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Restore Africa's glory, Mbeki urges students

Hailed with a standing ovation in UCT's Jameson Hall, former president Thabo Mbeki bookended his 6 September address to the inaugural African Student Leaders' Summit last week with a cautionary tale – that of the destruction of powerful Carthage, a series of cities in Tunisia, by the Roman Empire in 146 BC.

Quoting a speech by his predecessor, Nelson Mandela, when he addressed the first Assembly of the Organisation of African Unity in Tunisia in 1994, Mbeki spoke of how the sacking of Carthage marked the end of African independence. Now, more than two millennia later, the challenge is to restore Africa to its former glory, said Mbeki.

"I dare say that as our student leaders you should take up the call that Nelson Mandela made, and therefore say to yourselves, setting this as your task – Carthage must be rebuilt."

There is plenty for students to do then, suggested Mbeki. As additions to Africa's intelligentsia, students must pose questions about their society, and ask what should be done to improve it.

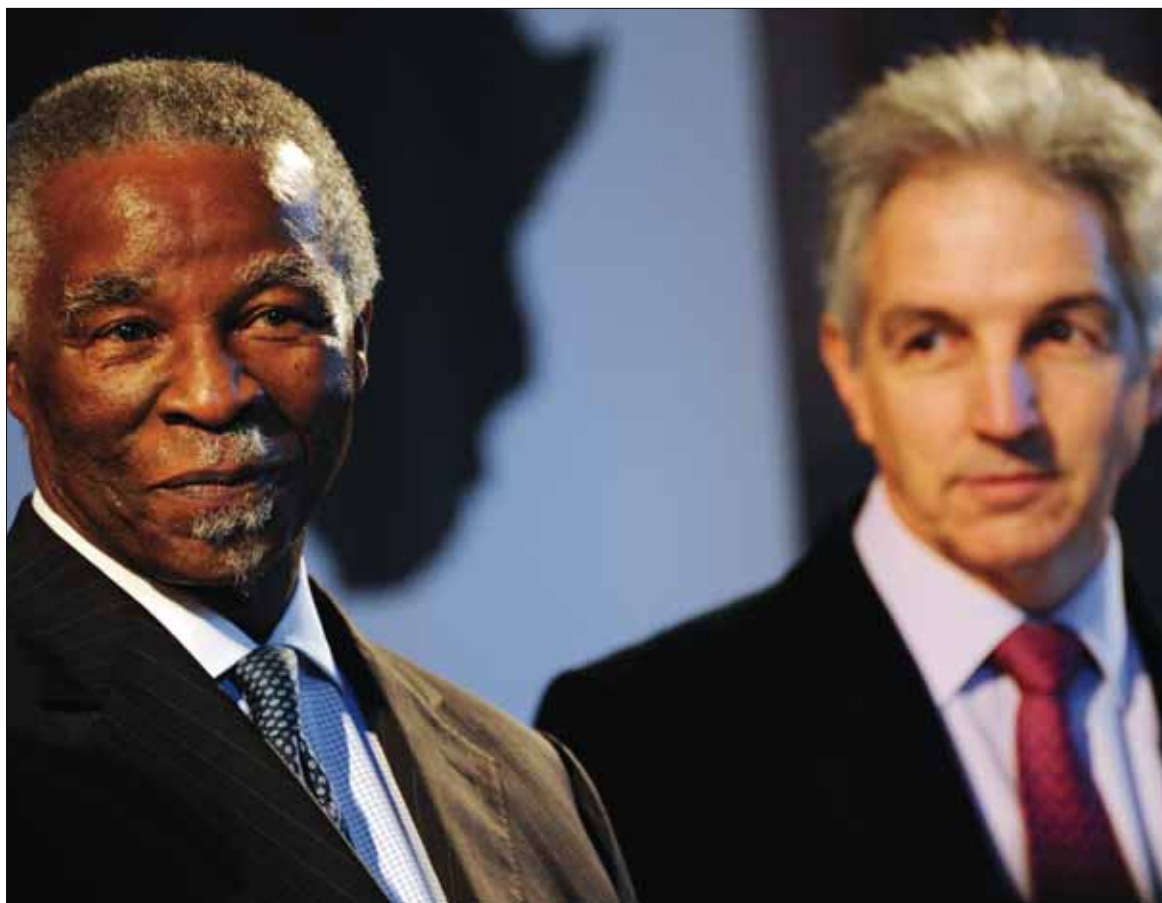
But he urged them to focus on the concerns of higher education, the renewal of the African university,

and the expansion and accumulation of the continent's intellectual capital. African universities are under siege, he suggested, with poor infrastructure and libraries and a shortage of staff counted among their shortcomings.

Even more troubling is the brain drain from Africa, Mbeki noted. He cited case studies from Ghana (which according to one estimate had lost more than 42% of its educated labour force by 2000), South Africa, Zambia and Malawi. That means billions of rands lost in investment in professionals.

But there are other concerns as well; notably, how African studies is taught in a post-apartheid academy, and how students and academics relate to the concerns of the masses, he added.

"Thus to position the African university as an agent of change will require that you, our student leaders, take it as your special responsibility to engage in struggle for the renewal of the African university, the sole institution which will provide Africa with the critically important intellectual capital without which it cannot achieve its renaissance." (To listen to the pod cast go to <http://www.uct.ac.za/news/multimedia/sound/>) **MP**



Agents of change: Speaking at the inaugural African Student Leaders' Summit, former president Thabo Mbeki – photographed with vice-chancellor Dr Max Price – urged students to play their role in the renaissance of Africa.

Lively debate on admissions policy

Opinions and loyalties were divided as panellists and audience members expressed their views on UCT's admission policy at a debate hosted at the Centre for African Studies on 2 September.

While most agreed that some form of redress is needed in South African society (and in who gets a seat in a UCT lecture theatre), there was no such like-mindedness on the afternoon's bone of contention – the use of race as a proxy for disadvantage in UCT's admissions policy.

On the panel, vice-chancellor Dr Max Price reiterated the university's stance that for now, race serves as the best proxy, as the vast majority of South Africa's disadvantaged are black.

