

Humanities against Humanity

Open letter to the Board of Reorganization at the Faculty of Humanities

As part of the personal Plan of the Reorganization, we, as scholars and lecturers were informed that we have lost our function at the Faculty of Humanities and from September 1 2013, we belong to the Transitieorganisatie, whose task is to help us to find another job.

On August 29th the Dean of the Faculty announced that our new functions are not *docents*, but we are *herplaatsingskandidaten*, in short, HPK, as it was written on the board of the presentation at this event. We were informed that as HPKs, we are physically grouped together and we have to move together into separate rooms of the Academic Building. We all need to leave our rooms at various departments till October 1.

This measure does not follow from the legal paragraphs of the Personal Plan of the Reorganization; this is the innovation of the Board of the Reorganization.

We believe that this is an outrageous measure that humiliates and strongly insults academics; this decision violates personal rights and the elementary principles of human dignity, offends international academic morals and creates shameful reputation for the University of Groningen. We believe that those who are responsible for this decision should shame themselves.

We realize that our Faculty is short of office space and we are happy to share our offices with others. Nevertheless, this whole procedure is not about space management: we do not need to explain that the methods of separating groups of people, labeling them with acronyms and moving them to transit place before the final solution, recall totalitarian historical experience. According to the cultural critic, Judith Butler, recalling terrifying experience from the past is itself the act of intimidation in the present.

We do not need to explain that after the two years of torture the Board of the Faculty practiced on our body and soul, we as academics and human beings do not want to be stigmatized and experience apart-heid. After all this, what comes next? Shall we be kindly asked to avoid the front gates?

We categorically protest against this decision and kindly ask the Board of Reorganization to find another solution, one which does not violate the basic principles of ethics. We would appreciate if – using the concepts of *overleg* and *transparantie* Dutch university managements are proud of – we could be consulted in this matter rather than being given yet another command.

Sincerely,

Drs. Hinke Alkema
Dr. Agnes de Bie
Prof. dr. dr. h.c. Cornelius Hasselblatt
Drs. Adriaan van der Hoeven
Dr. Janke Klok
Dr. Edit Zsadányi

19 September 2013