

American academics in Leiden for EuroScholars Program

Last week a group of American academics visited Leiden as part of the EuroScholars Program, which is chaired by Leiden University. The idea is for them to send excellent students to Europe to participate in research programmes.

Honours



The ten scholars from nine different American universities who visited Leiden on 11 and 12 March represent the Honours Colleges at their respective universities. The purpose of their trip, which also took them to Helsinki and Leuven, is to get to know at first-hand the EuroScholars programme. They will eventually send their own students to Europe as part of the programme. The American guests were treated to various informative lectures, a guided tour of the Academy Building and presentations by students who are currently spread out all over Europe participating in the EuroScholars Program.

The EuroScholars Program was set up by Leiden in collaboration with eight other European universities. The programme was established to provide highly talented undergraduate students from Canada and the United States with the opportunity to gain international research experience.

New perspective

In her welcome address, Vice-Rector Magnificus Simone Buitendijk expressed how very important she considers the programme. 'The world is not so small any more, and as a university we can no longer focus exclusively on Dutch problems,' she explained. 'We want to train our students to become world citizens. The world needs a generation with a new outlook. That makes international collaboration through this programme very important.'

Independent and resourceful



Anne Dahlman from Minnesota State University

One of the visiting academics was Anne Dahlman, from Minnesota State University, who became very enthusiastic about the EuroScholars Program on the trip. 'It would be good for every student to do some high-level research and at the same time to look beyond his or her own familiar little world,' she said. 'This programme combines those two things. For that reason, participating students need to be independent and resourceful, as well as willing to take risks.'

Everyone rides a bicycle here

Dahlman is impressed with the city of Leiden and its university. 'This is a marvellous place for students to live and to study,' she notes. 'It's an excellent university, and a lot of fantastic research is being conducted here. Leiden is one of the most beautiful cities I have seen.' She has even picked up on some aspects of the Dutch way of life. 'Everyone rides a bicycle here,' she remarked. 'It's incredible!'

3D printing

Apoorv Kakar is one of the international students who has come to talk about his research. He is from the State University of New Jersey and is currently conducting research in the field of dentistry at KU Leuven. Kakar explains how he uses 3D-printing to make false teeth, for when implants or orthodontic treatment are no longer an option. He is a third-year student of Economics and Biology and hopes to go on to study dentistry after he graduates. He hopes that the experience he is acquiring in the EuroScholars Program will give him insight into the field.