bear partial responsibility for judging the various awards.

The subcommittees are headed by one common jury chairman. Since 2023, prof. dr. Sandjai Bhulai has been the jury chairman. The judging process is coordinated from the Student and Education Affairs Department and supported by Kristel Struiksma, secretary for the VU Education Awards.

Below is an overview of the various committees from 2023-2024 and which prizes they are judging.

Academic Committee

The Academic Committee is responsible for the entire judging process of the Studen Talent Award (both shortlisting and interviewing) and the first step in the judging process of the Master's Thesis Award (shortlisting only). The Academic Committee consists of the following members:

Name	Faculty	Function
Sandjai Bhulai (chairman)	Faculty of Science	Professor of Business Analytics
Hein Daanen	Faculty of Behavioural and Movement Sciences	Professor of Exercise Physiology
Sharda Nandram	Faculty of Religion and Theology	Professor of Hindu Spirituality and Society
Remco Zwinkels	School of Business and Economics	Professor of International Finance
Etienne Verheijck	ACTA / Faculty of Dentistry	Director of Education Faculty of Dentistry
Amarylle van Doorn	Faculty of Medicine	VU alumnus, Basic physician, Winner Student Talent Award 2022-2023
Guido Groenescheij	Faculty of Social Sciences	Chairman USR

Master's Thesis Award Reading Committee

The Master's Thesis Award Reading Committee is responsible for the second and final step in the judging process of the Master's Thesis Award. The Reading Committee thoroughly reads the master's theses of the shortlisted candidates for the Master's Thesis Award, evaluates them, and designates a winner. The Reading Committee consists of the following members:

Name	Faculty	Function
Sandjai Bhulai (chairman)	Faculty of Science	Professor of Business Analytics
Bram Groothoff	Faculty of Law	PhD candidate in Criminal Law
Najat El Hani	Faculty of Social Sciences	VU alumnus, education advisor Leiden University, owner Link Academy
Ton van Balkom	Faculty of Medicine	Emeritus Professor of Psychiatry

Educational Innovation Jury

The Educational Innovation Jury is responsible for the entire judging process of the Educational Innovation Award (both compiling the shortlist and conducting the interviews). The Educational Innovation Jury consists of the following members:

Name	Faculty / Department	Function
Sandjai Bhulai (chairman)	Faculty of Science	Professor of Business Analytics
Janneke Waelen	Student and Educational Affairs	Director Centre for Teaching and Learning (VU)
Gerhard van de Bunt	Faculty of Behavioural and Movement Sciences	Professor of Sociology, VU teacher training programme director
Jantien Stuifbergen	Faculty of Law	Director of Education Faculty of Law, Winner Education Innovation Award 2021-2022
Mariska Min-Leliveld	University of Amsterdam	Director Teaching and Learning Centre Central (UvA)
Yvette Taminiau	Faculty of Social Sciences	Associate Professor of Organisational Science, Winner Van der Duijn Schouten Education Award 2022-2023
Geertje Tijsma	Faculty of Science	Researcher VU Athena Institute

Master's Thesis Award

The VU Master's Thesis Award is awarded annually to the master student who can best argue the (potential) social impact of their thesis research. The Master's Thesis Award is awarded on the basis of a two-stage assessment. In the first stage, the Academic Committee selects the best three master's theses based on the social impact of the thesis. In the second phase, the Master's Thesis Award Reading Committee chooses the best master's thesis from these three.

The winner of the Master's Thesis Award will receive €2.000 and will be paired by Alumni Relations with a VU alumnus of interest to the student.

Conditions

- Eligible final papers are those concluding a (research) master's programme at VU University Amsterdam.
- The final papers are nominated by the faculty board; students cannot nominate their own final papers. It is left to the faculty board how they select this thesis, e.g. based on the grading of the thesis.
- The submitted thesis should be accompanied by a social impact summary written by the student in Dutch or English.
- A thesis written by several students is also eligible for the award. Any amount of prize money to be awarded will be distributed. It is advantageous if the group of students is diverse.
- Coproductions by students and staff are not eligible.
- Only final works from the academic year 2022-2023 are eligible.
- **The grade with which the master's thesis was assessed does not constitute a criterion.**

Criteria

The Academic Committee judges submissions based on the social impact summary. This summary motivates the student to tell a lay audience why the thesis contributes to society.