In contrast, Professor Neville Alexander, Price's opposite number in recent media debates on the topic, argued that the use of old labels would undermine any effort to create a non-



Counterpoint: Panellists (from left) Sizwe Mpofu-Walsh, Archbishop Njongonkulu Ndungane, VC Dr Max Price and Prof Neville Alexander.

racial, multicultural South Africa, and instead retrench racial identity and racial prejudice.

In turn, Sizwe Mpofu-Walsh (president of the Students' Representative Council) supported using race as a proxy for a while, saying that racial schisms run so deep that even black students fortunate enough to have attended an academically respected

school would not automatically shake off all disadvantage.

Professor David Benatar then suggested that the years-long debate has now progressed to a stage that even proponents of the race-as-proxy approach are uncomfortable with it, and singled out some of what he called the "distasteful" and potentially "dangerous" practices of racial classification at UCT.

Finally, the chair of Council, Reverend Njongonkulu Ndungane, drew from his own pastoral experiences to underscore the value that black students and parents place on a spot at a university.

Session moderator Judge Dennis Davis then cross-examined the panellists. How could South Africa ever realise its ambitions of creating a non-racial society while still asking people to apply apartheid-era classifications to themselves, he asked Price.

On the other hand (he asked Alexander), if the university did nothing and did not use race as a proxy, would it not end up as the same "pristine white university" that he (Davis) experienced in his days as a student? And why should a black student and a white student from a good school not be measured by the same yardstick, he challenged Mpofu-Walsh.

While answers were few (listen to

the podcast for some more questions and suggestions), Price did point out that UCT is working on a new measure for disadvantage, and could well implement such a measure within the next few years.

Summing up, Davis commended the university for staging the discussion.

"But quite frankly, what is absolutely clear to me from this debate is that we've got a long way to go before we can actually get some consensus on how we resolve the problems of the past and move forward.

"The more debates we have at this university on these issues, the more we become a university community."

(Listen to the pod cast, view the video or read the transcription of the debate at http://www.uct.ac.za/news/multimedia/stream_video/series/)

Morgan.Morris@uct.ac.za



Alice Walker inspired and saddened by South Africa

“Steve Biko was an inspiration because he fully understood that the foundation of any true liberation was self love.”

Delivering the 11th Steve Biko Memorial Lecture to a packed Jameson Hall on 9 September, Pulitzer Prize-winning author Professor Alice Walker drew on her poetry, personal history and the inspirational role of the South African liberation struggle to disenfranchised people around the world.

The title of Walker’s lecture, *Coming to See You Since I was Five Years Old: An American poet’s connection to the South African soul*, refers to her memory of learning the future South African national anthem from her eldest sister, a college student at the time.

“We were the only children who were taught this song in our highly segregated, deep Southern town in Georgia,” said Walker, “and *Nkosi Sikelel’ iAfrika* has stayed with me for the last 60 years.

“I have taken you, your spirit, the spirit of Steve Biko, of Winnie Mandela, of Nelson Mandela, of the children of Sharpeville, completely, into the very marrow of my bones. In



Past and present: VC Dr Max Price with Pulitzer Prize-winning author Professor Alice Walker who delivered the 11th Steve Biko Memorial Lecture.

our own struggles to end American apartheid, you have been with us.”

But Walker’s tone was angry and cheerless when she spoke about present-day South Africa, its corrup-

tion, crime, violence and specifically, its president.

“It is with so much sadness that one reads about South Africa in recent news. I am unable to compre-

hend how you now have a president who has three wives and 20-odd children. A president who has been accused of atrocious acts, and who seems to have little of the restraint

in his personal life that would mean dignity and respect accorded to his people.

“Was Mandela’s decades of incarceration and Biko’s torture and death for this?”

People have forgotten their interconnectedness and worth, said Walker, and South Africa’s leaders have shown themselves to be obsolete.

Walker argued that we must therefore learn to lead ourselves, re-embrace conscience-raising poetry, and lose our attachments to gadgets that drown out our inner voice.

“About this, Biko was right,” said Walker. “Once your consciousness changes, so does your existence.”

Introducing Walker was vice-chancellor Dr Max Price, who apologized to those celebrating Eid ul-Fitr and Rosh Hashanah for the lecture’s timing.

“We try to hold the lecture very close to the anniversary of the death of Steve Biko (12 September). I ask your apology, but I also want to take the opportunity to wish our colleagues a healthy and successful year ahead,” said Price.

Chris.McEvoy@uct.ac.za

Hard-to-find ecology debates now in online database



Rare knowledge: Attending the the Sawyer/PERC Contested Ecologies Database launch were (from left) DVC Prof Crain Soudien, Dr Lesley Green and DVC Prof Danie Visser.

The latest contribution to UCT’s Afropolitan vision is a new database of ecological knowledge, launched on 30 August.

The Sawyer/Programme for the Enhancement of Research Capacity (PERC) Contested Ecologies Database makes available neglected, dispersed and rare literature that offers alternative perspectives on ecology.

Comprising over 200 articles on contestations over knowledge from scholars in the global South (specifically Africa, Asia and Latin America), the database was produced by Dr Lesley Green, co-ordinator of the Sawyer Seminar Series, and a small team of researchers in UCT’s Department of

Social Anthropology.

“The project began when we needed to access ongoing debates about knowledge for the Sawyer Seminar *Knowledges, Ways of Knowing and the Post-Colonial University*,” explains Green. “It was incredibly slow going using existing databases. Many of the articles we needed were published in journals we didn’t have, and a number of authors were largely unknown and hard to find on Google.”

But while a fellow at Harvard in 2005, Green had accumulated a “huge amount” of material that needed to be organised. Researchers Jess Auerbach, Jennifer Grant and Sven Ragaller helped Green build the database from

this material.

“It’s a small beginning, so there are some gaps,” says Green, “but it is something that we hope to keep updating as we go. I hope that colleagues who find it useful will reciprocate by loading similar articles they find of interest so we can strengthen scholarly networks in the south, where there are some fascinating debates going on.”

The Sawyer/PERC Contested Ecologies Database is available on the Vula website. Access to the site requires a password, which can be obtained from Sven.Ragaller@uct.ac.za.

