

Next Generation Professoriate

New Year's Update, 2017

Greetings and belated Happy New Year good wishes to you all.

I am using this opportunity to announce developments, to congratulate members of the NGP and to say some goodbyes.

As you all know, the major purpose of the NGP is to assist and support members in their efforts to be promoted. It is thus with great pride and pleasure that I share the news that, in the last round of ad hom promotions, Virna Leaner and Jennifer Moodley were both promoted to Full Professor and Manya Mooya and Tolu Oni were promoted to Associate Professor. Since the goal of the NGP is to support staff to reach the pinnacle of the academic hierarchy, Jennifer and Virna will be leaving the cohort but will not be lost to us as they both promise to stay connected! Their goodbyes are recorded below.

In the most recent cycle of NRF ratings, six of our members were successful. Paul Barendse, Tracy Craig and Sharon Kleintjes obtained ratings at their first attempt. Heather Marco and Meg Samuelson were both re-rated, both achieving dramatic improvements in the process. Zarina Patel was re-rated after achieving a Y rating some time ago. This is a tremendous achievement and I extend my heartiest congratulations to all of them. Each are now eligible for six years of research funding from the NRF research incentive fund.

This year we shall be expanding the numbers of the cohort from 35 to 40. I have invited each of the 7 Deans to nominate an additional member and hope that we will be up to our full complement by the end of February.

In the meantime we have four new members:

- Goolam Modack (Accountancy, Commerce)
- Zarina Patel (Environmental and Geographical Sciences, Science)
- Phumla Sinxadi (Pharmacology, Health Sciences)
- Deano Stynder (Archaeology, Science)

We hope that their stay in the cohort will be a happy and productive one and that they get to meet and befriend fellow cohorters at our various meetings during the course of this year.

Since my last newsletter we have had a number of activities including the normal monthly working spaces, the quarterly lunches at the UCT club, two teaching seminars to support ad hom promotion portfolio preparation (by Alan Cliff (CHED) and Jenni Case (Engineering)) and, notably, two writing retreats, one at Mont Fleur and another at Zevenwacht.



The Mont Fleur Gang (Left to Right (Back)): Freedom Gumedze, Zarina Patel, Meg Samuelson, Joel Chigada, Bob Osano, Tracy Craig, Lee-Ann Tong, Tracy Gutuza, Sylvia Bruinders, Heather Marco, Anwar Jardine, Ameeta Jaga, Kate le Roux, Sharon Kleintjes, Sine Duma. (Front) Robert Morrell, Frank Matose.



Mont Fleur early morning athletes: Freedom, Kate and Frank.



The Zevenwacht Gang: Lee-Ann Tong, Cecil Mlatsheni, Goolam Modack, Lebogang Ramma, Heather Marco, Frank Matose, Corrinne Shaw, Sine Duma.



The Runners! Corrinne, Lebogang, Frank.

We ended the year at the River Club with a wet lunch at the Slug and Lettuce



Heather Marco (Biological Sciences) has unanimously been re-elected as President of AGNES (the African-German Network of Excellence in Science). In a meeting held in Benin last year Heather was elected for the third consecutive time to serve on the Executive Committee.



AGNES is five years old having been founded at a workshop held in Addis Ababa in November 2011. The 21 Founder Members of AGNES are alumni of the prestigious Alexander von Humboldt Foundation that counts 52 Nobel laureates amongst its alumni and is based in Germany. AGNES is a young supra-regional contact structure that was conceptualised by a group of 17 scholars from 11 sub-Saharan African countries and Germany. The envisaged role of AGNES is to strengthen academic excellence in sub-Saharan Africa by promoting regional networking and professional exchange between excellent scholars within the region and Germany.

Under Heather's leadership she has expanded the membership, visibility, and funding capacity of AGNES. To date, AGNES has awarded 60 Grants to African postdocs, and in 2016 (for the first time) launched the AGNES Intra-Africa Mobility Grant - 17 Grants were awarded to excellent Doctoral and Masters students. One of the grantees is a third year Physics PhD student from the University of Yaoundé 1, Cameroon: Ms Murielle Vanessa Tchakui spent two months at the Department of Mathematics and Applied mathematics at UCT where she collaborated with Dr Haris Skokos and his team on nonlinear dynamics of Hamiltonian systems.

AGNES is financially supported by the Government of Germany (via the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation and the Federal German Ministry of Education and Research) and The World Academy of Science (TWAS). For further information please visit our web page at www.agnes-h.org.

For more, see: <https://www.uct.ac.za/dailynews/?id=10154>

Sine Duma



Sine joined the Department of Nursing and Midwifery in 2001. Prior to that she had lectured at the University of Natal. While at UCT she developed an expertise in the area of sexual assault trauma, recovery and nursing and became a leader in the development of curricula

and policy in this area. She now leaves UCT to become the Dean of Teaching & Learning at the College of Health Sciences at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

She bids her NGP colleagues farewell with the following words:

“Since getting the news I have been struggling to find the right words to say goodbye. This is probably more difficult because in the “cohort” I found not only colleagues with similar goals as mine, but more importantly, I also found friends, silent and vocal mentors and supporters. I leave UCT as a better person through everybody’s input and contribution. I know that the skills I acquired in leadership workshops and our informal engagements will be of great use in my new office.