- The social impact summary can be divided into the following sub-criteria:

  > What makes the thesis relevant to the field and society?
  > How does the thesis contribute to the VU values of 'open, personal and accountable'?
  > What recommendations would you give to society based on your thesis?
  > How did the thesis contribute to your own learning curve?

The Master's Thesis Award Reading Committee evaluates submissions based on the following criteria:

- Scientific quality and originality, with sub-criteria:

  > Internal logic of the text
  > Originality
  > Readability

- Relevance to the field and society
- Alignment with VU values: open, personal and accountable

Nominations

This year, a total of nine students were nominated by faculties for the VU Master's thesis award.

- Anouck Jue (ACTA / Faculty of Dentistry)
- Sergio Alvarez Lara (Faculty of Science)

- Riley Terzopoulous (Faculty of Science)
- Anna Barquinero Campodarve (Faculty of Behavioural and Movement Sciences)
- Michiel Bouman (Faculty of Religion and Theology)
- Megan van der Vorst (Faculty of Social Sciences)
- Caitlin Bozic (Faculty of Medicine)
- Maurice Boukhrass (School of Business and Economics)
- Daan van Ederen (School of Business and Ecnomics)

Shortlisted candidates

The Academic Committee selected Riley Terzopoulos, Anna Barquinero Campdarve and Megan van der Vorst for the shortlist because of their ability to very succinctly convey the (potential) social impact of their thesis research. Below is a brief summary for each candidate and thesis:

- Riley Terzopoulos (Faculty of Science), with the thesis: *Towards cervical cancer elimination: An exploration into the global variation of HPV vaccination programmes and coverage.*

  In her thesis, Riley investigated how decision-making around vaccination policies affected vaccination rates against the HPV virus. Riley found out that few countries reach the 90% vaccination rate. She conducted extensive global policy research and linked key policy-level decisions to impact on vaccination rates. She organised workshops and informal meetings in collaboration with key women's health organisations to design her research and disseminate the results. Her research provided recommendations for further research and improvement of HPV vaccination programmes.

- Anna Barquinero Campodarve (Faculty of Behavioural and Movement Sciences), with the thesis: *Promoting LGBTQ+ Healthcare Accessibility: A Social Psychology Study from the Perspective of Patients and Practitioners.*

  In her thesis, Anna explored healthcare-related discrimination against members of the LGBTQ+ community, examining both patients' and healthcare professionals' experiences. On the one hand, Anna's research yielded very concrete recommendations that can be used at both policy and practice level to increase the accessibility and quality of healthcare for LGBTQ+ patients. On the other hand, Anna's thesis lays a nice foundation for future research on this topic, especially on the barriers in healthcare against people who identify in a certain way, and minority intersectionality.

- Megan van der Vorst (Faculty of Social Sciences), with the thesis: *The Lockdown Aftermath: organisational trauma and healing in the aftermath of a slow-burning crisis.*

  In her thesis, Megan investigated the long-term effects of the corona pandemic in Dutch secondary schools. She conducted an ethnographic study among a group of high school students and teachers, focusing on the theoretical concept of *organisational trauma/healing*. Megan's research shows that despite the fact that society is back to the 'old normal' on a practical level, the effects of the pandemic on a social and psychological level are still percolating. With her findings, Megan provides tools for parents, teachers and policy makers to counterbalance the aftermath of the corona pandemic.

Winner: Riley Terzopoulos (Faculty of Science)

The Master's Thesis Award Reading Committee commends the theses of Riley, Anna and Megan for several reasons.

