

Monday Paper

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Constitutional governance chair established

UCT will seek top-flight candidates for the new Claude Leon Chair in Constitutional Governance, to be established in the Faculty of Law next year

A new chair, the Claude Leon Chair in Constitutional Governance, will be launched in the Faculty of Law next year, thanks to funding from the Claude Leon Foundation.

Speaking at the 150th anniversary of the teaching of law in South Africa, celebrated by the faculty recently, Dean of Law Professor Hugh Corder said: "Perhaps at no stage since the early 1950s, and certainly not since 1994, has there been a greater need for a law faculty in this country, one that can produce graduates with excellent knowledge of the law, the ability to think and analyse critically, and a strong sense of the necessity for an impartial, independent and fearless legal process and profession."

Corder said the UCT law faculty meets all these needs, and that those who have employed UCT graduates all over the world endorsed this view.

"Certainly the Claude Leon Foundation does, and it is with enormous pride and deep gratitude to the chair of the foundation, Bill Frankel, that we have established the Claude Leon Foundation Chair in Constitutional Governance."

It was with Cape Act 12 of 1858 that the teaching of law in South Africa began, although the first lecture was not delivered until 18 March 1859.

To celebrate this milestone, the faculty has launched a series of events over the next six months, as well as a fundraising campaign around the theme *Towards Sustainable Justice*.

"As I said to the more than 150 graduates at the launch dinner last month, Dickens had it right in *A Tale of Two Cities*: the times can be both best and worst," Corder said.

"The past weeks have witnessed the greatest economic meltdown and lack of confidence for many decades – hardly the most auspicious time to be asking for financial support.

"But then, the travails besetting the rule of law in this country over the past four months, while shocking to most of us, paradoxically provide an even more persuasive case for financial support."

Candidates for the chair should be outstanding constitutional lawyers, with at least a national reputation in the field in academic life or practice of the law, and preferably

also an international profile.

They will not only teach undergraduate and postgraduate students but will develop postgraduate research, including doctoral studies.

The chair will also be expected to contribute to public debate and lead public opinion on matters of constitutional governance. They will participate in law reform processes and co-operate with civil society organisations within South Africa and abroad - and may also participate in litigation as an *amicus curiae*.

"The UCT Faculty of Law is approaching the next phase of its long existence with confidence, aware of the challenges which exist but encouraged by the support of many graduates and friends,"



Corder said. "The development campaign is aimed at creating the financial and human capacity to

participate in the realisation of our constitutional values in a sustainable manner."

Alumna's social documentary for Parliament screening



HELEN THERON

UCT alumna Robyn Rorke's documentary, *Shamiela's House*, about a "milk and cookies" mom's fight to save her Mitchell's Plain home, was screened in Parliament on 12 November as part of the 2008 South African Film Festival.

It was the longer version of the film that won the 2008 Best South African Documentary. Rorke is working on a master's degree in human geography.

The festival was hosted by the Parliamentary Millennium Programme (PMP), Parliament's nation-building programme, and the National Film and Video Foundation.

Shamiela's House is an intimate observation of a mother's struggle to keep her home and save her children from being evicted by a mismanaged state-funded housing company. The battle for her home becomes a balancing act between her roles as an activist, a leader and a mother.

"Her first-person account of her experience intertwines with observational footage, leading residents from burning tyres through the halls of power," explained Rorke, who both produced and directed the documentary.

"Tension mounts as the community splits between those who support negotiations, and residents who want to resort to revolutionary tactics to be heard.

"It is a sober reflection on the state of South Africa's democracy." Rorke has been researching

grassroots activism in Cape Town since 2005. The film grew from her master's research in human geography while she was a Potter Fellow, but which she has not yet completed due to ill health.

"My thanks go to UCT, the Potter Foundation and Dr Sophie Oldfield, who is the most brilliant supervisor in the world."

Rorke has spent the past year undergoing treatment for rare temporal lobe epilepsy.

"Even when you are disabled, don't let it stop you." ^{MP}

Words and pictures: Master's student Robyn Rorke's award-winning social documentary, *Shamiela's House*, was screened in Parliament on 12 November.

Excavations begin on Rustenburg Burial Ground

HELEN THÉRON

UCT has begun archaeological investigations in the area of the Rustenburg Burial Ground, adjacent to and beneath All Africa House, built in 1996 before the burial ground was identified.

UCT plans to expand its campus in this area to meet the demands of a growing student body. Archaeologists believe this was the burial ground that served the 17th-19th century community that worked and lived on Rustenburg Farm.

