



@AeresUASIntOffice



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

## Seasons yet to come

(by Rick W. Cotton)

They gave us all a calendar  
 At work this afternoon.  
 Suddenly it dawns on me,  
 The year is ending soon!

Comes January, cold and gray.  
 The new year's just beginning.  
 And February, short and bright  
 With Valentine hearts winning.

Comes March, the windy roaring one  
 And warm the sun of spring.  
 Then April, bright of shining sky  
 And flowers blossoming.

Comes May, and school comes to a close  
 With children's happy laughter.  
 Then June, with open city pools  
 And picnics soon thereafter.

July comes booming with a bang  
 Of red-glared rockets blasting.  
 Then August lingers with its heat  
 That seems so...everlasting.

September, gold September comes.  
 The year is growing older.  
 October with sweet Halloween.  
 The nights grow dark and colder.

November smells of harvest,  
 Of turkey and Thanksgiving.  
 December comes with joy and light  
 To fill hearts of the living.

Each page I flip and see these things  
 Of days yet to come.  
 My calendar is a door to me,  
 An adventure just begun!

## Dear alumni,

It's raining and chilly outside but indoors the houses and also our university transforms into a warm, cozy Christmas setting with Christmas trees and candles. A special time of the year. Students have survived their first term of the year but are typically getting homesick these days.

Beginning of this month we have organized the international week. There were 22 visitors, representing universities from Latvia, France, Taiwan, US, Canada, Finland, Germany, Poland and Czech Republic. Over the last years we have changed our focus, aiming at offering study programmes together with partner universities instead of organizing international study programmes and promoting them in various countries at various partner universities. To develop and offer study programmes with partner universities is regarded to be more sustainable and is a great foundation for other joint activities. We prefer to work with a limited number of active partners and try to offer various activities together.

During the international week we also organized the international market and we used the opportunity to officially hand out our scholarships to the selected international students. We are happy that we have the opportunity to support international students to come over and study with us.

The international week was a fantastic week in which we strengthened our partnerships. Our partners were especially impressed with our practical training facilities. Over the last 5 years our school farm has been converted into a location where we do field research and create interesting training opportunities. Over the last

years we have developed a guide dog training centre, research is done on various farming systems and students test innovative agro technical systems and report back to companies on the outcomes. Next month we hope to open a new dairy processing training room and start to offer dairy processing courses for students and professionals. The developed products like yoghurt, cheese and butter will be sold on the farm.

2019 has been a fantastic year with great achievements for the organization, for our staff but also for our students. We hope that you as alumni can look back at such a fantastic year as well. May 2020 even treat you better! Merry Christmas and happy 2020!



Natasja Spaargaren  
 Head International Studies & Consultancy



## Aeres International week 2019

From 3-6 December International Office hosted International week. During this week we welcomed guests from all around the world: from Germany to Canada, from Latvia to the US, from Czech Republic to Taiwan! In total 25 representatives from partner universities across the globe!



The program started with guests arriving on Tuesday afternoon. They were introduced to the Aeres School Farm, met with Aeres colleagues from team DISC (Department of International Studies and Consultancy) and had a typical Dutch dinner. Next day the program continued in Almere, where guests were introduced to the Aeres university facility in Almere and got a chance to visit the International Horticultural Expo

terrain Floriade, which will take place in Almere from April-October 2022. Thursday came with a packed program: in the morning guests were giving guest lectures to both Dutch and International students. Afterwards guests could present their universities and minors to the Aeres students. In the afternoon the annual International market took place and 5 Holland Scholarships were awarded to the non-EU students. Holland Scholarship was

awarded by the Aeres International Student Fund, which in turn is supported by the local entrepreneurs in Dronten, the Municipality of Dronten and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

This scholarship offers a financial support for five non-EU students studying at Aeres University of Applied Sciences in Dronten and Almere. The International Market was a success as usual-students did a lot of work to surprise the taste buds of students and guests of International Week.