In Riley's case, the jury found it impressive that her thesis research was published as a scientific article. Another strength is that Riley created her own database based on *World Health Organization* data, and that she collected data from many different countries and regions. Moreover, the research yielded surprising results that could lead to policy changes.

The Reading Committee found it very valuable that Anna's thesis research demonstrates a research gap regarding experiences of discrimination in healthcare, and that Anna creatively fills this research gap by researching minorities. In addition, two studies were done and the research summarises the data very well. The power analysis conducted by Anna prior to her research was also highly appreciated by the committee.

The Reading Committee found the topic and question of Megan's thesis research to be particularly original, interesting and meaningful. The thesis stands out for its innovative and creative use of different research and reporting methods, such as theatre techniques and video material. Moreover, the thesis is written in excellent English and provides socially valuable advice.

After discussion and consideration of the criteria, the Reading Committee came to the conclusion that Riley's thesis stood out due to the overall quality of the research in terms of both content and methodology, and the surprising results it produced. The Reading Committee has therefore decided to award the 2023-2024 VU Master's Thesis Award to Riley Terzopoulos.

Student Talent Award

The VU Student Talent Award was established to appreciate students who have made a big impact on society and/or on the VU campus. These students are role models for other students, showing that you can contribute to society with both small and big things. In doing so, they take on the role of bridge-builder and show connection to the VU community. When they receive the award, they are connected to VU as student ambassador for a year.

The Student Talent Award is awarded on the basis of a two-stage assessment. The Academic Committee selects three students for the shortlist on the basis of faculty nominations. The three shortlisted candidates are then invited for an interview round with the jury. After the interview round, the jury designates a winner.

The winner of the Student Talent Award will win €2.000 and will be paired by Alumni Relations with a VU alumnus of interest to him or her.

Conditions

To be eligible for the Student Talent Award, the nominated student must meet at least the following conditions:

- Final-year undergraduate or graduate student;
- Enrolled as a full-time VU student;
- No older than 30 years;
- No more than one year of study delay;

Unlike previous years, a student's grade point average will no longer be a criterion for the Student Talent Award from 2023-2024 onwards.

Criteria

To be considered for the Student Talent Award, the nominated student will be assessed according to the following conditions:

- The student makes a special social or cultural contribution;
- The student has organisational talent, managerial talent, creative talent and/or sports talent;
- The student is boundary-pushing, entrepreneurial, intrinsically motivated, resilient and wants to use these talents;
- The student possesses traits that allow them to act as role models for (VU) students;
- The student is a bridge builder and committed to VU.

Nominees

This year, faculties nominated a total of four candidates for the Student Talent Award.

- Pia Beiermann (Faculty of Social Sciences)
- Mylene Brown-Coleman (Faculty of Science)
- Vlad Cursaru (Faculty of Science)
- Lotte Witké (School of Business and Economics)

Finalists

Of the four nominees, three were selected for the shortlist.

- Mylène Brown-Coleman (Faculty of Science)

Mylene is pursuing a bachelor's degree in Artificial Intelligence at the Faculty of Science. During her studies, Mylene campaigned hard for the safety and inclusion of female students within the Computer Science department. To this end, she successfully organised the hackathon event Hack4Her two years in a row, in which a total of more than 150 students participated. She is also co-founder and chair of the diversity committee for study association STORM, as well as committed to diversity on campus through other projects within VU. The jury praises Mylene for her resilience, perseverance and activism.

- Vlad Cursaru (Faculty of Science)

  Vlad is studying the master's programme in Software Engineering & Green IT at the Faculty of Science. During his studies at VU, Vlad has made himself indispensable to his fellow students and lecturers with the incredible amount of work that he has done as a student assistant. In a span of 3 years, he was a student assistant for 12 subjects within Computer Science and helped and taught a total of more than 1.000 VU students. He also developed automation and administration tools for two large-scale courses, allowing lecturers to devote more time to teaching. The jury praises Vlad for his cheerful and positive attitude, his work ethic and his clear passion for teaching.

