



@AeresUASIntOffice



#Alumni - Aeres UAS (University of Applied Sciences) - CAH Dronten



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Do you or the company you work for have an internship offer? Or an assignment which could be useful for our students? Maybe you want to come back to Dronten to your alma mater with an interesting guest lecture? You are always welcome! Let us know how we can help you! Mail to: [s.moroza@aeres.nl](mailto:s.moroza@aeres.nl) or [n.spaargaren@aeres.nl](mailto:n.spaargaren@aeres.nl)



You might have noticed that IFB 10 year anniversary was planned on June 19, 2020. Due to Covid-19 we have decided to postpone the celebration. New date will be announced, stay tuned!

## Dear all,

What a year! I believe this is a year that we all will remember many years from now. COVID has challenged us to change the way we work and even made us rethink and reorganize many other aspects in our lives.

I vividly recall the moment we were notified that our Canadian students wanted to go back home because of COVID. Italy was hit hard but the Netherlands was not confronted with COVID yet. The weeks thereafter were like a rollercoaster; within a very short time students were travelling back home and Dutch students returned to the Netherlands. After two weeks most students got home safe and sound. The work was not done yet as we had to quickly transform our education from a classroom setting to an online setting.

Looking back I believe we succeeded in offering education online in a proper way. We learned how much can be done online and sometimes much more efficient. Personally I was happy to see how we can limit our mobility when needed and the benefits for our environment. At the same time we have been missing our students and it was sad to have to decide that we couldn't organize a graduation ceremony in July.

As we are heading for summer holidays we are happy to see that we are getting a bit more flexible. Having said this we do have to organize our education differently for this fall, respecting among others the social distancing instructions. This is another major challenge but we are very happy to see that international students can come back to campus and we are looking forward to be able to meet each other again. Let's hope the situation remains safe over the coming summer months. I wish you all a good staycation; home sweet home! And above all - stay safe!



**Natasja Spaargaren**  
Head International Studies & Consultancy

With kind regards,



## From a student to a lecturer at Aeres



Office selfie

**Name:** Patrick Burgess (or Pat)  
**Studied in:** 2011-2015 International Food Business (a double-degree program between Aeres UAS in Dronten and Dalhousie University in Truro)

**International Food Business program is unique, it is a partnership between two universities (in the Netherlands and Canada), which leads to a double degree. What were the reasons why you applied for the International Food Business program?**

Well, there were a number of reasons. At the time of applying, I honestly did not know what to do in terms of studying. I remember being put in to contact with Prof. Heather-Anne Grant at the time to discuss the programme. When we met, she told me about the programme, the specific focus on agriculture and food business and the opportunity to travel and gain some international perspective. Even at the time, of applying as a 'mature student' at the age of 21 I found the IFB programme very attractive. I think the mix between the courses, international experience, and opportunity for a good future in the food and agriculture industry were the drivers for my choice in joining the programme.

**Were there big differences in student life in Truro and Dronten?**

That goes without saying, although both rural communities, the cultures were definitely different. Each of the two had their pros can cons. For example, Dalhousie AC offers excellent opportunities for extra curricular

activities such as student clubs, fitness facilities, sport teams, and great accommodations in education. However the location is rural, so commuting within the area is something that can be difficult. For this, I recommend joining as many student activities as possible outside of the study life. Dronten, also offers great education. One benefit I enjoyed here was the practical approach to education, and the ability to visit companies and learn from experts. The Netherlands, seems to make it easier to include this in their curriculum, so this was really a bonus. Public transport was fantastic in the country, so even though the location is also rural, it is pretty easy to get around. What I missed in the Netherlands location were all the facilities (gym, fully equipped library), as these are not as common in the Netherlands at Universities of Applied Sciences. All in all, it was a great combination.

**What do you remember/cherish the most from the time when you were the IFB student?**

Just the connection between people and the opportunity to get outside of my home country. I have never travelled outside of North America, and this was truly the biggest benefit for me.

**Being a Canadian, was it easy to adopt to the Dutch educational system? Where there things you didn't understand, or even opposite – thought were fantastic?**

I think that question depends on motivation. I was motivated to get 'good grades' as I was already a bit older and did not want to risk a



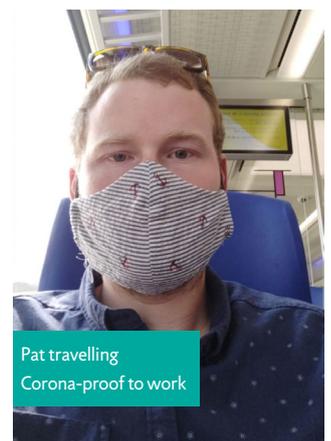
Beer time!



Fun time with colleagues

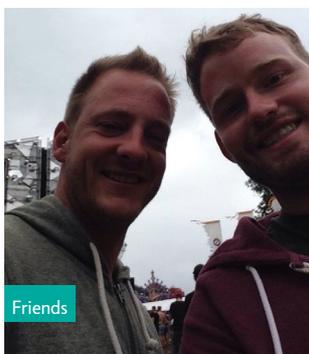


IFB class in 2011 (Pat is in the last row, first from the right)



Pat travelling  
Corona-proof to work

# OUR ALUMNI: STORIES



Friends

delay in my study. The system was pretty easy to adapt to. However, I can imagine the single mode of exams can be tough for some, while they would rather build up marks overtime. The applied sciences was a really nice addition, as it prepares students for the working world, this is something I really enjoyed.

