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VOTE THE STUDENT UNION

**ELECTION PROGRAMME 2026
HANZE REPRESENTATION COUNCIL (HMR)**

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Election Programme Hanze Representation Council (HMR) 2026

GMA of 12 March 2026



Summary

Take action and vote the student union. Our Hanze is under pressure due to budget cuts and reorganisation. The Groninger Student Union (GSb) is fighting for a university where quality, well-being and solidarity form the basis of our education. We demand affordability, transparency and equal opportunities for all students. As a student movement, we oppose the decline in educational quality and increasing militarisation. We fight for your student life.

1. Your Study Environment

Good academic results start on a full stomach. We take action for an affordable and healthy canteen, free fruit and a book lending fund, so that you can make ends meet more easily. We are fighting for a predictable annual planning and a university that is run transparently. The HMR must always be kept informed and involved in any measures that might increase our study workload.

2. Education Quality

Education is a right, not a business model. We demand that all lectures be recorded and live timetables in our private calendars. We also want digital sovereignty: a switch from American Microsoft products to secure, European (open source) alternatives. Furthermore, the Hanze must draw an ethical line by preventing interference from the Ministry of Defence and severing ties with institutions that violate human rights.

3. Internships and Challenging Education

Interns are not cheap labour. We demand a decent internship allowance and a central reporting point for discrimination against interns. In addition, we want students to be given the opportunity to develop personally by introducing a 'flexible window' of 15 EC credits for volunteering outside their studies.

4. Student Facilities

Our university must be accessible to everyone. We are calling for the expansion of accessible study spaces at Zernike and in the city centre. The GSb advocates for the opening of a not-for-profit canteen and the introduction of a bike-sharing system. Hanze must improve the indoor climate (ventilation and temperature) in all classrooms.

5. Diversity, Inclusion and Social Safety

Everyone should feel at home at Hanze. We are committed to a buddy system and better support for international students to combat social isolation and discrimination. We advocate for an anonymous reporting point for hate and discrimination. Finally, we demand proper facilities: accessible toilets in every building and additional quiet and prayer rooms, particularly at locations outside Zernike Campus.

Introduction

Your vote counts, especially now. Higher education is under pressure: severe budget cuts are on the horizon and students are facing increasing challenges. The Groninger Student Union (GSb) calls on you to support us at the Hanze University of Applied Sciences. Why? Because we are committed to improving your student life. Accessible education, student well-being, and social safety are being compromised, and we are here to make a difference.

We take action where needed and put pressure on administrators to achieve concrete change. That is why we are participating in the elections for the Hanze Representation Council (HMR). We strive for greater democracy and transparency in higher education, such as better insight into decision-making processes. Students have a right to democratic participation and open governance, especially during the current reorganization taking place at the university.

We are committed to helping all students. Students are increasingly finding themselves in vulnerable positions due to financial and mental health issues, bureaucratic barriers, and housing problems. We are also committed to improving the position of international students, who are increasingly finding themselves in precarious situations due to language barriers, discrimination, and a lack of support. Education should be accessible to everyone, regardless of your background or financial situation.

A lot is changing at our Hanze. The restructuring from academies and schools to thematic clusters still has the ultimate goal of cutting costs. It is naive to think that a *reorganization* will have no impact whatsoever on the quality of education and student support. In addition, the Ministry of Defense and military industry are increasingly interfering in higher education. Nationwide, study programs are being militarized to cover financial deficits. We believe that the Hanze should never become a playground for war, but should be a place for personal growth, innovation, and local collaborations.

The GSb is more than just a voice in the HMR. We are a broad and active student movement that stands up for your rights, both on and outside of campus. In recent years, we have successfully fought for the abolition of the long-study fine and forced the government to start making internship allowances mandatory. The GSb goes beyond the Hanze. Choose change, choose progress, choose the Groninger Student Union at the co-governance elections. **Vote GSb!**

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1. Your Study Environment

Staying on top of your studies isn't always as easy. We want you to be able to grow and learn in an environment catered to you. In a time of uncertainty and reorganization, we make sure new measures aren't implemented as a smokescreen for budget cuts that sacrifice your mental health and the quality of education.