- Lotte Witké (School of Business and Economics)

  Lotte is studying the bachelor's programme in Econometrics & Operational Research at the School of Business and Economics. During her studies, Lotte was chairwoman of the board of study association Kraket for a year, and started her own business: LotteLeert. Since 2021, through her TikTok and Instagram accounts, Lotte has been sharing tips on learning and studying with her following of some 126,000 people combined. In August 2023, she published her book *Nooit meer een onvoldoende*, in which she motivates pupils and students to make the most of themselves and their studies. The jury praises Lotte for her entrepreneurship and ability to convey her enthusiasm for learning to others.

Winner: Lotte witké

As all three shortlisted candidates met the criteria in their own unique way, it was difficult to immediately identify a clear winner. To arrive at a final decision, the jury looked primarily at the level of impact the shortlisted candidates have made. After thoughtful consideration, the jury came to the following conclusion. While Vlad and Mylène have been able to make a huge positive impact on the Faculty of Science, Lotte, with 126.000 followers on social media and the publication of her book, has been able to make a difference on a broader, societal level. The jury views her as a student figurehead who can convey the joy of learning to a target group that is usually difficult for the VU to reach. The jury has therefore decided to award the 2023-2024 Student Talent Award to Lotte Witké.

Educational Innovation Award

The VU Educational Innovation Award is intended for (interdisciplinary or trans-faculty) teaching teams that develop an innovative project that focuses on improving teaching practice at VU. Projects that focus on giving innovative substance to the VU educational vision also have a chance of winning the Educational Innovation Award. The context in which the collaboration between lecturers takes place is relatively free. Thus, lecturers can also involve support staff, students and social actors in their project.

The Educational Innovation Award is awarded on the basis of a two-stage assessment. The Academic Committee selects four teaching teams for the shortlist on the basis of faculty nominations. The four shortlisted teams are then invited to an interview round with the jury. After the interview round, the jury designates two winning teams.

The two winning teacher teams will each receive €15.000. The Centre for Teaching and Learning will provide free assistance to the two winning teams in scaling up their projects.

Conditions

To be eligible for the Educational Innovation Award, the project must meet at least the following conditions:

- The prize money must be fully used to realise the project, including dissemination. Upon completion of the project, an account of the implementation of the project will be delivered for approval by the rector.
- Winning teams commit to make at least three presentations to a wide audience (e.g. VU Education Day and other education-related events such as KnowVU meetings, Educational Leadership Course (LOL), Senior Teaching Qualification (SKO) or faculty education days).
- The winning teams commit to publish the project's progress and findings on a public website (with a minimum of 10 blog posts over the course of the project).
- The winning teams undertake to organise a public workshop once halfway through the project and no more than two years after its start, and to deliver a final report (NL/ENG-language) in which the developed innovation and results are made accessible to a broad public. It is recommended that a publication for an educational journal such as *Tijdschrift voor Hoger Onderwijs* is realised as well.

Criteria

To be considered for the Educational Innovation Award, participating teams will be assessed according to the following criteria:

- The extent to which the rationale for the project plan is compelling and reinforces VU's educational vision.
- The extent to which the innovation is original/innovative.
- The extent to which the innovation can be implemented sustainably, both within and outside the faculty.
- The degree of diversity within the team of teachers.

Nominations

This year, faculties nominated a total of four teaching teams for the Educational Innovation Award.

- Ana-Clara Cassanti's team (Faculty of Science), with the project *Diversity and Inclusion as a means of a safe learning environment within Earth Sciences and BETA programmes.*

- Joris Koene's team (Faculty of Science), with the project *Digital anatomy: the anatomy lesson of the future.*
- Margot Stroeken's team (Faculty of Social Sciences), with the *Social Sciences Career Mentoring* project*.*
- Amanda Porter's team (School of Business and Economics), with the *IBA Lab* project.