The archaeological investigations follow broad public consultation with the stakeholder group formed through a year-long public participation process. This process is required by the South African Heritage Resources Act.

The team is working to agreed terms of reference and in accordance with international best practice.



Ground work: Tim Hart, Kathryn Underwood and Dr Lita Webley, all of the Dept of Archaeology at UCT, and visiting conservator Nancy Child, keep an eye on excavations.

The work is being done by the Archaeology Contracts Office, by

Tim Hart, Dave Halkett, Lita Webley, Kathryn Underwood, Mpakamo

find out if there are 'safe areas' where UCT can expand, and also establish

Sasa, and Tandazo Mjikeliso.

"Historical documents suggest that an area of, say 30m x 50m, was walled off some time in the late 19th century," Hart said. "However, the burial ground is older than that. One of the reasons we are excavating is that we need to find out if there are any graves outside the historically identified area."

Hart said the excavation was not intended to unearth human remains.

"We do need to find out if there are 'safe areas' where UCT can expand, and also establish

if there are any graves outside the historically delineated area. If we happen to find anything that looks like human bone, work will stop and the find will be reported to UCT and the stakeholder group for further discussion."

Initially, the team will excavate three trenches, one of which will cut through the tennis court. These would be trial excavations.

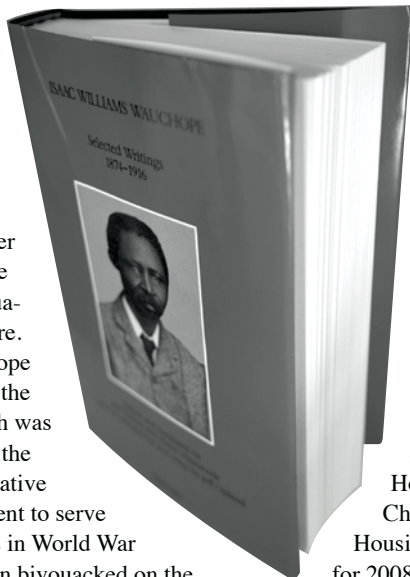
"The biggest challenge is going to be to try to reconstruct all the soil-moving events that may have affected the study area in the past," Hart said. "We will be using a smallish mechanical excavator on the tennis court, and will also be digging by hand."

The team will not remove any human remains.

"We are trying to achieve a situation where the graves and their contents remain in the ground. Anything that happens will be referred to UCT and the stakeholder group." MP

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The Van Riebeeck Society, chaired by UCT historian Professor Howard Phillips, launched the selected writings of Isaac Williams Wauchope on 4 November, its 90th volume. The isiXhosa text was translated by Dr Abner Nyamende of the School of Languages and Literature. The Rev Wauchope perished aboard the SS Mendi, which was carrying men of the South African Native Labour Contingent to serve the Allied forces in World War II. They had been bivouacked on the old Rosebank show grounds, now the UCT soccer field. A copy of the book was presented to Glenn von Zeil of the Department of Student Affairs. Von Zeil was instrumental in having the Mendi memorial placed adjacent to the site. It was erected in 2006 as part of the Sunday Times' centenary celebrations.



natural product-based drug discovery for tropical diseases, hosted at UCT on 4 November by Prof Kelly Chibale of the Dept of Chemistry (below). This expertise exists, but lacks capacity in several areas critical to biomedical research and drug development on the continent. Price added.

UCT graduate Junaid Moosa has won the Southern African Housing Foundation, Chartered Institute of Housing Student Award for 2008. The award is for his MSc thesis in property studies, which covers topics relevant to private-sector financial institutions and micro-lenders. Moosa will donate his prize money to a deserving student carrying out research in a similar field. Now working in Dubai, Moosa's parents, received the award on his behalf from Mbulelo Tshangana of the Western Cape government, John Hopkins of the SA Housing Foundation and Howard Farrand of the Chartered Institute of Housing.

Students in the Department of Social Anthropology have launched an online journal, Abantu, to provide a forum to explore relevance. Editor Jess Auerbach (seen in the picture

with Micah Faure and Nonjabulo Patience Garton) said it is vital that course content is considered at a deeper level than merely once a week before a tutorial, particularly if the skills would be useful in society. Some of the topics covered in the first edition include the perils of asylum; relationships, music and dance; and space, community and construction at Athlone Stadium. The journal is available online at <http://70.86.182.34/~socialan/>.