The GSb fights against diploma factories and intransparency. We work for an environment that is designed for purpose and motivation. We think that a good study environment is essential for your student time: from your schedule, to the classroom, and from campus, to what's for lunch. Students should have direct say in what environment they thrive in, and you can do that with your vote.

1.1 Education and Welfare Above Reorganization

The GSb is committed to creating a study environment that prioritizes quality and health. Our university is currently undergoing a reorganization; our familiar schools and academies are making way for thematic clusters. Although this offers opportunities for collaboration between fields, this transition should never become an end in itself. University reforms are only successful if it ultimately benefits education quality and well-being.

We demand that students and teachers be given direct say on any decision that is expected to impact the study or work load. Organizational measures and budget cuts should never come at the expense of education quality and the facilities that serve as safety nets for students.

- We plead the HMR be given a binding right of veto on any measure that results in a change in work or study load forecast.
- Measures resulting in budget cuts on student safety nets, such as study guidance, skills training, well-being facilities and social safety, are unacceptable.
- We choose an education community based on solidarity. No measures that pit students and teachers against each other.

1.2 No Financial Stress

Studying has become alarmingly more expensive. While the basic grant has been reinstated, our cost of living, rent, and studying are rising faster than ever. The GSb believes your social and financial background should never determine your chances for a degree. Hanze should be a place where studying is affordable for everyone.

We offer solutions to ease your financial stress. Students shouldn't have to skip meals to buy an overpriced book that rarely gets used for class. We want to establish a book lending fund so you can lend a textbook for a single semester, for a fraction of the price

of purchasing it. We also think that no student should go to school hungry because of financial problems. Therefore, we plead for free fruit for students in every building and a volunteer-run canteen with free or cheap meals.

- We propose the establishment of a book lending fund, where in return for a fee a book can be lent for a semester and it can be returned afterwards.
- No student should be hungry during class. We advocate for lower canteen prices and the establishment of a volunteer-run canteen with the single task of feeding students affordably.
- Every building should have free fruit for students. Healthy snacks are a basis for good studying performance.

1.3 Considerate Scheduling

Students live further away from campus than ever before and have packed schedules. Combining studies with a part-time job or caregiving responsibilities is becoming a greater problem. Last-minute schedule changes are therefore unacceptable. They force students to choose between their income/family and their education, resulting in unnecessary absenteeism.

We fight for more consideration and clarity in our schedules. A provisional timetable must be available at the start of each academic year. This gives students the opportunity to organize their work and private lives in a timely manner and without stress. Timetables shouldn't be ad-hoc and travel times should be taken into account.

- We want an annual course planning at the start of the academic year: a provisional timetable and clarity on our exam periods and project deadlines. A university that doesn't show the right example, will not encourage students to become better at planning.
- Last-minute schedule changes should be kept to an absolute minimum and should be communicated properly. We think that continuity is the basis for a healthy study environment.
- When drawing up timetables, greater consideration must be given to the logistical challenges faced by students who have to travel between buildings or those who live outside the city of Groningen.

1.4 Green and Healthy Campus

A bleak and dirty campus made of bricks and asphalt is depressing and uninspiring. Most students spend the majority of their weeks on Zernike and need a green and healthy environment. The GSb pleads for a campus that breathes and welcomes both people and nature. This means more greenery, more trash cans and bottle deposit machines, and working towards a smoking policy that keeps the campus clean and

works for both smokers and non-smokers. Making the campus clean and green is not only pretty, but also provides a breath of fresh air or a place to sit in the shade. It creates a more natural study environment.

We plead for more greenery inside every building, with real non-artificial plants, because a healthier campus does not end outside. We fight for greener buildings, cleaner classrooms and spaces where you can gather, study or exercise comfortably.

- Preserve and encourage biodiversity on campus. Drastically increase the amount of greenery and nature in and around all Hanze buildings.
- We want bottle deposit machines in all Hanze buildings and more trash cans along walking routes, for a cleaner campus.
- The GSb fights for a sustainable smoking policy on Zernike beyond the HMR. We broadly take action and raise the issue with policy makers.