Chris.McEvoy@uct.ac.za

International lecture series for computational science

Renowned chemist Professor Sason Shaik visited UCT to launch the Scientific Computing International Lecturer Series (SCILS).

Director of the Lize Meitner-Minerva Centre for Computational Quantum Chemistry at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in Israel, Shaik delivered a number of lectures and hosted hands-on sessions during his four-day visit.

A relatively new discipline, computational science is yet to have a precise definition agreed upon. But in lay terms, the field involves methods for using supercomputers to study scientific problems, complementing both theory and experimentation components in a scientific investigation.

“The SCILS programme originated because scientific computing is strong at UCT, although this is not generally true for the rest of South



Specialist skills: Prof Sason Shaik (right), who launched UCT’s Scientific Computing International Lecturer Series, with Prof Kevin Naidoo.

Africa,” explains Professor Kevin Naidoo, head of scientific computing in UCT’s Centre for High Performance Computing.

“The idea is to have prominent people in the field visit UCT to interact with both students and staff,” said Naidoo.

Shaik presented a public lecture

to undergraduate chemistry students on 23 August, titled *Chemistry: A central pillar of human culture*, and a special lecture aimed at academic staff and postgraduates, titled *Cytochrome P450 and its Reactivity Patterns: What a versatile catalyst!*, on 24 August.

Chris.McEvoy@uct.ac.za

Social Anxiety and Your Brain!

Brain imaging study conducted by the Department of Psychiatry

- About?** This study aims to investigate which areas of the brain are involved with Social Anxiety
- Who?** Men and women, between 18 and 30 who are right handed and experience a great deal of anxiety in social situations (like speaking in public, or when dating).
- What?** The study involves talking with a clinician and undergoing a brain scan

Interested? Please contact

Coenie Hattingh

coenie.hattingh@uct.ac.za
(021) 404 5482

Neo-colonialism deepening – Odora-Hoppers

Professor Catherine Odora-Hoppers, who holds the Chair of Development Education at the University of South Africa, does not mince her words, and her talk at the start of the inaugural African Student Leaders' Summit set the tone for the five-day programme. (See lead article on page 1.)

Odora-Hoppers, a prominent scholar and policy expert, warned student leaders from around the continent that networking alone wouldn't resolve Africa's problems. They also need a shared commitment to fix things.

The first level of leadership is in thought, she said, "and good thoughts contain good actions". Authority, Odora-Hoppers continued, is not about "having a gun stuck in your waist", but in demonstrating it, and acting in the interest of all humanity.

Turning to her topic of the day, *The United Nations and African Millennium Goals: How education can be developed to include traditional knowledge*, Odora-Hoppers spoke of what she termed the "gross disparities and intensifying of the north-south

divide". Neocolonialism, "an ulcer that meets Africans in all corners", is not only active, but is maintained and is deepening.

As a result, 20% of the northern minority has 82.7% of the world's gross national product, 81.2% of world trade, 94% of all commercial lending, 80% of all domestic savings, 80% of domestic investment, and 94% of all research and development.

"These things did not just happen because God said so. They happened from a careful and systematic strategy of aligning human resources, land and mindsets. Eighty-six countries serve the people of Europe, not because they are smart, but because of a system of organised violence dressed up as progress."

Odora-Hoppers said African society had lost out completely in the collapsing of all other forms of learning and education systems into one education system, the Western model, collapsing this further into the "narrow process" of schooling.

"The neo-liberal paradigm has now provided the practical tools for the



Winds of change: Prof Catherine Odora-Hoppers addresses student leaders at the inaugural African Student Leaders' Summit. The summit was funded by a grant from the Vice-Chancellor's Strategic Fund.

final burial of African society."

But it's not all doom and gloom.

Odora-Hoppers said China, India,

South Africa and Brazil are forming a new front to push for a new agenda in the transformation of global relations.

"There is a new episode in global relations and you will be part of that drama," she told students. **MP**

Corpse-measuring method gets new life



A new device set to revolutionise how forensic pathologists at crime scenes estimate a body's time of death is the brainchild of Dr Siphon Mfolozi of UCT's Division of Forensic Medicine.

The imaginatively-named NecroChronometer – still in its alpha stage of development – took second place at the National Innovation Competition, an event held every two years by the Technology Innovation Agency and the Department of Science and Technology.

According to the competition's rules,

Crime science: Dr Siphon Mfolozi is the inventor of the prize-winning NecroChronometer.

the R200 000 cash prize will be divided between research funding and commercialising the device once complete.

Mfolozi explains that the NecroChronometer uses three tried-and-tested methods to calculate time of death, namely tympanic membrane (found in the ear) temperature, liver temperature and the concentration of potassium in the corpse's eye fluid.

But the NecroChronometer's claim to innovation is that it combines all three methods, as well as factoring in climate and weather variables, such as wind speed and humidity, which affect the cooling rate of the corpse.

Looking like something out of a 1960s Star Trek episode, the NecroChronometer comprises three probes and a retro-futuristic handheld reader, which includes an anemometer for reading wind speed and a hygrometer for air humidity.

"It's only a static model, so it's still a bit more bulky than I would like," says Mfolozi.

Despite its appearance, the working model will be at one with technology. Bluetooth will transmit data wirelessly from the corpse's probes to the handheld device, and the NecroChronometer will be able to connect to the internet from anywhere on the planet to download weather history for the area.

"The plan is to combine all these factors to give the most accurate reading possible," says Mfolozi proudly.

But although it has a patent pending, the device is yet to be tested. Mfolozi is confident that this next stage in the birthing of the NecroChronometer will be successful.

"There's nothing magical about it," he says modestly. "It's just science."

Chris.McEvoy@uct.ac.za

TB workshop poses thorny question

The controversial question of whether or not to incarcerate patients with drug-resistant tuberculosis came under the spotlight at a workshop held at the Faculty of Health Sciences from 3 to 5 September.

Workshop participants heard from a number of experts that valid medical concerns about risk to the community had to be weighed up against the ethical and human rights of patients.

One of the organisers of the event, Associate Professor Keertan Dheda, wrote in two recent articles in *The Lancet* that patients with extensively drug-resistant (XDR) tuberculosis have poor treatment outcomes.