Geologist Chris McKay, a National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) investigator, visited UCT on 4 November to give students and staff the results of the Phoenix mission to Mars. NASA expected, said McKay, to find the surface red and cold, with rocks, dirt, ice-table and salt. But they were surprised to discover a complete dry soil, a flat ice-table and perchlorate, a highly reactive salt found naturally on Earth and used in products such as fertiliser, fireworks and rocket fuel. Scientists are one step closer to considering that life on Mars is possible in a wet and cold Martian world, said McKay.

The Institute of Infectious Disease and Molecular Medicine (IID-MM) underwent a three-day review process by both the International Scientific Advisory Committee (ISAC) and the University Review Committee, from 2 to 4 November. The review processes were conducted si-

multaneously to assess the work done over the past five years by members of the institute and the institute as a whole, and to give feedback regarding their successes and possible areas for improvement. "The reviewers will listen to the research and provide advice to the institute at a strategic level," explains ISAC chairperson Professor Valarie Mizrahi. The review process, which the IIDMM will undergo every five years, is used to determine the nature of the institute's future direction and funding.



Dr Aubrey Mainza, a senior lecturer in the Department of Chemical Engineering, has won the prestigious Young Author Award at the 24th International Minerals Processing Congress held in Beijing, China. Mainza was one of 10 recipients of the accolade for his paper, *A Study on Efficiency of Mineral Department in the Three-Product Cyclone*, which he presented to more than 950 delegates. The event was nicknamed the Olympics of mineral processing, following the Olympic Games in the city earlier this year, and is hosted every two years. MP



The Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR), Cape Town, South Africa, invites you and members of your organisation to a seminar launch of the book

CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON? AFRICA AND CHINA

(edited by Kweku Ampiah and Sanusha Naidu)

CHAIR AND SPEAKER

Dr Adekeye Adebajo

Executive Director, Centre for Conflict Resolution, Cape Town

SPEAKERS

Professor Adam Habib

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, University of Johannesburg, Johannesburg

Dr Garth le Pere

Executive Director, Institute for Global Dialogue, Midrand

Date: Friday 28 November 2008 • Time: 17h00 to 19h30

Venue: The Centre for the Book, 62 Queen Victoria Street, Gardens, Cape Town

RSVP: Lavenia Benjamin • Email: lavenia@ccr.uct.ac.za • Tel: (021) 689-1005

Fax: (021) 689-1003 • Website: <http://ccrweb.ccr.uct.ac.za>

The book will be on sale at the event. All are welcome and entry is free.



High hopes for reduced carbon emissions at UCT



Hands on: The solar water heater on display was manufactured by Winston Inglis and Riyaad Dollie (first and second from left), photographed with John Critien and Stanley Smith of Properties & Services.

HELEN THÉRON

How many trees would UCT have to plant to counter the carbon emissions from fuel burned to produce hot water for its thousands of residence students each day?

Probably in the region of around 20 per student, but this could be reduced ten-fold by combining solar water heating with heat pumps, said Associate Professor Harro von Blottnitz (Environmental & Process Systems Engineering) at an African Universities Day celebration in the Kramer Building last week.

UCT responded to the theme of sustainable development in higher education, set by the African Association of Universities for the 2008 event.

South Africa presently emits 450 million tons of carbon dioxide each year and this will increase rapidly if no action is taken.

While the United Nations Environmental Programme had planted one billion trees in 2007, trees could

never be enough to offset carbon emissions, Von Blottnitz said.

Nonetheless, the Kramer Quad was transformed into a green lung, exhibiting a solar water heater designed and built by Properties & Services staff Winston Inglis and Riyaad Dollie, supervised by John Peters.

It will be installed at Forest Hill Block C and interconnected to the existing cylinder. It is expected to yield electricity savings of between 40% and 50%.

At Glenara, the Vice-Chancellor's residence, three solar water heaters have been included in plans to revamp the building.

UCT's Green Campus Initiative, an action-based group that works to make UCT carbon-neutral, plans to join other universities in launching The Green Challenge. This will encourage campuses to go green, with an intended prize of R1 million for the best effort.

A conservative estimate says UCT will recycle over 1 000 tons of waste next year. **MP**

Four new environmental law courses on the menu

Four new environmental courses, namely the Principles of Environmental Law, Land Use Planning Law, Natural Resource Law and Pollution Law, will be offered by UCT's Institute of Marine and Environmental Law from 2009.