1.5 Transparent University

The university is built by students and teachers, but policies are often drafted about us, rather than with us. The GSb fights for accessible and transparent student representation in your study environment. Crucial discussions regarding the quality of study programmes are held behind closed doors and students often have trouble understanding their rights. We believe in a Hanze where students' voices are not only heard, but determine the course of action.

We refuse any system where budgets, reforms, and organizational shifts are decided in back rooms. We demand that co-governance bodies, such as the HMR and DMR, are treated as equal partners. We want to replace layers of bureaucracy with open governance. To ensure students' rights remain protected, we additionally plead for the introduction of an independent student ombudsman for fairer treatment of students' issues and rights.

- Require all study programme panel discussions to be open to the student body, with a report or minutes published after every meeting.
- Establish a student ombudsman outside of the university's direct hierarchy to provide students with advice, legal support, and mediation services regarding exams and unfair treatment.
- We advocate for consent rights for all co-governance bodies on all major financial and educational changes, ensuring that no policy passes without the explicit approval of the people it affects.

2. Quality of Education

Every day, students come to the Hanze for one primary purpose: to learn. The GSb pleads for an education system that works for students. You deserve to be treated as a person, not just another number on a list. This means addressing problems at their root cause instead of patching up broken systems.

Quality education does not begin and end in the classroom. It means not only that the content of the lectures are informational, but that this information is accessible anywhere, anytime. It means that the Hanze does not ally itself with hostile third parties who are only out to make profit over the backs of students, without regard for education.

2.1 Online and Recorded Lectures

Students shouldn't be punished if they are sick or absent due to circumstances beyond their control. Lectures are often not rewatchable and the information from a shared PowerPoint is often the bare minimum. This is inexcusable when students pay thousands of euros a year in tuition fees. The GSb believes you are paying for knowledge, therefore all lectures should be recorded, so all students have equal access to their study material.

The GSb refuses to accept "technical hurdles" or "privacy concerns" as excuses to gatekeep information. We believe that course material belongs to the students, which means making lectures rewatchable, accessible and inclusive for students with a disability and those who have to travel long distances.

- We want recordings of all lectures and made available on Brightspace afterwards. No student should fall behind because of disability, illness, or an emergency.
- The university has already installed the equipment for hybrid lectures and lecture recordings in most classrooms. If it's already there, we should actually use it.
- We plead for a quick and easy system so setting up does not take more time than necessary.

2.2 Allow Timetable Exporting

Your timetable belongs to you, not to the Outlook app. The Hanze currently refuses to allow exporting your timetable to your personal calendar, causing many students to juggle with multiple calendars and losing oversight. We think that an IT solution's security integrity shouldn't depend on an accessibility feature. Students shouldn't be forced to share their personal agenda with the Hanze in order to use a single calendar.

The GSb demands that secure calendar subscription links should be implemented on Digirooster. This solution must allow imports outside of the Microsoft environment and lift the current Hanze-only restriction. We want to work towards open IT solutions where students can help create better, faster, and more accessible scheduling tools rather than being forced to rely on institutional software only.

- Give students back control over their timetables and allow them to import them into their personal calendars.
- We advocate for open infrastructure so students can develop and build their own scheduling and education tools.

2.3 Ditch Microsoft and Control Our Data

A lot of valuable data is exchanged on the Hanze digital network. Recent geopolitical tensions have proven that our data is not safe in the hands of American companies. Transitioning away from Microsoft products like Outlook, Teams, Office 365 and Sharepoint, towards European, preferably open-source alternatives should be the priority. The safety of sensitive information is paramount and should not be entrusted to foreign corporations at the whim of autocratic governments.

The GSb demands that our data sovereignty is taken seriously. The Hanze needs to reclaim our data and invest in solutions that place security and integrity over profit. We should follow the example of other institutions and move towards productivity tools and storage solutions that are European and open-source.

- Find European, preferably open-source alternatives to Microsoft products. We demand a clear phased approach to improving our data sovereignty.
- Ditch services that put Hanze at risk of exposing private data to foreign actors. Sensitive student and research data must be stored only on servers strictly controlled by the university or a European collaborative effort.

2.4 No Defence Recruitment on Campus

The university should be a place for growth, innovation and a better society, not a recruitment ground for the Ministry of Defence. The GSb is against the normalization of militarization on our campus. Students are not a talent pool for foreign wars. Stop legitimizing the arms industry and military careers as "standard" professional paths.