Reflecting on the period of writing up to the launch at the end of 2016 of my book, “The Pain of Being a Woman” I realise that I could not have done it without the incredible support of Professor Robert Morrell and Nceba Lolwane.

I will miss all of you and I am really sad that the joyride of participating with you in the “cohort” has come to an end, but I believe we can still grow together as the future generation of professoriate, irrespective of where each one of us will be.”

At the end of 2016 Sine launched her book, *The Pain of Being a Woman*, in the Frances Ames room in the Barnard Fuller building, Faculty of Health Sciences. The guest lecturer was Sine’s mentor, Professor Julia Nobelungu Mekwa, who retired from UCT in 2006, where she was the Acting DVC and Head of Division of Nursing & Midwifery. Sine’s book was based on fieldwork in Cape Town with survivors of sexual violence. Her book pays tribute to the resilience of women and their ability to recover from repeated assault.

For more on Sine’s book see: <https://www.uct.ac.za/dailynews/?id=10099>

Virna Leaner



Virna Leaner of the Division of Medical Biochemistry & Structural Biology in the Department of Integrative Biomedical Sciences was promoted to full professor in December 2016. She began her studies at UCT with a BSc and completed a PhD in Medical Biochemistry in 1998. Her academic career at UCT began as a junior research fellow and in the period 1998-2003 she was a NIH/Fogarty International Post-Doctoral Fellow at the National Institutes of Health, USA. In 2004 she returned to UCT and threw herself into academia. In 2008 she was awarded the TW Khambule Young Scientist Award by the National Science and Technology Forum (NSTF). She has supervised 7 PhD and 6 MSc students to completion and has authored 34 peer reviewed journal articles. Some of her administrative responsibilities included/s that of course convener of the MBChB Semester 5 Lab3009H program (with 220 students), course convenor of the B.Med.Sc (Honours in Medical Biochemistry) program, senate representative from 2009-2011, 2015- and head of division from 2015.

She leads an active research group that is focussed on the characterization of genes associated with cancer development as potential biomarkers and therapeutic targets. An example of her work is the identification of nuclear import inhibitors with anti-cancer activity that is being tested in pre-clinical model systems. Much of her work is multi-disciplinary and involves bioinformatics, computational chemistry and molecular biology technologies. Her research is done in collaboration with researchers based locally and internationally at the University of Kentucky, Harvard Medical School, and the University of Rome and has been funded by grants obtained from the NRF, MRC, TIA and CANSA.

She said that her time in the Next Generation Professoriate had been characterised by the support she received from the NGP director and the enthusiasm of fellow cohort-members. “It really helps to feel part of a team”, she said, “and I shall miss my cohort friends but plan to remain active and assist the programme in the future”.

Jennifer Moodley



Jennifer was promoted to Full Professor in December 2016 so we wish her Hamba Kahle as she continues to serve UCT. Jennifer hails from Durban and completed her medical training at King Edward Hospital at the University of Natal. She has travelled a long way since becoming a Registrar in Community Health at UCT in 1993. In the last twenty odd years she became Director of Women’s Health Research Unit (School of Public Health and Family Medicine), Director of the Cancer Research Initiative and then Deputy-Dean (Research) in the Faculty of Health Sciences in 2016.

She has served as a technical advisor to World Health Organization (WHO) on Sexual and Reproductive Health Programmes and HPV Vaccines, on the first Ministerial Advisory Committee on the Prevention and Control of Cancer and serves on the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) Regional Advisory Committee on Africa. Her research interests include understanding pathways to cancer care. Cervical cancer is the leading cause of cancer death among women in Sub-Saharan Africa and much of her work has focused on the prevention and control of cervical cancer.

Jennifer was a founder member of the cohort. She leaves with fond memories of the camaraderie, head-clearing walks at Mont Fleur and engagements around the meaning and practice of leadership.

Meg Samuelson (Department of English, Humanities) was a founder member of the NGP cohort. She has accepted an academic position in the Department of English and Creative Writing at the University of Adelaide.



Meg came to UCT from Stellenbosch University in 2013 and became Head of the Department of English in 2014. She is renowned for her work on South African, African and postcolonial and Indian Ocean cultural and literary studies. She is author of *Remembering the Nation, Dismembering Women? Stories of the South African Transition* and has published over 50 articles and chapters in book. On her departure, Meg said that she “Valued the cohort for its camaraderie and collegiality and found it a vital and friendly space for research and writing”. She found the writing retreats a particularly useful opportunity to re-think her ideas and stimulate her creative energies.

Let me conclude this newsletter with a note of appreciation to all members of the cohort for making 2016 such a productive and happy year and extend my good wishes for a productive, friendly and awesome 2017.

Robert Morrell

30 January 2017