On Thursday international guests also had a unique opportunity to celebrate Sinterklaas - a beloved celebration of Dutch children when gifts are exchanged. Sinterklaas visited, and we could sing songs for him! It seems that international guests behaved well in 2019, as they all got presents from Sinterklaas!

Friday came fast-it was time to reflect and do the harvest of the week! Afterwards, all guests went for an excursion to explore Flevoland!

It was a busy week, but it was nice to meet and catch up with colleagues from partner universities. We can't wait for Aeres International week 2020! ■



Sinterklaas



International market





# Stefano Laudadio

2008/2009 INTERNATIONAL FOOD CHAIN MANAGEMENT

**Studied:** in 2008/2009 International Food Chain Management  
**Home University:** Tuscia University, Viterbo, Italy; Food Science and technology

## Do you remember what triggered you to come to Dronten in 2008/2009 and follow an international study program?

At that time I was already searching for an Erasmus project abroad. I wanted to go to the Netherlands, obviously to learn English. I always liked the country. And then mr. Schipper was attending one of the Erasmus meetings and he convinced us that Dronten is something different than any other destination in the Netherlands (*for instance Wageningen*). It sounded good enough to me.

## You studied in Dronten more than 10 years ago. If you think back at your study time in Dronten, what do you still remember about it?

It was probably the most important year in my life, to all of us international students. And I keep on repeating it to the students now as well. We moved away from our home towns, to a new country, different culture. When I was studying we were 150 international students, it was a very multi-cultural environment. We all lived together on the campus. It was a very stimulating environment, not just because of the things we learned but also from the human point of view.

## If you compare educational system in Italy with the one in the Netherlands – was it probably shocking how things were done in the Netherlands?

Yes, it was very different. It was a bit shocking for us to stand up in front of the class on the first day and presenting ourselves with very poor English (*back then it was quite poor to be honest*). The main difference between the Italian and Dutch educational systems is that fact that Dutch system in Dronten was very practical. In Italy we always have interviews with



teachers, you are asked a lot of theoretical questions, you are supposed to know a lot of theory. In Dronten it was totally different, we were working on business plans, simulations, presentations. Not a lot of theory, but a lot of practice.

## Do you still have friends from your study time in Dronten?

Yes, definitely. I still have a close contact with a few. But I know that I can send a message to anyone and they would reply.

## You graduated in 2009. What has happened since then and what are you doing now?

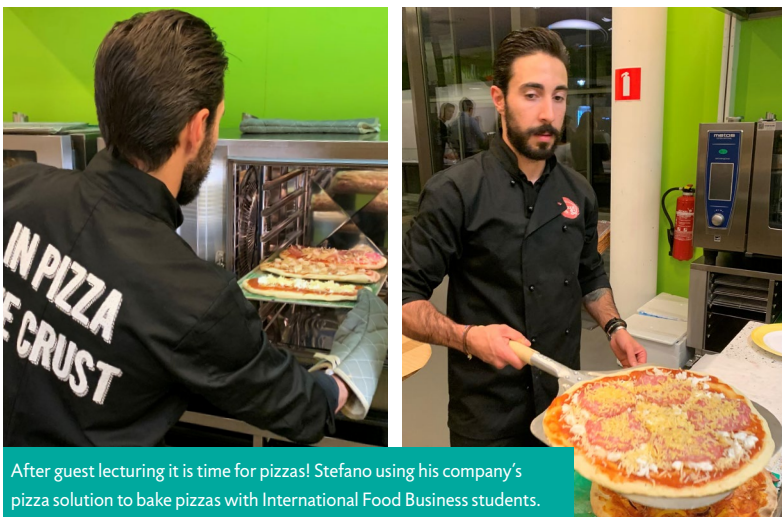
As part of my internship that I had to do for my studies in Dronten, I moved to Ireland back then. My internship tutor is actually now my business partner, we developed a company together. Basically from internship we started our own company. And at the moment that is what I am doing.