The GSb wants a ban on defence recruitment in and around Hanze buildings, in lecture form and other methods of recruitment. No student should be targeted by recruitment tactics while trying to access their education.

- We plead for a ban on Ministry of Defence recruitment activities within and around Hanze buildings. This includes career talks and recruitment lectures by military personnel.
- The university should remain a place for learning and student life. Say no to legitimizing war and the military-industrial complex.
- We call for full public disclosure of all research grants and partnerships. The Hanze should reject any funding or collaboration tied to the development of weapons technology and military intelligence.

2.5 Cut All Ties With Israel

Nobody should cooperate with a state that actively carries out colonization, dehumanization and genocide. Institutes contributing to the violation of human rights should not have influence on our education.

The GSb demands that every tie the Hanze has with the state of Israel should be cut as soon as possible. The partnership with the Israeli *College of Management Academic Studies* should be ended. It is not a controversial opinion to oppose human rights violations, the university should meet the three demands of the Palestine movement:

- Condemn the genocide in Gaza.
- Disclose all the university's ties with Israeli institutions.
- Cut all ties with all Israeli partner institutions and universities.

3. Internships and Challenging Education

Your study is not just classes, but an opportunity for growth and mastering skills. Not every student gets these opportunities. All students have the right of equal internships, extra-curricular educational opportunities and access to collaboration.

We stand for a Hanze that takes an active responsibility in students' success. We believe fair treatment, inclusivity, and a balanced study-life structure are essential for equal opportunities. The university should be a place that respects your time, your work and your unique ambitions.

3.1 Fair Internships

Students are the future of the workforce. We are not a source of cheap or free labor. In fields like health care and teaching, the line between intern and full-time worker has almost vanished. Students are carrying the workload of full-on staff, without the pay, the protection and the mentorship they deserve.

The GSb fights for good internship quality and fair internship allowances. We have successfully campaigned for mandatory internship allowances, but we continue to fight for a fair implementation.

- We plead for an enforced cap on independent productivity. Interns are not supposed to be used to stand in for permanent staff.
- Any organization using students as "cheap labor" should be placed on a blacklist and barred from offering internships to Hanze students.
- We continue to fight for fair internship allowances. All internships should meet a wage norm.

3.2 Combat Internship Discrimination

For many students, the search for an internship is their first real introduction to the job market. Unfortunately, that introduction is not the same for everyone. The national internship code for higher professional education does not serve its purpose and students are often responsible to recognize internship discrimination by themselves. We believe the university has a duty to protect students against this.

The GSb demands a proactive and systemic approach, where instances of discrimination can be centrally addressed. We plead for an easy to find central contact point for reporting internship abuse and discrimination. The Hanze has a caregiving duty to students going through the process of finding an internship.

- Implement a single, accessible, and easy-to-find reporting point for internship abuse and discrimination within the Hanze.

- We demand that reports of internship discrimination are duly processed according to vigorous protocol.
- We advocate for solutions to combat prejudices during internship hiring. All students should have equal opportunities to finish their degree.

3.3 Additional Elective Space

The structure of study programmes makes your study sometimes feel like factorywork. Students should be rewarded for taking initiative in the real world. Every programme should include a flexible window, separate from the minor, allowing students to pursue individual courses, volunteer work, a student board position or becoming active in the student body.

The GSb pleads for a flexible 15 EC window in every study programme, separate from the minor. We think students should be encouraged to gain experience outside the classroom. Social contribution is an essential part of education and development.

- Every study programme should have a flexible 15 EC window, which can be used towards additional interdisciplinary courses, volunteer work, and other skill specialization.
- Board years, council positions, and community work should become formalized as credit-earning activities.
- We advocate for an open enrollment policy for minors and electives. Students should be allowed to pursue their interests without having to navigate bureaucratic procedures.

3.4 Passion-driven Honors

We believe honors programmes shouldn't function as exclusive clubs for the highest grades. Any student who demonstrates a clear, self-driven plan for a project or research should have the opportunity to enter honors.

Passion drives students. Potential shouldn't just be judged by grades. Students should be given the opportunity to demonstrate their potential and vision the moment they show passion for their study field.

