

# New Generation of Academics Programme (NGAP) Newsletter

#2 July 2018

## Good news all round

Warm winter greetings to you all. Isn't it wonderful to see the dam levels rising and to imagine that the next summer season will not feature chronic water and drought anxiety.

I should start this newsletter with the fantastic news that the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) awarded UCT five new (Phase 4) NGAP posts. This was the maximum number of posts that could be awarded, so we are delighted. Currently the process to appoint five new NGAP lecturers is underway in the Faculty of Commerce (Economic Development and Information Systems), Faculty of Health Sciences (Biostatistics and Virology) and the Faculty of Science. When the process is concluded we shall have seventeen NGAP lecturers at UCT - verily constituting a proud new generation of academics at UCT.

In this issue we welcome Taahira Goolam Hoosen, recently appointed as a Phase three NGAP lecturer in Health Sciences Education and congratulate her on her achievement of being named in the *Mail and Guardian's* Top 200 Young South Africans. Well done, Taahira!

DVC Loretta Feris extends her welcome to the NGAP cohort and we report on the achievements and profiles of Amanda Mtya, Kentse Mpolokeng and Phindile Ntliziywana and on our first NGAP lunch for Heads of Departments, Mentors and Supervisors at the UCT Club. The final word is reserved for Musa Nxele who reflects on the DHET meeting in Pretoria at the end of May.



## A welcome from Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor Loretta Feris

From February 2018 the NGAP programme reported to my Transformation portfolio . It is an exciting change and aligns well with the DHET's aim with respect to NGAP, namely to drive the transformation of staffing at universities. Some of you are new to UCT. So firstly welcome. I look forward to meeting all of you and working with each and every one of you on the programme. Second, allow me to introduce myself. I have been an academic at UCT until fairly recently: situated in the Faculty of Law, teaching Environmental Law and heading up the institute of Marine and Environmental Law until the beginning of 2017 when I assumed the position of DVC: Transformation, including the portfolio of Student Affairs. This has been a natural fit as my scholarship in environmental law and human rights has driven my passion for social justice and heading up the transformation portfolio has simply meant steering that passion in a different direction.



Image: Independent On-Line (IOL)

I am excited about NGAP as it contributes to what I believe to be the heart of transformation at UCT; institutional culture change. Transformation at UCT is therefore about creating a university that is truly a pluriversal place, that reflects the many identities, ideologies and belief systems in a manner that includes and not alienates. This is an ideal that we should strive for in every aspect of the university, be it teaching and learning, research or our engagement with community. This also includes having a teaching staff that reflects a multiplicity of identities and world views and NGAP helps us to achieve that. I hope that you will see your role here at UCT as one in which you will strive to achieve success, not only your own individual success but the success of the university in achieving transformation and as such ensuring that it produces quality graduates and scholarship that can serve the country.

## Taahira Goolam Hoosen (Health Sciences Education)



Recently named Mail & Guardian's Top 200 Young South Africans for 2018 (<http://ysa.mg.co.za/2018/taahira-goolam-hoosen/>), Taahira is the new lecturer appointed in the Department of Health Sciences Education. She feels privileged to be a part of this new department and is determined to add her value. Born in Durban, Taahira is the eldest of three siblings whom are both in the Business Science sector. She had her eye to continue her tertiary education at the University of Cape Town and was successful in securing a full scholarship in 2009, however, due to her commitment to her family decided to stay and complete her undergraduate degree at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal. An opportunity knocked on her door for her to pursue her postgraduate studies and she moved to Cape Town in 2012 to complete her Honours degree. She has not looked back since then working her way and making her difference in Cape Town.

She always had an innate ability to empower others and had a keen interest in Medicine. She decided to start this journey through the BSc route at UKZN in hopes to join the Wits GEMP programme, but enjoyed the sciences so much that she

continued to do her Honours in Human Genetics at UCT to follow a Genetic Counselling career. Unfortunately, that door closed, and so, to return to what she loves doing i.e.: helping others through skills development, she took a gap year to expose herself to the education sector and completed her PGCE at UCT in 2013. She then returned to the Medical Sciences and completed her MSc in Haematology in 2017. She had joined the Mowla lab at the Faculty of Health Sciences investigating and characterizing microRNAs that are differentially expressed in HIV-associated Non Hodgkin's lymphomas. When the opportunity to upgrade to her PhD presented, she realized that merging her love for the sciences and academic development was more appealing and decided to progress towards her PhD at the Department of Health Sciences Education after her MSc. Her research is focused on the academic literacies practices of postgraduate students in the Health Sciences.