"Often, these patients have high-grade resistance, are not surgical candidates, and have received 12 months of inpatient therapy but continue to have positive cultures," reads one excerpt. "Among these patients, acute ethical dilemmas arise. Should they be discharged into their communities? If so, should treatment be suspended, to prevent further acquisition of resistance? Should they be isolated from society; to whom they pose a threat?"

He writes that discharging infectious and incurable patients back into

the community might be criticised, "but are there any alternative options in resource-poor settings?"

"Although incarceration of patients who do not comply with treatment has been used in countries such as the US, resource-poor countries often have an inadequate legal framework and no suitable facilities to deal with such patients."

Dheda says that there is an "urgent need" to develop better drugs to treat XDR-TB.

"New diagnostic algorithms must be developed, ensuring that everyone is tested for drug resistance."

Furthermore, there has been a sharp increase in the number of health care workers who have been diagnosed with XDR-TB, and Dheda recommends that all health care workers with suspected TB be given rapid MDR and XDR-TB tests, to expedite their treatment.

Law expert and Research Fellow at UNISA, Professor Christa van Wyk, told the workshop that if a person was diagnosed with drug-resistant TB and refused voluntary intervention, a health care provider or head of a health establishment could apply for a court order to compel such a person to be medically



Treatment dilemma: Patients with extensively drug-resistant (XDR) tuberculosis have poor treatment outcomes, Assoc Prof Keertan Dheda wrote in two recent articles in *The Lancet* focusing on drug-resistant TB globally and in the developing world.

examined, admitted to a health establishment, treated and isolated.

Van Wyk told the workshop the head physician of the department in which the person was isolated was authorised to annul the decision as soon as the conditions for mandatory action were no longer present, or the person agreed to voluntary interventions

The courts, she pointed out, were already overburdened. **MP**

The Centre for Conflict Resolution, Cape Town, South Africa invites you and members of your organisation to a public dialogue seminar

IS PRESS FREEDOM UNDER THREAT IN SOUTH AFRICA

SPEAKER

Mr Nicholas Dawes

Editor

Mail and Guardian

Date: Tuesday, 21 September 2010 • Time: 17H30 to 19H00

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All are welcome and entry is free. Kindly RSVP for seating purposes.



African graduates struggle to find employment – survey

The finding in a recent study that even African graduates who have graduated from historically white universities (HWI) are less likely to find employment than their white counterparts is somewhat unexpected, says UCT's Professor Haroon Borhat.

Speaking at the first of the revived Open Planning Forums of the Institutional Planning Department (IPD) on 30 August, Borhat and Natasha Mayet – both of the Development and Policy Research Unit (DPRU) – drew attention to some of the highlights from a 2009 Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) study on student retention and graduation destination, particularly a section conducted by the IPD. That research looked at what has happened to some 5 491 students who graduated from seven South African universities, including HWIs and historically black institutions (HBI), at the end of 2002. (UCT did not form part of the study.)

In keeping with recent trends, researchers found that overall, 66% of white students in this cohort had graduated by 2002, far more than the 39% of Africans. And that African

non-completion rates are significantly higher at HBIs (62%) than at HWIs (37%), particularly for African women (71%).

What does stand out is the figure that at the time of the survey in 2004, 42% of African graduates from HWIs had not found work – just higher than the 40% of Africans from HBIs. These numbers were also a far cry from the 10% of whites from HWIs and 6% of whites from HBIs who were still unemployed by 2004.

"The notion persists that if you control for a range of variables, including household and parental effects, then Africans who go through the same degree, the same course of study and at the same institution as whites have a lower probability of finding employment," Borhat cautiously pointed out.

That said, he noted that the study had many shortcomings. It was at best a once-off snapshot, and more universities would need to be included in a future study to see if these trends are persistent. (For example, the IPD's Jane Hendry reported that African



Calling the future: Prof Haroon Borhat (left), DVC Prof Crain Soudien and Natasha Mayet at the forum hosted by the Institutional Planning Department.

graduates from UCT are far more likely to find employment than their white classmates.)

The full report of the HSRC study,

published by HSRC Press as *Student Retention and Graduate Destination: Higher education and labour market access and success*, can be down-

loaded from www.hscrepress.ac.za/product.php?productid=2272&freedownload=1.

Morgan.Morris@uct.ac.za

Obs community improvement project takes to the streets

UCT's R3.5 million investment in combating crime and grime and dealing with the complexities of homelessness in surrounding areas took physical shape on 1 September with the first deployment of security patrols and cleaning staff taking to the streets.

This was the public launch of the Groote Schuur Community Improvement District (GSCID), a project four years in the planning, with the aim of cleaning up the business areas (and later, residential areas) bordering Main Road, from the South African Breweries in Newlands to Anzio Road in Observatory.

The new cleaning crew is provided by Straatwerk Ophelp, who provide



G/Crime busters: Attending the GSCID launch were (from left) Antony Davies, John Critien and DVC Prof Thandabantu Nhlapo.

rehabilitation and job creation for the

homeless. After a tender process, Orbis

Security Solutions were appointed to provide the new security patrols.

Speaking at the launch function, Antony Davies (CEO of the GSCID) thanked UCT for its "massive investment" in the pioneering project.

"This unique partnership shows the value that UCT places on good neighbourliness," said Davies. "It also shows a commitment to addressing the crime and grime concerns of the community."

Deputy vice-chancellor Professor Thandabantu Nhlapo said the project was of immediate interest to UCT, because although crime has been lowered significantly on campus, the crime problem in its peripheral areas

has resulted in the murders of UCT students and staff.

"Occasionally it's my job to announce a death to relatives, and believe me, you don't ever want to do that. It's the most gut-wrenching thing to do."

UCT is also upgrading the GSCID offices in Shell Court, Mowbray "as part of UCT's commitment to urban renewal," says John Critien, executive director of the Properties and Services Department.

"The university is very serious about the upliftment of the area it serves," said Critien. "We want to be a part of real change."