**Are you still in touch with people you met during your studies in Dronten/Truro?**

Yes, many people actually. I made some great friends, who I meet up with pretty frequently.

**Do you see any difference in students, when you compare them to students with whom you were studying?**

Sometimes I do for sure, but I mean, now I am looking at it from a different perspective. I think each year is different. So it is tough to say.

**What are your plans for the future?**

I would like to continue working at Aeres. I would also like to do some research in Blockchain and related information systems to understand their role in the food supply chain. More so related to short food supply chains and transparency.

**As always, we finish with your wish to our students and alumni.**

In these strange times, I wish that all current students can still enjoy their programs as much as possible. I think the current situation puts a ton of uncertainty into their 'luggage'. My advice would be to stick with it, and when things improve, we can get back to normal. I also wish Alumni good luck in these times, hoping that business owners and employees can get back to operating 'normally' sooner than later.



Time for sports (Pat is first from the left, in case you didn't recognize him)

**What are you doing now, where do you work?**

Well, funny you should ask. I am currently working for Aeres University of Applied Sciences in Dronten and Almere locations. One of the alumni, who decided to return to pursue their career in education, research and consultancy. So I guess you could say I liked it so much I had to come back.

**Could you have ever imagined that after studying in Dronten you would become a lecturer in Dronten?**

Yes, why not? I think it's a great job, with awesome students to work with, and not to mention a great team. The mix Aeres provides in research, projects, and education is tough to beat as each day is different.

**How does it feel to work for the university you graduated?**

Great, not much else I can say. I was happy to hear about taking over coordination of the IFB program, although it will be really tough to keep the standards which my predecessor has created over time.



IFB study tour in Scotland



Project in Tanzania, departure back to the Netherlands



Work visit (project) in Al-Quds



## Seven things you probably do not know about Wieke van der Vlis

After 12,5 years with Aeres UAS it is time to share some inside information about. There are many things you know already about me... my love for high heels, love for food and baking, my various roles in the International Food Business programme, my eye for detail and how my colleagues could 'bribe' me with chocolate any time... 😊



**1.** Me being a 'foster parent' for a lady called Odine, the Bernese Mountain Dog. Since two years the latest edition of the Hetsen family is this lovely family member; she is warm, loving and caring and from time to time a little mischievous, exactly like me 😊



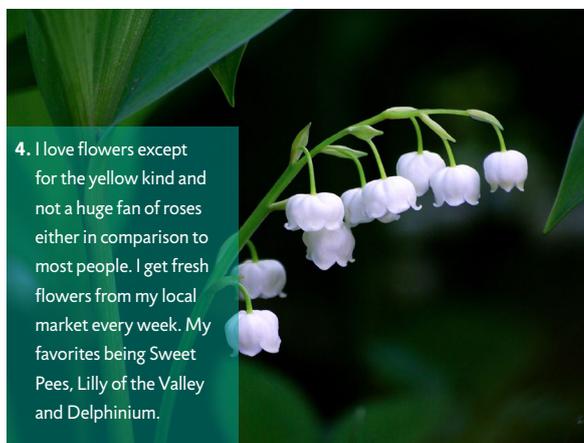
**2.** I have fear of heights, I'm a acrophobic. Climbing the Eiffel tower started this fear. Funnily I do not fear the height of heels.



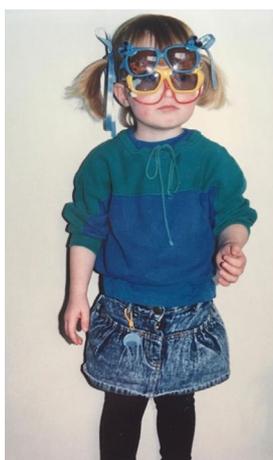
**3.** During college I played field hockey although against the advice of my parents thinking I could be seriously dangerous with a wooden stick and my desire to play to win. Going for a run and doing float fit work outs turned out to be a safer option.



**4.** I love flowers except for the yellow kind and not a huge fan of roses either in comparison to most people. I get fresh flowers from my local market every week. My favorites being Sweet Pees, Lilly of the Valley and Delphinium.



**6.** Every Christmas family dinner turns into a cooking and baking competition with not the main but desert as the most coveted dish to serve. Guess who wins??? You have to earn your spot at the dinner table and new comers start with doing the dishes or when there is a noticeable cooking talent you can start with the 'horse d'ouvres'



**7.** I am a fruit farmers daughter and I love apples, Dutch apples! I was born and raised on this farm and we moved to the village of Dronten when I was 14 years. And yes, I can drive a tractor! My parents also taught me to eat local fruit. I can eat apples all day when they are freshly plucked from the tree. I used to do this right before dinner time absolutely ruining my appetite. I like a good sauer and crisp apple, like the Yellow Transparent or the Elstar. On a side note, I don't like appelmoes, apple sauce.



## Nice-to-know about the International Food Business program

354 student have been enrolled in the IFB programme

83 did not finalize the programme (*Switched programme, stopt studying or received negative binding study advice*)