In conjunction with her studies, Taahira has worked part-time at UCT starting as a sub-warden at her alumni residence, Obz Square where she also chaired the academics committee. She was a Writing Consultant for the last 4 years working at both the Upper Campus centre and has been at the newly established FHS Writing Lab since its inception in 2015. She was also a writing mentor and facilitator on the suite of CHED postgraduate courses. In addition, she has been involved in the monitoring and evaluation of the 'Journeys Through Research Writing' course and part of the Transforming Journeys research team. Lastly, she worked from 2015 - 2017 as the Academic Logistics co-ordinator for the Residence Academic Development Committee's (RADC) living and learning programmes. All these positions allowed her to build crucial networks, relationships and learn about the UCT culture and explore the possibility of entering the world of academia. When the nGAP post was advertised, she knew she had to try her best to grab it with both hands.

Merging her passion for the medical sciences and academic development, particularly through academic literacies has been a dream position for Taahira. She loves being able to help students navigate the often strange and confusing world of the academic space through academic literacy support. As a lecturer placed within the FHS Writing Lab she believes that it is her responsibility to assist students and staff access the academic literacy practices and epistemology crucial for their success as both students and professionals. When she is not teaching during the day she is a Humanitarian with the voluntary role of Chief Operating Officer for the Humanitarians, an NPO and PBO focusing on innovative and sustainable means of skills development and empowerment.

## Welcome – the Third Phase has Landed.

A function to welcome the Phase 3 NGAP lecturers was held in the Mafeje Room in April. Professor Loretta Feris, DVC for Transformation welcomed the new appointees. She underscored the importance of NGAP for UCT's transformation vision saying that NGAP lecturers represented UCT's future and with the quality of staff appointed, this looked rosy indeed.

Robert Morrell provided some background to NGAP including the DHET's intent to have 80% of posts filled by black and/or female South Africans. In fact all posts have been filled by black applicants. In phases 1 & 2, 200 posts were filled at 26 Universities (with 24 posts that were awarded not being filled in Phase 1 and being made available in Phase 2). The gender split in Phase 1 was 55 female, 47 male. A new organisational development has been that NGAP now falls under DHET's University Capacity Development Plan. This seeks to reorient and focus support in the higher education sector. Each University receives a University Capacity Development Grant (UCDG) to fund research and teaching support and development activities.

The approach at UCT has been to build NGAP as a cohort (rather than as a group of individuals) and to this end, group activities such as quarterly meetings and writing retreats are organised. The idea is to link NGAP lecturers to one another so that new networks are created and an environment of collegiality and collaboration created.



Xolisa Guzula, Musa Nxele and Taahira Goolam Hoosen (*Picture - Nceba Lolwane*)

## Amanda Mtya in the News

Amanda Mtya (Construction Economics and Management) was recently featured in the first quarter issue of *Shape Shifter*, the official publication of the South African Council for the Project and Construction Management Professions (SACPCMP) [www.sacpcmp.org.za](http://www.sacpcmp.org.za). The focus of the article was on managing men in the context of constructing projects.



Amanda observes: “Managing the human element on construction projects still has to be one of the most challenging and exciting tasks for me. I am a people’s person and, as simple as that may sound, it is my biggest weapon. Managing diverse teams from numerous organisations can be daunting and without proper communication, everyone can pull into different directions. My main objective is to ensure that all efforts are directed towards the same goal effectively and efficiently. In my current role as lecturer, my main challenge is to attain student engagement. Construction Management is a very practical and hands-on discipline and most of my students still experience the disconnect between theory and application. The exposure and experience I have gained in industry adds value to my course content through practical illustration of concepts”.

Amanda is an active member of the SACPCMP’s Construction Management Development Committee (CMDC). “My involvement with the SACPCMP’s Construction Management Development Committee is one of my highlights as it has helped me understand the challenges facing the Construction Management discipline in SA”.

She traces her career back to an Education to Employment programme called Go for Gold which she attended while in Grade 11 at school. This led to a .BSc (Hons) in Construction Management, followed by three years working for NMC Construction Group. Her first job was in Transkei so she spent time working in Butterworth. She left her family behind which was emotionally tough but it left her with extra time to devote to her work. Her next job was in project management at Delta Built Environment Consultants in Cape Town followed by three years in Mahikeng in rural infrastructure development. In 2016 she became the the first recipient of the Honorary Ambassador Award at Go for Gold and was also appointed as a board member.

## Kentse Mpolokeng presents at the ASSA Conference



Kentse Mpolokeng (Division of Clinical Anatomy and Biological Anthropology) presented a poster at the 46<sup>th</sup> annual Anatomical Society of Southern Africa (ASSA) congress, Muldersdrift, in April. Her presentation was titled “*Identification of the orbital arterial vessels using stamp-pad ink on embalmed cadavers*” and was based on the research work that she undertook for her Masters degree at UFS. Her fellow presenters included Graham Louw (her current PhD supervisor at UCT) and her former UFS supervisors, Mathys (M J) Labuschagne and Henk (H J) Potgieter.