Shortlisted candidates

The Education Innovation Jury selected the 4 teams above for the shortlist. Below is a brief summary for each education team and project:

- Ana-Clara Cassanti's team (Faculty of Science), with the project *Diversity and Inclusion as a means of a safe learning environment within Earth Sciences and BETA programmes.*

  Team members: Ana-Clara Cassanti, Marleen de Ruiter, Anoek van Tilburg, Castille Jacquet, Ella Farmer, Gerica de Rubertis, Jasmijn Golyardi, Jonathan Leggett, Shivalika Madgulkar, Zoe Aldrich.

  Ana-Clara Cassanti is a lecturer in the Global Environmental Change and Policy (GECP) master's programme in Earth Sciences. She started the Diversity and Inclusion project to address her students' concerns about diversity and inclusion within the programme. The first phase of the project has now been completed. In this phase, through an original application of the Mixed Classroom model with extensive questionnaires, Cassanti's team identified the most pressing issues among students and teachers. This yielded insights that were translated by student working groups into concrete recommendations for successful educational improvement at GECP. To conclude phase 1, DIVES (Diverse and Inclusive Values for Earth Sciences) was established, a student collective that acts as an advisory body to Earth Sciences staff in the area of diversity and inclusion. The team is now entering phase 2, where it will focus on institutionalisation and extending the project to other courses within the Institute for Environmental Studies.

- Joris Koene's team (Faculty of Science), with the project *Digital anatomy: the anatomy lesson of the future.*

  Team members: Joris Koene, Elloha Taizaj, Mieke Roth, Sander van Iersel, Tim de Visser, Yumi Nakadera, Wouter van der Vegt.

  Joris Koene is a lecturer in the Biology bachelor's programme at the Faculty of Science. Traditional anatomy classes in the cutting room are under pressure due to decreasing availability of teachers and teaching spaces, increasing student numbers and ethical concerns. To address these issues, Joris started the pilot project SLAB with financial support from the faculty. In this pilot project, the content of a practical lesson on the anatomy of the pool snail was converted to an instructional video, which was supported by a digital 3D model. The success of this pilot encouraged Joris to write a proposal in which the teaching module on the pool snail would be expanded into a library of digital, interactive and modular anatomy teaching materials for a wide range of species.

- Margot Stroeken's team (Faculty of Social Sciences), with the *Social Sciences Career Mentoring* project*.*

  Team members: Margot Stroeken, Marina de Regt.

Margot Stroeken is a Career Officer at the Faculty of Social Sciences. In recent years, the faculty found that their programmes received low ratings from students in terms of job market connection. However, Margot knew from experience that Social Sciences alumni do end up in interesting workplaces. The faculty and Career Services therefore joined forces for a pilot project within the Social and Cultural Anthropology master's programme. This is a mentorship project aimed at developing a buddy network of alumni for social scientists. The project aims to broaden student perspectives on the job market, teach students how to communicate with the professional field and actively use relationships with alumni. If successful, Stroeken's team has plans to expand the pilot project to other Social Sciences programmes.

- Amanda Porter's team (School of Business and Economics), with the *IBA Lab* project.

  Team members: Amanda Porter, Christer Guldemond, Jet Vink, Laura Nino.

  Amanda Porter is a lecturer in the KIN group in the School for Business and Economics. After the corona pandemic, the faculty identified the need to boost innovations that increase the sustainability and flexibility of education at SBE. An extensive inventory of the specific needs within SBE resulted in the creation of the IBA Lab project. IBA Lab involves 2 interlinked electives from the second year of the bachelor's programme of International Business Administration. In these electives, students are paired with external stakeholders with a social need. The project centres on one teaching space where lecturers and students jointly shape education. In this 'lab', lecturers are allowed to test new teaching ideas in a safe environment and students are given the opportunity to set up a socially responsible business. In the coming period, the IBA Lab team plans to invest in obtaining a dedicated teaching space, developing a safe and accessible digital platform, and training teachers.