Chris.McEvoy@uct.ac.za

Lecturer to teach project management in Europe



Dr Kosheek Sewchurran of UCT's Department of Information Systems has been named as one of only 20 international scholars – from a pool of some 1 600 applicants – to win one of this year's European Union Erasmus Mundus scholarships. Named after the famed Dutch philosopher Desiderius Erasmus, said to be the most influential humanist of the Northern Renaissance, the scholarship will allow Sewchurran to travel to Italy, Scotland and Sweden, where he will teach students enrolled for their master's in strategic project management. The Erasmus Mundus Programme aims to globalise European education, and Sewchurran will hope to breathe some African ideas into the study of

project management in the three countries. The practice of project management in Africa – think the countless service-delivery issues – could well reshape classic project management, he says. Take, for example, new information-systems projects here. "You not only affect the technology, you literally affect the culture, the way people work, the things they should value – you affect it at a very deep, cultural level." These are the lessons Sewchurran will teach as he spends a total of three months over the next two years at Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh, Scotland; Politecnico di Milano in Milan, Italy; and Umea University in Umea, Sweden.

Morgan.Morris@uct.ac.za

Applications for 2011 close soon

The deadlines for 2011 applications are fast approaching, and prospective students are urged to get their applications in soonest. In two weeks, on 30 September, it will be the last day for applications for undergraduate study. Postgraduate students have until the end of October to get their applications in. These students should check deadlines with their faculties. UCT has implemented an online application system to facilitate the process. The new system is an extension of PeopleSoft, a student administration system widely used by education institutions.

PROGRAMME FOR ENHANCEMENT OF RESEARCH CAPACITY (PERC)

Call for grant applications in the African Research Project on Knowledge Production

The Programme for the Enhancement of Research Capacity (PERC) is due to award further grants in its African Research Project on Knowledge Production and calls for new applications. To date six grants of R150 000 each have been made and a further two (of R150 000) are offered in this call.

All academic staff are eligible. Applicants should be engaging in collaborative, cross disciplinary research and will need to demonstrate that their research will contribute to this knowledge project which raises the broad question:

How is knowledge produced within a broad African, Diasporic and local South African context?

The purpose of the grants is to stimulate research that is in line with the University's Afropolitan vision and leads to the construction of new knowledge paradigms, steeped in theory and practice. The grants will support research in all fields that contributes towards shifting the lenses from Eurocentric to African models of scholarship, while recognising that both African and European experiences are multiple and mixed. Research into the nature of knowledge itself, therefore, will be supported.

- Successful applicants must produce two articles in accredited journals (or the equivalent).
- They should demonstrate the participation of postgraduate students/ post doctoral fellows in their research project.
- They should run at least one workshop in the research office open to participants across the campus.
- It is important that the composition of research teams reflects demographic diversity.
- As much supporting evidence as possible needs to be supplied and this should include the Curriculum Vitae of the applicant as well as proposed team members.

Prior to application, expressions of interest should be directed to Professor Robert Morrell (robert.morrell@uct.ac.za with a copy to Judith.Rix@uct.ac.za).

Final applications should reach Judith Rix (Judith.Rix@uct.ac.za) electronically on or by 15 November 2010.

New light on dark energy

Points of view and accents were equally wide-ranging when international scholars met at *Beyond the Concordance Model*, a workshop hosted by UCT's Astrophysics, Cosmology and Gravity Centre at the Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Studies at the end of August.

The centre's co-director, Professor Peter Dunsby, had gathered a roomful of some of the brightest minds in cosmology to pitch (from an assortment of approaches and schools of thought) alternative models to what's known as concordance, or the standard model of cosmology. This model starts off with the Big Bang but is now in flux as cosmologists and astronomers struggle with a universe that is made up primarily (all of 95%, by some calculations) of two forms of matter that fit snugly into models and observations but which no-one has been able to explain or identify – dark energy and dark matter.

Not surprisingly, not everyone swears by this model. But as these dissenters are usually a muffled fringe, Dunsby thought it was time for them to air their views.

"I've deliberately brought together

people who are looking at challenging and questioning some of the basic assumptions and tenets of the standard model," he says.

So, over the five days of the gathering, more than 20 speakers offered some cutting-edge models – involving modified gravity, inhomogeneous cosmologies, backreaction and other alternatives – that could explain an expanding universe without dark energy. That raises questions about some of the fundamentals that graduate students in the centre have been taking for granted for many years.

"In terms of solving the equations that describe the evolution of the universe, we like it," says doctoral student Sean February, "but in terms of 'does it make sense?', no."

The workshop, added fellow doctoral student Anne Marie Nzioki, is a helpful learning curve. "This is very non-standard, but it helps you understand the standard model better," she says.

The one who got perhaps the biggest kick out of the meeting was master's student Hassan Bourhous. "I've never been happy with the standard model or anything standard," he



Learning curve: Cosmology students Anne Marie Nzioki, Hassan Bourhous and Sean February were some of the students who rubbed shoulders with thinkers in the field.

jokes, "and if it turns out to be wrong, we learn from it."

There would be no consensus or new model emerging from the workshop, explains Dunsby, but it would perhaps lay the groundwork

for a viable alternative. Or at least get cosmologists thinking along new lines.

"So if we go away with a sense," said Dunsby a few days into the meeting, "of what the different competing alternatives are and what the problems

are that we have to address, and if we can walk away with the formation of an international research network addressing these issues, that would be very important."

Morgan.Morris@uct.ac.za

Brainy neurosurgery at the foot of Africa

Even in a field as technically and technologically demanding as neurosurgery, and one in which most innovations hail from Europe and the US, South Africans are blazing new paths.

That's not too startling, said Professor Graham Fieggen, the Helen and Morris Mauerberger Professor of Neurosurgery in UCT's Division of Neurosurgery, when he delivered his inaugural address in August. As Fieggen indicated in his lecture, *Brain Matters: Neurosurgery in a developing country*, the earliest records of surgery on the brain were found in North Africa. These are 10 000-year-old skulls bearing the marks of trephination – in which holes are made in the skull of a living person – and the papyrus on which Imhotep (the Egyptian physician who lived in the 27th century BC) recorded injuries of the spine and head. In the case of these injuries, Imhotep (considered by some to be possibly the greatest of all physicians) would prescribe that no action be taken, on the grounds that it would be futile.