- All honors programmes should be open to all students demonstrating the capacity and motivation to plan and run a project or research.
- We plead for more autonomy in honors programmes. All students showing potential in their study field should be able to participate in challenging education.

3.5 Contact Hours for Project Work

Not every project should turn into a remote project. We have to admit, students sometimes need a little encouragement. We are in favor of scheduled hours in class timetables, designated for group project work. If planned between regular hours, students will have an easier time gathering, benefitting the quality project deliverables and presentations.

The GSb pleads for more regularity in our schedules. Time realistically spent towards studying, should also be reflected on our timetables.

- Encourage students to go to campus. Schedule two to four hours every week dedicated to flexible project group work, for most programmes.
- We want a realistic division of duties between teachers and students in the formation and continuity of project groups.

4. Student Facilities

Our university is made up of thousands of unique students, each with their own virtues, capabilities and needs. We believe in a university that keeps everyone's situation in mind. All students should have equal access to the facilities the Hanze offers.

The GSb fights for student facilities that are accessible for everyone. We need to look beyond our own worldviews and inquire among the student body about what is necessary and what is not yet properly facilitated. The GSb pleads for inclusive, effective and multifunctional facilities.

4.1 Affordable Food

No student should go to school hungry. Not eating severely impedes the learning process and makes concentration harder. Food prices on Zernike campus are extraordinarily high, and cheaper options are kilometers away. It is disgraceful that students who are short on money cannot afford to eat breakfast or lunch. A new volunteer-run canteen must be opened that can provide a nutritious and healthy meal at an affordable price, preferably for free, to any student. Additionally, the Hanze should make free fruit available in every building for students.

The GSb believes it is essential that the basic needs of every student are met. Offering affordable alternatives for food is an essential step toward having a healthy student population and should be a top priority for the Hanze.

- Open a Mensa (a sustainable volunteer-run canteen that provides meals to students) with no profit-incentive and preferably free of charge.
- Provide free fruit to students in every building.

4.2 Affordable Study Materials

Most studies require some amount of studying materials to be bought by the students themselves. This includes books, but also specialized equipment or e-learning courses. This is a steep and sometimes unaffordable cost for some students. Lacking behind in your schoolwork due to a lack of affordable studying materials is an unfortunate reality for many students.

- We plead for the establishment of a book lending fund, where you can lend a book for a single semester for the fraction of the price of buying one.
- Encourage publishing digital versions of excerpts of books on Brightspace as much as legally possible.

4.3 Bicycle Sharing

Students should not just be reliant on the bus system to get them across the city on time. Creating a bicycle sharing system on the Zernike campus and across other

buildings in the city would allow students to travel at their own pace, without having to worry about bus times or running late for class in another building.

The GSb pleads for a collaboration with the Rijksuniversiteit Groningen for a bicycle sharing system for students/staff or a broader collaboration for OV-fiets point on campus.

- We plead for a bicycle sharing system across all Hanze buildings.
- We broadly advocate for the establishment of OV-Fiets points on university campuses.

4.4 City Centre Study Spots

The study environment of a Hanze student does not stop at the Zernike campus. Many students live and study in the city center, but the pressure on available spaces in the Forum is enormous.

We think studying environments go beyond campus. The GSb fights for more third places for students. We plead that Hanze students can also reserve study rooms in Hanze buildings in the city centre.

- Allow room booking across all Hanze buildings, outside busy periods.
- Extend study space booking hours during exam periods.
- We advocate for the Hanze to collaborate more actively with the Municipality, the RUG, and cultural institutions to expand study spaces and third places in the city centre.

4.5 Ventilated Classrooms

Full classrooms easily get warm and stuffy. Insufficient ventilation causes too much CO₂ to build up and makes it harder to breathe and concentrate. During winter, classrooms can get cold and drafty. The ventilation and climate control systems in every building need to be modernized where possible, and drafty doors and windows should be fixed.

Students should not have to worry about the climate in their classrooms while they are learning. A well ventilated classroom has been proven to be the basis for a productive and healthy learning environment.

- Modernize ventilation and climate control systems. Clean air directly contributes to better study performance.
- Repair drafty windows, doors, and leaks.