Finalists: the teaching teams of Margot Stroeken (Faculty of Social Sciences) and Amanda Porter (School of Business and Economics)

The project proposals by Margot Stroeken and Amanda Porter showed enormous potential and therefore made it to the finals.

In the case of Margot Stroeken's team, the jury liked the fact that the project involves interdisciplinary cooperation between academic and support staff. Another strength is that the Career Mentoring project kills two birds with one stone: on the one hand, it offers students who are uncertain about their future prospects on the job market, and on the other hand, it strengthens alumni's commitment to the master's programme in Social and Cultural Anthropology and the Faculty of Social Sciences. However, the jury noticed that, compared to the other teams, the project is really still in the middle of the pilot phase, which means that the educational substantiation and elaboration of the project proposal can still be improved in some aspects.

In the case of Amanda Porter's team, the jury was impressed by the experimental way in which the IBA Lab project brings together students, teachers and societal stakeholders and ensures that all three parties benefit from mutual cooperation. The jury liked the fact that IBA Lab encourages students to enter into collaborations with students from other programmes, and that the IBA Lab team itself sees opportunities for exchange with VU's *Community Service Learning* team. However, because the project proposal has such a wide range and goes in many different directions, the jury was unable to pinpoint what exactly is at the heart of the project.

Winners: the teaching teams of Ana-Clara Cassanti (Faculty of Science) and Joris Koene (Faculty of Science)

The jury concluded that Ana-Clara Cassanti and Joris Koene's project proposals stood out because of the clear, concrete way they substantiated the innovative nature, scalability and alignment with the VU Educational Vision of their projects.

In the case of Ana-Clara Cassanti's team, the jury praises the potential scalability of the project, and the fact that, thanks to the project, students are actively involved in curriculum and educational reform. The working method of the Diversity and Inclusion project has proved successful at Earth Sciences, and with customisation can be adopted relatively easily by other programmes within the Faculty of Science (and perhaps eventually even within the other VU faculties). Moreover, the project meshes seamlessly with VU's diversity spearhead.

In the case of Joris Koene's team, the jury was pleasantly surprised by the innovative way the project uses animation and 3D techniques to enrich the content of anatomy lessons, while also alleviating the practical problems and ethical concerns regarding dissection. Moreover, the jury found it very noble that the Digital Anatomy team intends to make the learning modules available to a wide audience of students, pupils, teachers and scientists through various channels in the future. In doing so, the project aligns directly with the VU core value: open.

For the above reasons, the Educational Innovation Jury has decided to award the 2023-2024 Educational Innovation Award to the teaching teams of Ana-Clara Cassanti and Joris Koene.

Teacher Talent Award
Learning by Doing

Foreword
Students have to have mastery of a lot of subjects, know a lot about their subject. Additionally students have to be able to perform certain actions, a medicine student must be able to diagnose patients and a social sciences student must be able to conduct qualitative interviews.

There are many ways to learn a subject, and even more ways to go about teaching it. Teachers play an enormously important role in the learning process of students. Students often continue on tracks taught by their favourite teachers, are most enthused by a teacher who can engage the student. Especially in those courses which usually need a lot of enthusing a creative and innovative way of teaching can make a world of difference.

This year's theme aims to highlight those teachers who make the effort to innovate upon their way of teaching, use different methods, include relatable material or are otherwise masters of engaging their students through creative teaching.

The Teacher Talent Award is given to teachers on behalf of the student population. Faculty Student Councils from different faculties nominate teachers they find to be deserving of the award. The Jury would like to thank all (nominated) teachers for their hard work!

The winner of the Teacher Talent Award will receive €2.000. The prize money must be used for educational and teaching purposes.

The jury
The jury consists of three members of the University Student Council and five members of various Faculty Student Councils.

