

# **Next Generation Professoriate**

## **Newsletter #2, March, 2017**

This is our second newsletter of the year. The main story is the departure of Francis Petersen who has provided enthusiastic and ceaseless support for the cohort. I want to place on record my deep gratitude for this support and, at the same time, welcome Hugh Corder who will be acting Deputy Vice Chancellor in the months ahead. Hugh and I are in the same building and so we bump into one another from time to time so I am hoping that we can encourage him to attend some of our functions and to share his experiences with us.

### **Farewell Francis**



I joined the Office of the Vice Chancellor in July 2015 after Francis had agreed to run with my idea for a Next Generation Professoriate. I was soon introduced to Francis's engineering approach. These found expression in the RDR, Francis's Recruitment, Development and Retention (RDR) vision. Francis had been Dean of EBE before becoming DVC (with responsibility for, among other things, the Faculties). Francis is a big-picture person with an ability rapidly to identify bottle-necks and gaps and to see opportunities for growth and efficiency. Although not everybody likes the term, Francis introduced me to the idea of a pipeline. This is a metaphor for a process with constituent parts and if these parts are connected or are only imperfectly connected then there is spillage, waste, lost resources.

Francis grew up in Oudshoorn where his father was a teacher. He studied at the University of Stellenbosch where he received a B. Eng (Chem), M. Eng (Metal) and Ph.D degrees. He was Executive Head of Strategy at Anglo Platinum Corporation and Executive Vice-President for Research and Development at Mintek. He was a member of the South African Minister of Science & Technology's National Advisory Council on Innovation (NACI) and chairman of the Board of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). Francis is an extraordinary professor in the Department of Chemical Engineering at the University of Stellenbosch. From 2008 to 2014 Francis was Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment before becoming DVC in 2015.

From the start Francis gave full support to the NGP and the idea of a dedicated mid-career support programme directed at providing resources and encouragement to a targeted group of academics. The expectation was that in time and on the basis of demonstrated potential, cohort members would become associate and full professors. Regarded as a pilot project that would impact the demographics of the Professoriate, Francis also considered it as a test for how to improve various elements of the academic enterprise at UCT.

“The NGP is not only a dedicated commitment from the University to transform the professoriate, but it also allows the University to reflect on its programmes and practices for academic staff, in order to respond to their career progression.”

For much of 2016 Francis was heavily involved in dealing with campus protests associated with Rhodes Must Fall and Fees Must Fall. He was Chair of the Special Executive Task Team which had the mandate of dealing expeditiously with crises when they arose. This put Francis in the hot-seat and he showed himself in this position as fair, patient and calm, as somebody not easily flustered. Unfortunately from the point of view of the NGP this meant that Francis did not have the time to give to the NGP that he would like to have given. In January 2017, having first met cohort members at the launch of NGP in September 2015, Francis again met the cohort, this time to say goodbye. Characteristically, he used the occasion at the Common Ground Tea Room, Rondebosch, to discuss developments at UCT and to engage cohort members in discussion about what had happened and why the Executive had taken various decisions and actions.



We wish Francis very well as he travels to Bloemfontein to become Vice Chancellor of the University of the Free State. The UFS's gain is our loss.

### New NGP Members

I'm also taking this opportunity to showcase four new(ish) members of the Next Generation Professoriate. The composition of the cohort changes and grows and I think it is a good idea for us to get to know one another by presenting short biographies. More to follow in future Newsletters!

## **Shari Daya**



I am from Cape Town, and completed a BA (Hons) in English Literature and Italian Studies at UCT, then went to Durham University and, surprisingly, became a social scientist, graduating with a PhD in Cultural Geography in 2007. Now a Senior Lecturer in Human Geography back at my home institution, I try to marry my literary and geographical interests, particularly in an ongoing project on stories about the modern Indian city. My main research, however, is on cultures of production and consumption in South Africa, and I'm particularly interested in understanding how people create value around commodities in ways that go far beyond the economic. My current project, supported by a Newton Advanced Fellowship, explores food, ethics and identity in three South African cities. I have supervised 7 Masters students and 1 PhD student to completion, with a second PhD student about to submit. I've authored or co-authored around 10 journal articles and 5 book chapters, I convene a postgraduate course in Cultural Geography as well as our second-year course on Urban Challenges, and I teach into our third-year module 'Geographic Thought'.

## **Goolam Modack**



I'm an Associate Professor and Head of the College of Accounting at UCT. I was born and raised in Cape Town, the youngest of eight children,. After matriculating from South Peninsula High School in 1995, I studied at UCT and completed the first year of a traineeship towards qualifying as a Chartered Accountant at UCT in 2001. Thereafter, I completed the remaining two years of my traineeship at the audit firm, KPMG, before returning to UCT in 2004. I'm involved in the profession in various capacities through my involvement with the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants.

I teach financial reporting and corporate governance to undergraduate and postgraduate students and in the recent past co-authored textbooks on financial reporting. In 2017, the College introduced a new M Com specialising in Accounting, which is designed to provide opportunities for enhancing the skills required for leadership in accounting and corporate governance decision making. I convene the corporate governance course.

Financial reporting, corporate governance and integrated reporting are amongst my research interests. I'm a member of the adjudicating panel for the annual EY Excellence in Integrated Reporting survey. The survey judges the integrated reports of the 100 JSE-listed companies with the largest market capitalisation at 31 December and the 10 largest State-Owned Entities by asset value.