"The last decade has seen huge growth in the post-LLB area of law. Forty percent of all students registered in the faculty are studying for master's degrees and postgraduate diplomas," said Dean of Law Professor Hugh Corder.

"We're proud that we offer over 40 postgraduate options, but we are also mindful of the need to be current and to provide areas of specialisation that are valuable and relevant to solving the challenges facing human society."

It is for this reason that the postgraduate Environmental Law Programme has been restructured. The new courses mean that UCT can now offer a depth and breadth of specialisation to policy makers, legal practitioners and environmental consultants.

The four new courses will include a block teaching compo-

nent (40 hours), which means that students not living in Cape Town can study large parts of the curriculum by correspondence.

Principles of Environmental Law introduces students to the fundamentals of environmental law. It provides a critical overview of the principles underlying the discipline, the key components inherent in environmental laws, the institutions responsible for their administration, and the challenges facing their implementation.

"As South Africa has one of the world's most contemporary environmental legal regimes, it will be used as a case study throughout the course," said Corder.

One of the key ways to govern the impact of society on the environment is through regulating land use and planning. Land Use Planning Law came into being at the beginning of the twentieth century but environmental law was superimposed on it towards the end of the twentieth century.

The past decades have seen a significant shift in the array and nature of regulatory tools that planning authorities have used to achieve

a balance between the dictates of development and environmental protection. The course examines the complex interaction and overlap between the regulatory tools contained in these two areas of law.

There is global consciousness and consensus that the world's natural resources are being depleted on an unsustainable basis. Natural Resources Law examines the domestic legal frameworks that have emerged to regulate the use and conservation of natural resources.

Development and pollution appear to be inherently linked, as evidenced by the rapid development that has taken place over the past few decades. Pollution Law will examine the domestic legal frameworks that have emerged to deal with this.

The Institute of Marine and Environmental Law was founded in 1983 and is the oldest and largest of its kind in Africa. The Institute also participates in multi-disciplinary research projects in collaboration with scientists, geographers, economists and other experts in marine and environmental subjects. **MP**

Jewish politics explored in master's thesis

CHRIS MCEVOY

In 2001, Minister Ronnie Kasrils, the highest-ranking Jew in South Africa's post-apartheid government, launched a declaration calling on South Africans of Jewish descent to protest Israel's policies towards Palestinians.

The furious debate he launched within the Jewish community is examined in Joel Pollak's *The Kasrils Affair: Jews and minority politics in post-apartheid South Africa*, published by UCT Press. The book

is a contemporary analysis, based largely on published commentary and interviews conducted with the members and staff of the Jewish Board of Deputies, which investigates broader patterns of Jewish political behaviour. The experience of the South African Jewish community in the Kasrils affair is compared with the recent experiences of Jewish communities in the UK, France and the United States.

The book also draws heavily on Pollak's personal insights and experiences. As a speechwriter for Tony

Leon at the time, he was directly involved in the debates and discussions surrounding the issue.

The Kasrils Affair is the result of Pollak's work for his master's in Jewish Studies at UCT's Kaplan Centre in 2004. "The book is essentially an update of my thesis to include unprecedented recent events, such as the rise of Zuma," he says. Although South African-born, Pollak grew up in the US, returning as a Rotary Scholar in 2000. He is currently studying law at Harvard College. **MP**

Oral on new TB diagnostic tests wins award



First prize: Dr Richard van Zyl-Smit won best PhD oral presentation at the recent Medical Research Council Research Day for his work on developing new rapid tests for diagnosing TB.

HELEN THÉRON

Pulmonologist Dr Richard van Zyl-Smit's oral presentation on new techniques to rapidly diagnose tuberculosis has won first prize at the annual South African Medical Research Council (MRC) Research Day.

The research day gave students from around the country the opportunity to present MRC-funded projects. Van Zyl-Smit's R20 000 prize will allow him to present his work, based on his PhD research, at an international conference.

Based in the Lung Infection and Immunity Unit in the Department of Medicine and the UCT Lung Institute, Van Zyl-Smit's main research examines the effect of tobacco smoking on the body's defence against TB.

During the initial phase of his PhD, while setting up smoking exposure protocols and methods, Van Zyl-Smit worked on several projects. One of these assesses new techniques to rapidly diagnose TB in patients who fail routine tests.

Under the supervision of Professor Keertan Dheda, several new tests are currently being evaluated.

The standard TB diagnostic technique is to identify the organism, carried in sputum, under a microscope, the same method employed since the 1900s.