Beau van de Graaf, FSC Faculty of Humanities
Kelvin van Gorp, FSC Faculty of Bahavioural and Movement Sciences
Okke de Vet, FSC Faculty of Social Sciences
Pahal Agrawal, FSC Faculty of Science
Xin Taphoorn, FSC Faculty of Medicine
Sarah Kasd-Alla, USC Faculty of Law
Sofia Rabbanizadah, USC Faculty of Medicine

Guido Groenescheij, USC Faculty of Social Sciences (Chairman)

The process
Firstly, all FSC's were contacted to nominate a maximum of two nominees. They went on their quest, and came back to us with nominees in the form of a nomination form, often outfitted with direct quotes from students lauding the nominee. The Jury received a total of ten nominations.

The nominees
- Atze van der Ploeg (Faculty of Science)
- Maikel Wijtmans (Faculty of Science)

- Ilja Cornelisz (Faculty of Behavioural and Movement Sciences)
- Jos ten Berge (Faculty of Humanities)
- Roland Luttens (Faculty of Humanities)
- Jasper Muis (Faculty of Social Sciences)
- Geert Schenk (Faculty of Medicine)
- Lubna Medema-Baroud (Faculty of Law)
- Anne van der Kuyl (Faculty of Law)
- Marc Schauten (School of Business and Economics)

The finalists

FSRs had put forward their nominees with nomination letters, in which they provided the jury with information on the nominees and what students have told them about these teachers. Based on these nomination letters, the jury members graded the candidates on the basis of requirements relevant to the topic. Based on this, the jury formulated a shortlist of three candidates. These were as follows:

- Atze van der Ploeg (Faculty of Science)

...teaches computer science at the Faculty of Science. He has seen his programme grow significantly over the last years and now frequently teaches multiple-hundred students simultaneously. Students laud him for providing engaging, understandable and comprehensive lectures in which Atze makes use of innovative techniques to engage students and make the challenging and dense subjects fun. Additionally he plays a role in coordinating the many TAs that support him in keeping 600-student courses running.

- Lubna Medema-Baroud (Faculty of Law)

...teaches law at the Faculty of Law. First year law students are told to make sure to enrol for Lubna's workgroups if possible because they are most engaging and interesting due to Lubna's narrative way of teaching. She makes sure that students *experience* the course matter by making them act out scenarios or drawing on her extensive experience as an attorney and judge to provide interesting examples. Her lectures too do not disappoint; she fills the large halls with attributes and role play, turning the benches into a true courtroom.

- Marc Schauten (School of Business and Economics)

...teaches finance at the School of Business and Economics. Walking through the VU's halls at 9 in the morning you might find empty lecture halls, reportedly Marc's classes do not suffer from this ailment. His highly personal way of teaching, including personal anecdotes and relatable and recognisable examples, motivates students to continue coming to his classes. He manages to make the abstract and impersonal subject matter tangible and relatable while utilising blended learning to encourage a deeper understanding of the world and subject matter.

These three candidates were invited for an interview, in which they were requested to give a short, 10-minute lecture and would afterwards answer some standardised questions.

All three teachers thoroughly impressed us with their stories, educational visions and teaching strategies, though a choice had to be made. We made use of ranked choice voting where the candidate with the least amount of votes was eliminated until a candidate achieved 50%+1 votes.

Because the jury is comprised of an even amount of jury members we had to go through several rounds of discussion and voting before we reached a (non-tie) conclusion. An important matter to clarify here is that members of the jury were not allowed to vote on any teacher from their own faculty at any point in this process until the final round of voting.

The winner: Atze van der Ploeg (Faculty of Science)

The jury had an incredibly difficult time making a choice, but ended up deciding to crown Atze as *most* deserving of the prize. His enthusiasm and personality was extremely engaging and his frequent use of innovative tools such as those from the 'blended learning toolbox'. His easy-going and understandable way of answering questions and sheer ability to explain highly complex computer science issues to the relatively layman jury while showing the relevancy of the subject matter proved the deciding factors to sway the vote in his favour.

We, the jury, would like to encourage Atze and all other nominees to continue what they're doing. To continue enthusing students, deepening our understanding, helping us form ourselves academically and otherwise!