Not so the treatments of Cape Town neurosurgeons at Groote Schuur and the Red Cross Children's Hospitals in recent years, declared Fieggen.

Take for example their work in the area of traumatic brain injury (TBI), very common in South Africa. "It is not widely appreciated that trauma is the number one cause of death for South Africans between the ages of four and 18, and more than half of these deaths are due to brain injury," said Fieggen. "One can summarise this data in the simple but appalling statement that the risk for a South African child of dying from a head injury is eight times that of his counterpart in the USA."

But with some clinical and management interventions, Fieggen reported, Red Cross has reduced its mortality rate for TBI (which stood at over 40% in the 1990s) to around 25% in 2005 and, today, to 10%. They pulled off this remarkable feat through three innovations – the practice of the once-controversial technique of decompressive craniectomy,



A cut above: As Prof Graham Fieggen demonstrated, South African neurosurgeons have been pushing the envelope in their field.

tomy, in which surgeons remove part of the skull to make space for a swelling brain; consolidating the various intensive care units at the hospital into a single unit; and finally, by

introducing multimodal monitoring of the brain, ie monitoring the recovery of an injured brain using a number of indicators rather than just one.

In addition, South African neurosurgeons at these hospitals have been making breakthroughs in the treatment of epilepsy through hemispherectomies, in which an entire hemisphere of the brain is removed or disconnected. And in the treatment of spasticity, which afflicts children with cerebral palsy, they've recorded notable successes with a procedure known as selective dorsal rhizotomy, in which selected nerve roots in the spinal cord are severed.

These and other examples illustrate the role that neurosurgeons do and can play in Africa, said Fieggen. But there are obstacles – the shortage of trained neurosurgeons, poor infrastructure, linguistic and cultural barriers, and the lack of research funding among them. On the other hand, UCT and other South African institutions are doing their bit to swell the ranks of neurosurgeons on the continent by providing training to doctors from

other countries, and scientists are developing technology that is appropriate to conditions in Africa.

Things are also looking up in the Western Cape and at UCT, said Fieggen. The province boasts a high-functioning healthcare system and a number of well-respected experts, collaborations are afoot between the public and private sectors, and there are cross-fertilisation opportunities because of the UCT Private Academic Hospital sitting on the doorstep of training facility Groote Schuur Hospital. These factors bode well for the future of neurosurgery at the university and in the region, noted Fieggen.

"This will enable us to retain and grow the expertise we currently enjoy; develop the state-of-the-art infrastructure we need in terms of clinical space, imaging, operating theatres and even shared academic space; ensure we can train colleagues adequately; and serve as a springboard for translational research, as well as nurturing a greater interest in basic neuroscience research."

Morgan.Morris@uct.ac.za

POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH FELLOWS

SA investment companies not quite green-savvy

Dr Stephanie Giamporcaro joined the Environmental Policy Research Unit (EPRU), part of the School of Economics, as a Postdoctoral Research Fellow in March 2009. She hails from France, where she headed research into socially responsible investment at Novethic, a Paris-based centre, while pursuing her studies at the University of Paris V, Sorbonne, where she completed her PhD in sociology on responsible investment approaches in France in 2006. In South Africa, her research keeps along the same tack as she investigates the implementation of environmentally responsible investment (ERI) approaches in the country. To this end, she's looking at how innovative finance tools such as socially responsible

investment funds, greens funds or carbon funds are being implemented, it at all. So far the picture is not very promising. In a study published earlier this year, the EPRU found that South African asset management companies are still some way from providing their clients with the kinds of investment products that seriously take environmental issues into account. Only half of the 22 investment companies that took part in the study showed what the EPRU called 'internal awareness', ie an understanding of and the taking of suitable action to address climate change. In addition, 53% of the respondents suggested that the environment is a concern for the future, and peripheral to its core business. One gripe that companies have with ERI

offerings is that – allegedly – they're not as profitable as their non-ERI counterparts. Not so, says Giamporcaro. "Many of the studies done in Europe and the United States have shown that they perform the same," she points out. "If you are a good asset manager, you will make money with it." (Giamporcaro is about to embark on similar research that will focus on the private equity/venture capital sector in South Africa.) And if there is a light at the end of the tunnel beyond regulation, it's that on paper at least, most of the respondents are keen to see an increase in ERI offerings in the industry, and believe that they will one day become commonplace in South Africa.

Morgan.Morris@uct.ac.za





One of a kind: The Kirby Collection was relaunched at the SACM.

Traditional sound reborn in Kirby Collection

Renowned as the most significant archive of traditional Southern African musical instruments in the world, the Percival R Kirby Collection was re-launched at a celebratory function at UCT's South African College of Music (SACM) on 2 September.

The re-opening of the collection to the public forms part of the SACM's centenary celebrations, and is set to draw researchers and students to the school from around the world to study the one-of-a-kind archive.

Umrhubhe and *uhadi* bows, *umtshingo* flutes, Zambian drums chiselled out of tree trunks, a tortoise-shell *gumbri* lute from Morocco and a Hausa 'talking drum' are just some of the many instruments in the collection, comprising about 600 pieces – some dating to as far back as the late 1800s.

Speaking at the launch, Michael Nixon (head of Ethnomusicology and African Music at the SACM, and curator of the Kirby Collection) described the archive as a work in progress – fertile ground for research.

"We have now reached the point in the conservation and restoration process that allows us to use the

instruments as they should be used. Because of the collection's national heritage status, UCT has an obligation to maintain it and open it up to the public."

The arduous restoration was made possible by a grant worth over R2 million from the National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund. Many of the instruments had suffered physical degradation, mainly due to the lack of facilities for keeping the assemblages in a proper, humidity-controlled environment.

"The mould was thick, the floor had rotted," explained Nixon. "We had to start from the outside of the building – with the services of a restoration architect – and work our way in."

The launch concluded with a demonstration of the instruments at work by ethnomusicologist Professor Andrew Tracey.

"The sounds are the real artefacts," said Tracey. "The instruments are just a means for reaching the sounds. But when the last one goes, that will be it – the thread will be broken."