## Can you tell something more about your company?

The name of the company is PizzaSi. It is not restaurant. We supply a pizza solution for the hospitality industry. Our idea is to enable our customers (*hotels, restaurants, pubs, and cafes*) to prepare a proper Italian pizza without having to invest any money in equipment or pizza chef. We started in Ireland in 2009, after a couple of years we expanded to the UK, where I am based now. A couple of years ago we also expanded to BeNeLux. We have different companies/offices: one in Dublin and one in London. And one is also in the Netherlands. We have our own production site where we manufacture artisan pizza bases which is our core business. Of course I am biased to say that our products are good. But it is an artisan product that is meant to resemble the work of the pizza chef. It is an actual dough, stretched, in the size of a disc. You just have to add sauce, cheese and toppings and you bake it for 10 minutes.

## And that has to be done by the chefs in the restaurants?

Yes, correct. ►



After guest lecturing it is time for pizzas! Stefano using his company's pizza solution to bake pizzas with International Food Business students.



Stefano during the guest lecture about start up entrepreneurship with International Food Business students.

**Do you provide them with any recipes?**

Yes, we also do that. We provide also what we call PizzaSi service. When you product from us, you have access to this service, which includes equipment, maintenance of equipment, marketing support, staff training.

**Could you have ever imagined that after coming to Dronten and after your placement you would end up running your own company?**

Absolutely not. I have always known myself and that is probably the reason why I was driven enough to leave my country, friends and family. I had a feeling that entrepreneurship was a way for me. I have always been playing with idea of entrepreneurship, although I had no idea whatsoever what to do. And I did not have a particular field I was ready to start. I have always been involved in the food business: worked as a waiter for years during my studies. And as I was always involved in food, I knew that I might end up in food business. But pizza and PizzaSi actually came along by coincidence.

**Luckily we see you quite often at the University in Dronten. What brings you back?**

Every year I have a pleasure to be invited as a guest lecturer

teaching start-up entrepreneurship to the food business students. Now it's the third year I have been doing this.

**How does it feel to come back as a guest lecturer, as an entrepreneur who has to teach students?**

Dronten is not particularly entertaining city, it is quiet, it is definitely not your usual student city. But still, every time I am very touched to be here [in Dronten], after everything I have received here. It is good to come back every single time and it is good to share my story with the students (*I am not a teacher, I just share my story*). Hopefully some will be brave enough to embark the entrepreneurship journey. The ones that do not, that is absolutely fine. As long as they get the curiosity of trying to do more.

**What are your plans? What do you want to do more?**

It is probably a curse, but probably also something that helps: I am never satisfied! I try to wake up every day and think what can I do better this day? It can be related to our company, or personal life. What can we do better today? What can we improve? In PizzaSi we are trying to develop the company on an international level. We are trying to establish ourselves as an authority in what we do in the market where we operate. In the meanwhile we try to expand to the US and maybe the Middle East. Those would be the next steps for us.

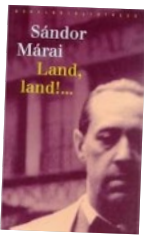
**New Year's wish to our students and alumni?**

Maybe it is a cliché, but more than anything it is important that everybody should try to look for what makes them happy. (*I do not really believe in life-work-balance thing*). When you have work that you are happy to do, you will always find a way to make things work out. There are commitments, of course, but you should not see work as something that you have to do to survive. If I have a wish, then it is for everybody to find something they are happy to do and they are happy to do it every single day. ■

## 5 things you probably did not know about .....Kees Schipper



**1.** I love sports and I have always been active in sports. Even nowadays I practise sports at least 2 times a week. Just before my study period in Leiden I was selected for the Dutch national championships gymnastics on behalf of the province of Zeeland, my region of origin.

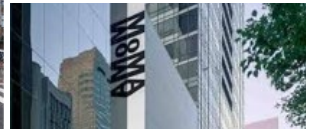


**2.** I have a passion for reading. There are so many books that I consider my favorites: Márai Sandor Land Land, Amin Maalouf Le naufrage des civilisations, Chaim Potok Davita's Harp, Garcia Márquez 100 years of solitude, etc. etc. When I am abroad I try to read a book from that country.

