

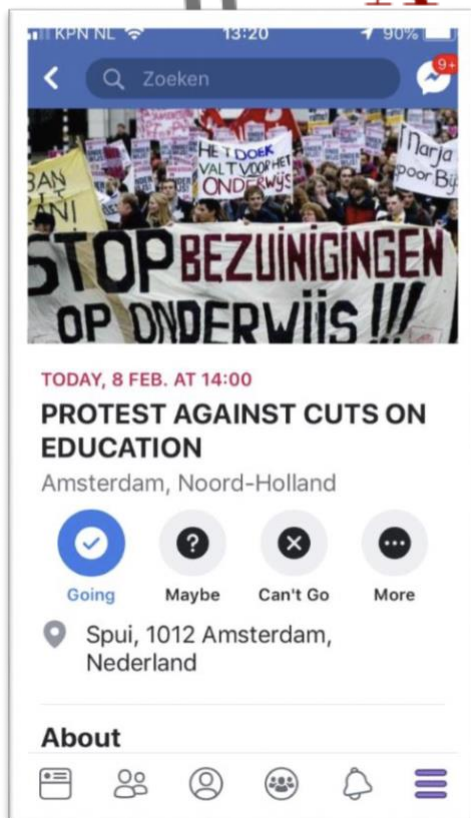
Student protest against Amsterdam University president

Mr Kroon is president of the board of Amsterdam University. Since his appointment in 2017, Mr Kroon has made large budget cuts: laying off academic staff, enlarging classrooms and selling Amsterdam University buildings for real estate value. Word got out that Mr Kroon has recently negotiated a salary raise. Effective from 1 March 2019, his annual salary would rise with – net – EUR 100.000.

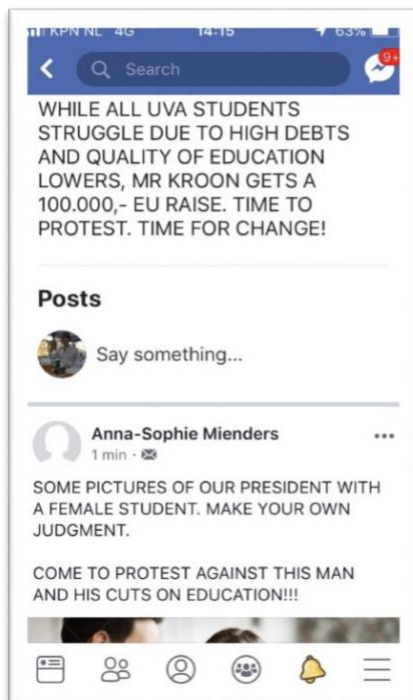
Students felt that this was a totally unfair matter: in essence a reward for stripping Amsterdam University of academic staff, good teaching and buildings. They decided to protest against it on 8 February 2018.

Anna-Sophie, Yasmine and Ahmed took the lead and organised a mass protest, for which they obtained the required licenses. On a special Facebook page, they encouraged as many students as possible to join the protest. At the same time, Anna-Sophie, Yasmine and Ahmed planned to take pictures of Mr Kroon with a female student.

Anna-Sophie was helped by her friend Fleur. Fleur persuaded Mr Kroon into having a cup of coffee in a bar during Mr Kroon's lunch break. Anna-Sophie, Yasmine and Ahmed created timing and angle for the pictures to make it look like Mr Kroon and Fleur were sitting together romantically, while Fleur tried to sit by Mr Kroon as close as possible. Fleur also managed to touch his leg a couple of times, which he seemed to enjoy. The pictures were better than they hoped for and perfectly showed the image they wanted to create.



A week before the planned protest, when 12.000 students had clicked 'attending' on the Facebook event, the pictures appeared on the Facebook page.



Links were quickly made and the pictures appeared on the Facebook page of Amsterdam University and websites like Dumpert. The pictures were often shared with hashtags such as #metoo, #believewomen – as this happened just after the Kavanaugh hearings. Of course, Mr Kroon had something to explain to his wife and two daughters, who were Fleur's age.

The strategy was effective. Even before the planned protest took place, the board of Amsterdam University decided to renegotiate the salary raise and the board decided to investigate the rumours of the affair between a board president and an university student. From the investigation, it became clear that Fleur set Mr Kroon up and worked together with the students who organised the protest. Despite the outcome of the investigation, Mr Kroon suffers severe reputation damage.

Furthermore, Mr Kroon feels humiliated: his privacy is infringed upon and he sues Anna-Sophie, Yasmine, Fleur and Ahmed. He wants them to be declared liable for privacy infringement and defamation. Further, he seeks compensation for the lost income of his salary raise and reputational damage suffered due to defamation.

Anne-Sophie, Yasmine, Fleur and Ahmed feel that they are not responsible: they were well within their rights to hold a protest for their case, also when making the – in their view: innocent – pictures.