"Fortunately, we can catch the last whiffs of tradition and history in the Kirby Collection."

Chris.McEvoy@uct.ac.za

Changing landscapes, changing perceptions

The changing face of landscape art and its various interpretations through history is the focus of a new exhibition curated by Professor Michael Godby of UCT's Historical Studies Department.

The Lie of the Land: Representations of the South African landscape, which opened at the Iziko Michaelis Collection in June and re-opens at the Sanlam Gallery, Bellville, on 14 October, comprises paintings, photographs, sculptures, maps and charts created over the centuries.

These illustrate how South African artists have approached the complex task of representing landscape, and how this reflects a wide range of issues, from the personal to the political.

"Landscape is both the oldest and the most popular type of art in this country," says Godby. "It was used to commemorate the first European explorers, and it is still widely practised throughout the country.

"Throughout history, landscape art has taken many forms because different artists in different times have wanted to communicate different things about their natural environment."

The exhibition is arranged in five sections, namely statements of awe, celebrations of methods of exploiting



Lie of the land: Landscape painting by Gladys Mgudlandlu.

the landscape, commemorations of struggles over possession, expressions of poetic or patriotic feelings, and recent questions about the very means of representing landscape.

Godby sees *The Lie of the Land* as a sequel to his previous curatorship of *Is there Still-Life? Continuity and change in South African still life*

painting, also exhibited at Iziko, in 2008.

"I feel that exhibitions, especially those with catalogues, may constitute a different sort of publishing, no less rigorous than articles in accredited journals, but also able to reach a much wider audience," he says.

Chris.McEvoy@uct.ac.za

Relief for campus parking woes

After months of anticipation, UCT's Ridelink scheme will go live on 20 September, the first day of the campus-wide Green Week, which runs until 24 September. (Watch the UCT website for more information on Green Week.)

Ridelink is described as the first university carpooling system in the country. It's a free carpooling service for the UCT community that works by matching users, based on their travel schedules and routes. Hosted on Vula, Ridelink can be accessed by anyone with a UCT

student or staff number.

An informal survey of 200 cars entering UCT's Sports Centre parking area one morning last term revealed that almost 90% had only one occupant.

"If just half of those people began sharing lifts to campus, 90 more parking places would become available overnight," said the GCI's Kimon de Greef, "never mind that the new carpoolers would halve their morning petrol bills. Besides its practical and environmental benefits, carpooling also makes perfect

economic sense."

As an incentive, UCT carpoolers can look forward to reserved parking on campus. From 20 September, parking lot P4 (next to the rugby fields) will be reserved for multiple-passenger vehicles only. Access will be controlled by a boom gate operated by a UCT traffic official.

(Ridelink is part of the Green Campus Initiative, supported by the Properties and Services Department. To find out more please visit <http://www.ridelink.uct.ac.za>) ^{MP}

Cuba reconnects with Africa



Renewed friendship: Cuban ambassador Angel Villa.

Cuba has enjoyed links with Africa for many years, yet there seem to be many lessons that Africa – South Africa in particular – can still learn from the Caribbean country, suggested Angel Villa, ambassador of the Republic of Cuba to South Africa.

In his recent lecture at UCT, *Reconnecting Shared Histories: Cuba and Africa*, Villa outlined achievements in his native country that have enabled it to achieve social indicators that are on par with those of most first world countries, despite relative poverty and the long US economic blockade.

These, he noted, include Cuba's success in eradicating institutional and historical forms of racism (it is still proactive about addressing race issues), its collective approach to politics (described as the essential part of socialism), and the implementation of pro-poor policies (Cuba was declared free of illiteracy way back in 1961), among other achievements.

"Literacy is the essential human right – after obtaining education you can decide on your own, otherwise someone will tell you what to do."

Villa's talk marked the closing of the Cuban poster exhibition, *Humanity Has Moved On*, which chronicled the many important milestones towards independence in Africa. *Humanity* was a collaboration between the Friends of Cuba Society (FOCUS), UCT's Centre for African Studies and *Chimurenga* magazine. ^{MP}

EVENTS

UCT Sawyer Seminar / PERC

Contested Ecologies invites you to a seminar by Prof Alf Hornborg, Professor of Human Ecology at Lund University, Sweden. Title : Rethinking Ecosystem Services: The role of etishism in the politics of knowledge about global ecology. Date: Monday 13 September 14h30 -16h00. Venue: Ben Beinhardt Room Otto Beit Building

Tuesday 14 September @ 20h00, Philosophy Society Meeting Title:

Dr Andres Luco (Philosophy, UCT), Moral convergence and gender equality. Venue: Room LS1A, Robert Leslie Social Science Building Enq: 021 650 3316

Title: Melissa Steyn, The City's

Other: Small Towns in post-apartheid South Africa, Sociology and Director of Intercultural and Diversity Studies, University of Cape Town. Date: October 6.

Time: 3pm. Venue: Davies Reading Room 2.27 Engeo Building, Upper Campus. Title: Steven Robbins, Urban social movements, rights talk and mass action in Cape Town, Department of Sociology, University of Stellenbosch. Date: November 3. Time: 3pm. Venue: Davies Reading Room 2.27 Engeo Building, Upper Campus

Department of Medicine

Thursday Forum August/ September: 16 September 2010 - Prof Stanley Ress - "Clinical Immunology Overview - Infection Autoimmunity. 23 September 2010 - Prof Jean-Pierre Bassand - "Bleeding, Anemia and Transfusion in Acute Coronary Syndromes: A shift in the paradigm". 30 September 2010 - DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE RESEARCH DAY

VACANT POSTS

EXECUTIVE AND ACADEMIC POSTS:**Lecturer/Senior Lecturer:**

Construction Economics & Management, Department of Construction Economics & Management, Faculty of Engineering & The Built Environment, Closing date: 17 September 2010

Lecturer/Senior Lecturer:

Property Studies, Department of Construction Economics & Management, Faculty of Engineering & The Built Environment, Closing date: 17 September 2010

Lecturer, Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Humanities, Closing date: 17 September 2010