"With HIV, a large number of patients either don't cough up sputum, or the sputum contains such a small number of organisms that they cannot be found using a microscope," Van Zyl-Smit explained. "TB also frequently occurs outside of the lung, making the diagnosis even more elusive."

Although the sputum samples or samples obtained from around the lung can be cultured for TB organisms, this is both costly and takes between six and eight weeks to diagnose.

"These delays affect the patients as they may get significantly sicker before the final diagnosis is reached. What we are doing is trying to diagnose TB within 24 hours, using alternative techniques to the microscope."

Other researchers at UCT and the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital are investigating ways to rapidly diagnose drug-resistance in TB. **MP**

New security system launched

A new campus security CCTV control room, costing about R2.5 million and two years in the making, has been launched. Contractors i to i technologies handed over the

revamped CCTV control room at Burnage to UCT at a launch function. The new control room boasts an array of electronic systems that allows Campus Protection Services to jump from camera-to-camera at the touch of a button.

New ICT head appointed



Hot seat: Sakkie van Rensburg joins UCT as executive director of ICT in 2009.

UCT has appointed Izak (Sakkie) van Rensburg as executive director of Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

Van Rensburg was director of ICT at the University of the Free State (UFS). He holds an MBA from UFS and has more than 25 years' experience in the ICT sector. He spent 22 years in the private sector, during which time he built a private business that was sold to a JSE-listed company in 1998.

He has a strong track record of developing ICT strategies in the higher-education sector and of aligning these with the university's systems.

While at UFS, Van Rensburg facilitated key technology decisions, and oversaw the successful implementation of various systems, all of which improved service to the university.

As UFS' strategic advisor, and reporting directly to senior management, he developed the university's ICT Strategic Plan and saw to its implementation. Part of his mandate was to align and harness technology for the benefit of the university's academic, administrative and research functions.

"With an in-depth knowledge of the industry, as well as of university strategy and operating models, Mr Van Rensburg is passionate about service and understands the needs of the teaching and research communities," said Acting Vice-Chancellor, Professor Thandabantu Nhlapo.

"Moreover, he understands research technologies and trends in the market and their potential applicability to the university."

He is also the co-ordinator of the Special Interest Group on High Performance Computing for South African universities.

"We welcome him on board," Nhlapo said.

Van Rensburg will take office on 1 February 2009. **MP**

Guidelines and applications for UCT's multilingual logos



UCT's logo has always been an easily recognisable image that connects all the university's activities and services and is publicly perceived as UCT's corporate signature.

The new multilingual logo has been updated to include the three official languages of the Western Cape and is available in several formats for use in various contexts.

To promote a consistent and professional image for the university, a set of guidelines regarding the use of the logo is available, including downloads and corporate stationery templates. These guidelines and templates are available on CDs

that have been distributed to all faculties and directorates. The guidelines explain how the various forms of the logo can be used most effectively.

Detailed multilingual logo guidelines and downloads are also available online at www.uct.ac.za/about/logo/overview/. Stationery templates are available at www.staff.uct.ac.za/administration/stationery/.

For further advice on the use of the multilingual logo, stationery and other layout matters relating to the logo, please contact Murray Steyn at email Murray.Steyn@uct.ac.za. **MP**

Calling all macebearers

The university urgently needs macebearers (staff or student volunteers) for the December 2008 graduation ceremonies.

The macebearers are required to: lead the platform party (procession) in and out of Jameson Hall at the start and end of ceremonies; and assist with providing academic dress to staff members joining the procession.

Macebearing is voluntary and there is no payment for providing this service.

If you would like to be a macebearer, kindly send your name and contact details to Denise Benjamin at denise.benjamin@uct.ac.za, telephone 021 650-2187 or fax 021 650-2138, by no later than 26 November 2008.

Please advise the date and time of the ceremony at which you would like to assist.

MONDAY - 08 DECEMBER

09h00 - EBE 1
14h00 - Science 1
18h00 - Health Sciences 1

TUESDAY 09 DECEMBER

10h00 - Humanities 1
15h00 - Commerce 1 (All BBusSc excluding Actuarial Science)

WEDNESDAY 10 DECEMBER

10h00 - EBE 2 and Science 2
15h00 - Commerce 2 (All BCom and BBusSc Actuarial Science)

THURSDAY 11 DECEMBER

10h00 - Humanities 2
15h00 - Commerce 3 (All Diplomas and Certificates. All Postgraduate Degrees)

FRIDAY 12 DECEMBER

10h00 - Humanities 3
15h00 - Health Sciences 2 and Law

Unique transport solution pays off for UCT

HELEN THÉRON

UCT will look at further collaborations and training with Amalgamated Transport Services following the successful dedicated taxi operation along the Claremont-Tugwell-Mowbray route during the past nine months.