**3.** One of my hobbies is crossing Amsterdam on an old bicycle. Nothing more beautiful than cycling along the canals on a Sunday before 10 a.m. when most of the people are still asleep.



**4.** My favorite museums?

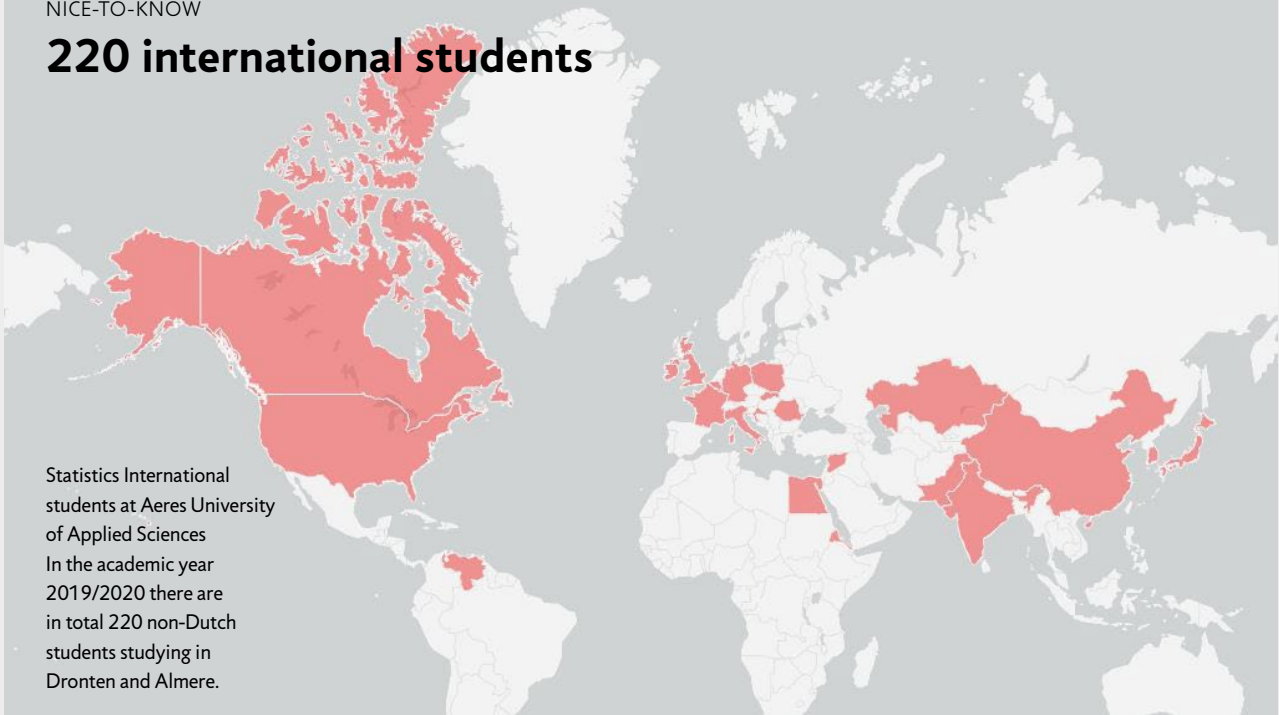


**5.** More than 10 of my students became my colleagues, international students as well as Dutch. Guess which colleagues were my students.



NICE-TO-KNOW

## 220 international students



Statistics International students at Aeres University of Applied Sciences  
In the academic year 2019/2020 there are in total 220 non-Dutch students studying in Dronten and Almere.



62 out of 220 students study a Dutch-taught program, whereas 158 follow an English-taught program. Moreover, there are 110 Dutch students studying an English-taught program.

In total, there are students representing 30 different nationalities!