When I'm not working I enjoy reading widely and travelling with India, Vietnam and New York City being amongst my favourite destinations.

## Amir Patel



I was born in Cape Town, the eldest child of two high school teachers. After matriculating from Livingstone High School in 2004, I started studying at UCT and graduated with a BSc Eng (Mechatronics) in 2008. I was subsequently employed by Tellumat Defence in December of that year. Here I was involved with modelling and designing of flight controllers for autonomous aircraft for various military applications. While employed there, in 2010, I also researched the subject of collision avoidance for autonomous aircraft and graduated with an MSc in 2011. I joined UCT in January of 2012 as a part-time lecturer in the Electrical Engineering department and became full-time (leaving Tellumat) in July of that same year.

In July 2012 I began to investigate the motions of the cheetah tail during rapid manoeuvres, with the hopes of applying these to agile robots. In this work, I discovered that the observed tail motions are able to stabilise rapid acceleration and high-speed turns of a wheeled robot. The cheetah tail's aerodynamic properties have a significant effect on stabilisation at high-speeds. For this work I received a PhD in 2015. In 2016, I received an NRF Thuthuka Grant to investigate manoeuvrability in quadruped (four legged) animals and robots using mathematical modelling, sensor observations on cheetahs and physical robot tests. In that same year, I was awarded the Claude Leon Merit Award for Young Researchers and I'm presently a Fulbright nominee (outcome pending).

I enjoy listening to music as well as singing and playing guitar for my 1 year old daughter. At times, I also dabble with electronic beat production on my Akai MPC 1000 sampler.

### **Zarina Patel**



I was appointed as a senior lecturer in the Environmental and Geographical Sciences (EGS) Department at the University of Cape Town in January 2016. Between 2012 and 2015, I held a joint contract position with EGS and the African Centre for Cities (ACC). Appointments at other academic institutions include lecturer and senior lecturer in the Geography Department at the University of the Witwatersrand (2002-2011); a British Academy Fellowship at the University of Sheffield (2010); and a Research Fellowship at the School of Development Studies at the University of Natal (1994-1996). My PhD was conferred from the University of Cambridge in 2002.

My research is concerned with the multiple dimensions of the meaning and practice of sustainable development at the city scale. In interrogating disconnections between policy and practice, my research, teaching and postgraduate supervision has focused on the following three interrelated areas: interpretations of sustainable development in theory and practice (rhetoric); environmental governance as it applies to the transition to sustainability (practice/implementation); and appropriate

tools for decision making (how). Whilst South African cities and their respective policy processes have been the geographical focus of my work, the theoretical application pivots around these three themes and the interrelationships between them.

My academic practice has benefitted from periods of working outside of academia, at the CSIR, the Durban City Council and the Gauteng Provincial Government. My commitment to engaged scholarship is demonstrated through publications I have co-authored with City Officials, and through social responsiveness engagements serving on statutory advisory boards. I regularly review papers for journals in my field, and actively contribute to the editorial board of Local Environment: the International Journal of Justice and Sustainability and have recently been appointed as Editor-in-Chief of the journal Urban Forum.

I joined the NGP cohort somewhat reluctantly at the end of 2016 in the hope that this initiative would provide a supportive framework for prising open many of the black boxes that shape progression in the UCT system. What I found in this cohort is a friendly and spirited group of people, from across the university. The camaraderie and opportunities created through alternate spaces in which to meet an exchange with colleagues has been an invaluable support during a confusing, complicated and confounding period in UCT's history.

### **Phumla Sinxadi**



I am currently a Senior Lecturer at the Division of Clinical Pharmacology, Department of Medicine, Faculty of Health Sciences. I am a course convener for MDN5003H and I teach pharmacology to undergraduate/postgraduate students.

I was born in Worcester, but at age 6, my family moved to Sterkspruit, Eastern Cape. Raised by a single mother and my grandmother, who both valued education, I matriculated from Mehlomakulu High school in 1994, and came to Cape Town in 1995 to study medicine. I graduated from UCT with an MBChB in 2001, subsequently specialised in Clinical Pharmacology, obtaining an MMed in 2010 and a PhD in 2016. The choice to specialize in Clinical Pharmacology was partially influenced by the lifestyle the discipline provides (e.g. overnight/ weekend calls in hospital), and suffering from tuberculosis while doing community service. However, my love for research developed when I was doing my MMed, which influenced my decision to pursue a PhD.

I have been a recipient of the following internship programs/fellowship awards: Discovery Foundation Academic Fellowship, CIDRI Fellowship, SAMRC Senior Research Training Fellowship, National Health Scholar Program, Novartis Next Generation Scientist internship, and the WHO Career Development Fellowship. My research interests include investigating relationships between antiretroviral drug concentrations and metabolic complications, and how genetic variants influence both of these, in patients with HIV infection. The findings improved the understanding of genetic determinants of efavirenz plasma exposure in an African population -I was awarded a prize for best publication by an author in training in 2015 by the prestigious British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology for the paper describing this aspect of my PhD. While busy with the PhD, I got an opportunity to become the lead investigator for the First in Man clinical trial investigating a new malaria compound discovered at UCT and I hope to develop capacity for conducting early phase clinical trials at UCT.

I enjoy travelling and I dabble in photography. My bragging rights include bungee jumping at Bloukrans bridge on a dare.

Robert Morrell

Editor

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