5. Diversity, Accessibility and Inclusion

The Hanze is attended by students from all over the world, each with their own values, minds, needs and cultures. The university should be a place for everyone, despite their differences. The GSb strongly believes in a university where students can feel included to the greatest extent. This means that we need to consider the needs of students that extend beyond the typical mental or traditional world views.

To achieve this, we plead for facilities that do not just cater to one specific group, but to create facilities that anyone may use for their own reasons and purposes. Facilities that seem trivial or useless to one, can make a huge difference for another. The Hanze is a community, where everyone looks out for another, and nobody is left out.

5.1 Student Support

Students and teachers run extra-curricular welfare or study groups, to support students with learning disabilities. We think these classes are vital to improve mental health and help with study skills. Many of these classes get fully booked quickly or scheduled during regular classes. It is alarming that some students cannot attend these groups because of conflicts in their schedule.

In order to allow students to attend these meetings without risk of being double-booked, the GSb pleads for a designated lecture-free gap in the schedule, where these personal aid classes and other extra-curricular activities can be held.

- We plead for a gap in the timetable on a regular basis, so that those who are afflicted with personal issues have the time to attend group meetings, classes or clubs who provide support and guidance.
- Welfare or study groups should be supported by the Hanze wherever possible.

5.2 Integration and Community

Moving to the Netherlands as an international student is an enormous step. Hanze has a large body of international students, who are often unfamiliar with Dutch customs, traditions and institutions. Finding your place in a new country can be difficult and can lead to feeling isolated and lost. Language barriers form a huge obstacle to integrate into the local community. The GSb believes the university should do more to make all students feel at home.

The capacity of Dutch language courses for internationals must be expanded, and students should be made more aware of the existence of these courses. Additionally, a workshop explaining the rights and obligations of living in the Netherlands should be provided at the start of the year to all new international students. Clarity on important matters such as housing, culture, government and bureaucracy is a crucial first step for

successful integration into Dutch society, and feeling confident and secure in a new environment.

- Introduce a buddy system for first-year international students. Personal buddies can provide personal guidance and help navigating Groningen and the Dutch education system at first hand.
- We plead for the expansion and active promotion of Dutch language classes for internationals, so international students face fewer barriers integrating into Dutch society.
- Provide an introduction to Dutch society workshop at the start of every academic year. International students should face no surprises in their first months in Groningen.

5.3 Diversity and Inclusion

On a regular basis, students and staff are subjected to discriminatory or hateful remarks. While often meant merely as a joke, the impact remains the same. This can leave a deeper mark than one may consider. The GSb considers this an injustice.

We plead for diversity and inclusion workshops to be held for teachers, students and other staff who partake in hateful behaviour. Campus should be a safe place for everybody. Everyone should be left in their own values and beliefs without risk of being subjected to hateful comments or insults.

- We plead for diversity and inclusion workshops to combat discriminatory behaviour in the classroom.
- A safe and anonymous central reporting point for reporting discrimination or hate should be established.

5.4 Equal Toilet Facilities

Students who do not identify with the established gender binary, or those who do not feel comfortable using the male and female restrooms, should not have to walk large stretches to the other side of their building, or in some cases, to another building altogether to relieve basic bodily needs. The GSb pleads for expanding the number of gender-neutral bathrooms in all buildings.

Students should not be forced to conform to gender norms that do not apply to them and enter a bathroom they feel uncomfortable using. Relabeling more bathrooms to being gender-neutral is an inexpensive change, but a very welcome one.

- Expand the amount of gender-neutral bathrooms in all Hanze buildings.
- Clearly indicate gender-neutral bathrooms on campus maps and signage.

5.5 Quiet/Prayer Rooms

A diverse student body means a diverse set of faiths and beliefs. Everyone should have the right to be able to pray, meditate or reflect in their own way and on their own time. The construction of the quiet room in Van OlstBorg (ZP7) has been a very welcome addition. However, not all Hanze students reside on Zernike campus. The GSb therefore pleads for the construction of additional quiet rooms in the Hanze buildings that are not located at Zernike.

- Construct additional quiet rooms in buildings off-Zernike campus, so all students have access to a quiet room near them.
- Clearly indicate quiet rooms on maps and signage.