Lecturer, Division of Nursing & Midwifery, School of Health & Rehabilitation Sciences, Closing date: 17 September 2010

Lecturer, Department of

Psychology, Faculty of Humanities, Closing date: 27 September 2010

Professor/Associate Professor/ Senior Lecturer, Graduate School of Business, Closing date: 30 September 2010

Executive Director: Human Resources, Department, Closing date: 30 September 2010

Professor/Associate Professor/ Senior Lecturer, Department of Private Law, Faculty of Law, Closing date: 01 October 2010

RESEARCH, PROFESSIONAL, ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPPORT POSTS (PASS)

Laboratory Manager, Centre for Minerals Research, Department of Chemical Engineering, Closing date: 23 September 2010

Editor-in-Chief, African Centre for Cities, Faculty of Engineering & The Built Environment, Closing date: 30 September 2010

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PROPERTY/ACCOMODATION

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Wanted: American family on sabbatical Jan-Dec 2011 seeks 3BR, 2 BA house, furnished or not, in Southern Suburbs, outdoor space a plus. contact: dackerly@berkeley.edu

Pinelands: ACUTE COTTAGE Beautiful thatched cottage built in 1929. Ideal for short or long term stays. E-mail: simbi@absamail.co.za /www.acutecottage.za.net or phone: 0768550704 From Jan 2011 onwards

Kenilworth: Sunny North facing one and a half bedroom flat to rent. Undercover parking, mountain views, secure complex with a pool and entertainment area. Available from 1 October. R3800.00. Contact: Liesel - melchiorza@yahoo.co.uk

Claremont: Bedroom available. Spacious; unfurnished; B-I-C. Looking for an open-minded person, respect others space. Rent is R1800 p/m; excluding maid, w&e. Rachel: 072 443 6236

Tamboerskloof: Room available in fully furnished modern flat in Tamboerskloof. Has DSTV and is very centrally located next to Kloof str. R3 000pm incl water and electricity. To view please call Maryke 079 631 3947

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Rondebosch: Old Cape Farmhouse with self-contained, furnished apartments available. DSTV & broadband, fireplace, beauty salon, UCT Shuttle on doorstep. Weekly & short stay rates. Contact: 0216851747 www.ivydeneguesthouse.com

Wanted: EX-UCT Capetonian living in Brussels seeks accomodation 23/12-6/1/11 for 3 adults. Willing to housesit, rent or houseswap. Local references. Contact: barbara.jawith@ec.europa.eu

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Ngwenya in the hot seat

Amanda Ngwenya of the Democratic Alliance Student Organisation (DASO) has been named the new president of the Students' Representative Council (SRC) for the 2010/2011 term.

At the SRC seat-allocation meeting on 3 September, Kathleen Taylor, who received the most votes, and fifth-placed Jessica Price – both independent candidates – were chosen as internal vice-president and external vice-president respectively.

This puts the first three most senior positions on the committee in the hands of women. (These positions are occupied by men in the current SRC).

The rest of the committee is Sean Darge (DASO), secretary-general; Mark Schoeman (DASO), deputy secretary-general; Aboobaker

Kalla (SASCO), treasurer; Inshaaf Issacs (SASCO), chair: academics; Lethu Shange (SASCO), transformation; Khanya Gwaza (SASCO), residences; Kim Senogles (independent), day houses; Alexander Spoor (Society for Democratic Society), societies; Kodwa Cengimbo (DASO), sport and recreation; Mike Ramothwala (SASCO), media and communications; Vimbai Paraffin (DASO), health, safety and security; and Ross Hare (DASO), entertainment.

The new leadership takes office on 1 November. September and October will serve as a handover and induction period.

(Interviews with Ngwenya and members of her council will be published in the next edition of *Monday Paper*.)



Taking office: Amanda Ngwenya has been elected SRC president for 2010/2011.

Men's hockey in grand win

It was a nervy and sometimes sloppy affair, but in the end the UCT men's 2-1 win over Central on 3 September was more than enough to help them clinch the Western Province Hockey Union Grand Challenge trophy – the team's first championship victory since 2004.

Going into the match, the title was UCT's to lose – even with archrivals Stellenbosch University breathing down their neck, a win, a draw, or even a defeat (if by no more than one goal) would have been enough to settle matters in their favour. They got off to a bright enough start, dominating the early stretch of the game and deservedly taking the lead about midway into the first half.

But then they took their foot off the gas, allowing Central back into the game. Central continued to press in the second half, and their equaliser came as no surprise as holes began to open up in the UCT defence. But the goal was just the jolt UCT



Grand winners: The men's hockey side celebrate their championship win.

needed, and the team picked up their game and scored late into the half. That took the wind out of Central's sails, and UCT was hardly stretched as they held on for the final whistle.

"I'm really proud of these boys," said visibly chuffed coach Craig Sieben after the match. "This was really one of the best-contested Grand Challenges for a long time."

But Sieben knows that UCT will be the side with the target on its back next year. "Winning the title for one year means nothing; we have to perform again next year."

But with only two players likely to leave the squad over the coming months, he is confident UCT can fend off any challenge in 2011.

Morgan.Morris@uct.ac.za

Second wave of titles for women surfers



Wave crest: UCT's Jessica Bezuidenhout, Carla Mackenzie, Sarah Nicholson, Kerri Hodgkinson and Jerri Anderson celebrate their win at the USSA surfing championships.

UCT women successfully defended their title at the 2010 University Sports South Africa (USSA) surfing championships, hosted by the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) at Victoria Bay in George recently.

That was thanks in large part to the respective first and third spots for Sarah Nicholson and Kerri Hodgkinson, with rivals from Stellenbosch University and NMMU finishing in second and fourth place respectively. The result would have been especially pleasing to Nicholson, who finished

third in 2009.

Alas, UCT men couldn't dethrone defending champions NMMU in the men's event, although top-eight finishes by Jochaid Salie and Philip Visagie were enough to earn UCT a second place.

Cold winds and rain made the event a nightmare for spectators, but provided good waves for the surfers, reports Nic Pringle of the UCT Surfing Club. "They were probably the best waves we've ever seen at the competition," says Pringle.

Morgan.Morris@uct.ac.za

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