The presentation reported the results of research conducted on 118 human eyes from 59 bodies. The aim was to explore the layout of blood vessels in the eye by using a staining technique. An accurate identification of the arterial system was made possible. This will help eye surgeons to avoid intraoperative complications. The application of dye will also be useful in the training of anatomy for both undergraduate and postgraduate students.

Kentse had the company of UCT colleagues at the conference. Furthermore, as she comments, she was gratified to see the evolution of the discipline and the emergence of a new generation of academics.

“One of the highlights of the conference was that I saw most of the students that I have met when I started joining the society attending the conference in Bloemfontein in 2016. They are now lecturers at various universities and some through co-supervision of the student projects were showcasing their students’ research results”.



Left: Miss Kerri Keet, middle: Miss Kentse Mpolokeng, right: Dr. Victoria Gibbon (all from UCT)

## Professionalisation of local government management in SA

Phindile Ntliziywana has recently published another piece that profiles his expertise in the law of local government. His chapter will appear in a volume edited by De Visser, J; Chigwata, T and Kaywood, titled *Rethinking Local Government Transformation: Spatial Planning, Robust Governance and Sustainable Financing as Tools for Developmental Local Government* (Juta).

He notes that the majority of municipalities in South Africa are unable to deliver on their mandate despite an enabling legislative and policy framework, massive infusion of funds and substantial technical support. Many municipalities are dysfunctional. Phindile argues that for things to change, for core services to be delivered, local public administration must be professionalised. The fulfilment of the vision of developmental local government, which is the building block on which the reconstruction and development of our country and society will be based, is a pipedream without a professional organisation.

Only when all the components of professionalisation - competencies, norms and standards, professional independence and professional bodies - are implemented will the crisis of local government be resolved. Amongst the steps that need to be taken are appointing individuals on the basis of professional qualifications and knowledge. The code of professional ethics, the Batho Pele principles, and the Codes of Conduct for Municipal staff members must be enforced by recognised professional bodies in order to maximise human potential and ensure efficient, economic and effective use of resources. And managerial independence must be cushioned from interference.



Phindile presents his chapter at the South African Local Government Association Research Colloquium held in Cape Town on 28-29 March 2018. (Image supplied).

## NGAP Lunch - HoDs, Mentors and Supervisors

There are now 12 NGAP lecturers employed at UCT but they are scattered across all 7 faculties and none is in the same department. This means that they are geographically isolated from one another and run the risk of being socially and academically isolated too. But quarterly meetings and writing retreats provide an opportunity to overcome this danger. For the Heads of Departments, mentors and supervisors, on the other hand, there is little opportunity to meet colleagues with NGAP involvement. To address this we organised the first function that specifically caters for this critical constituency. A lunch was held at the UCT Club on 20 March. It was well attended. Amongst those in attendance were: Joel Chigada, Danwood Chirwa, Alan Cluff, Malcolm Collins, Laura Czerniewicz Geney Gunston, Suki Goodman, Cathy Kell, Mark Massyn, Maano Ramutsindela, Merle Sowman.



*(Picture - Nceba Lolwane)*

## Becoming part of a key to change the world



Image by Orionsante

The title of this article conjures a rather strange image: becoming *part* of a key? The world over, celebrations of Nelson Mandela's centenary are underway, to rekindle our common humanity, our hope for goodness, and our shared desire to change the world. One of the well-known proverbs suitable to be embraced as our collective conviction is Mandela's "education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." We are currently experiencing doors opening in higher education institutions. For how are doors opening without keys, and how are keys not weapons in this context, given that a weapon is a means of gaining an advantage in contested spaces? If education is a key and weapon, is not a teacher part of the key?

This was the affirmation and revival we enjoyed during a workshop on the New Generation of Academics Programme for newly appointed lecturers and mentors held in Johannesburg on 31 May 2018. The DHET inspired in us a sense of responsibility and esteem for this invaluable opportunity to be a part of a project of transforming our tertiary education institutions.

The workshop was also empowering, by generously disseminating information about the specs of the nGAP, about the institutional architecture, as well as clearly articulating how the academic fits and navigates the design. It is definitely a programme for us; a programme which also relies on our collective in making it work effectively and impactfully.

Given the sharing-oriented design of the workshop agenda, with various stakeholders represented in the delivery of information, there was a feeling of inclusivity and balance of perspectives. To risk singling out my favourite presentation, the talk on the role of mentors was extremely insightful and energising. We learned that this relationship is conceptualised to be stable, with a mentor appointed for a minimum of four years, to support both the short-term and long-term development needs of the mentee. Dr Cheryl Chamberlain, from Wits University, gave a beautiful presentation to this effect, emphasising that mentorship is about working with the 'whole' person.

At the end, what was remarkable is that everyone I spoke to commented, with agreement and enthusiasm, that the workshop was well worth the trip.

*Musa Nxele, the Nelson Mandela School of Public Governance.*

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