The agreement signed with them last year was a first for the city.

In terms of the memorandum of understanding, Amalgamated Transport Services contracted their services to UCT for an exclusive, scheduled and regular service on the route from 06h00 to 09h00 during term time.

This "peak lopping" exercise allowed UCT to meet the increased demand for campus transport by freeing up buses previously used on the Claremont-Tugwell-Mowbray route and redeploying them on campus, and also alleviated traffic congestion at peak hours.

Speaking at a press conference on 6 November, executive director of properties and services, John Critien, said 42 000 rides were provided on campus daily, putting pressure on the Jammie Shuttles.

In August last year taxis blockaded Claremont Main Road to protest UCT's Jammie Shuttle operation on that route.

Critien and Anthony Davies, executive manager of the Claremont Improvement District Company, felt the best resolution was to negotiate a mutually beneficial deal with the taxi associations on Main Road.

"It was not just about the routes and UCT's problem, but the bigger picture. UCT sees itself as an institution that seeks national solutions and here we needed to engage with our own community and find a solution in our own backyard."

"The agreement has been effective and efficient, and our staff and students, of whom many were initially pessimistic, are delighted with the service," Critien said. **MP**



At the ad hominem cocktail function on 4 November, UCT celebrated the promotion of 58 academics, recognising their continued good work over the years. Vice-Chancellor Dr Max Price said their elevation reflected their excellence, which contributes to UCT's standing. Those promoted included 11 academics from the Faculty of Humanities, pictured here with Dean, Professor Paula Ensor. They are (from left) Assoc Prof Shamil Jeppie, Dr Imraan Coovadia, Gail Solomons, Svea Josephy, Dr Joanne Hardman, Assoc Prof David Lincoln, Ensor, Assoc Prof Mastin Prinsloo, Dr Wallace Chuma, Assoc Prof Yasin Dutton, Dr Lauren Wild and Assoc Prof Natasha Distiller. **MP**

String theory – small solutions to big questions

Even among theoretical physicists - not ones to be fazed by mind-bending mathematics - string theory is thought to be . . . testing. And, despite its multitude of followers, it's not a theory without its critics. Here's a brief introduction to a UCT group that, even in the face of the sceptics, is doing its bit to answer those big questions that physicists and mathematicians have posed themselves

MEGAN MORRIS

Just about the first thing Dr Jeff Murugan does when he steps into the office in the morning is log on to the electronic bulletin boards.

As a mathematical physicist leading UCT's String Theory Group, part of the Cosmology and Gravitation Group in the Department of Mathematics and Applied Mathematics, his first interest is just catching up on the latest developments in the field.

His second, perhaps more pressing worry is that he and his group members might have been scooped yet again by some or other paper. That's happened four times already this year.

But that's to be understood in the fast-paced world of string theory. First developed in the 1960s, string theory is hardly the new kid on the block. Its premise is that just about everything in this universe, from an electron to a star to a black hole, is made up of small vibrating strands of energy known as strings. Other hallmarks of string theory are supersymmetry, which holds that there is a yet-to-be discovered twin for every known particle in the universe, and talk of at least 10 dimensions (including the observable three of length, width and depth, plus time).

But after 30 years of not one testable prediction, some are ready - no, baying - to write string theory off. On the one hand.

On the other, a flurry of research, soaring student interest and unflinching - if not always flattering - media attention would suggest that string theory is yet to come into its own. Murugan thinks so, anyway.

But not one prediction that can be put to the test? After 30 years?

"You can't put a timeline on creativity," Murugan argues. (Hey, he points out, it took some 70 years before the technology was developed to test - and confirm - a theory first mooted by Einstein in the 1920s that, at very low temperatures, an ideal gas could condense into a highly degenerate state that would come to be called a Bose-Einstein condensate, which won its 'discoverers' the 2001 Nobel Prize in Physics.

So, too, string theory has made a number of predictions - such as

the extra seven dimensions - but the technology has yet to catch up, Murugan adds.

Others are not convinced. Like Distinguished Professor George Ellis, one of Murugan's own doctoral supervisors.

For years now, Murugan and Ellis have had a running battle on whether String Theory has a leg to stand on. Their disagreement centres mainly on the issue of quantising gravity, ie the problem of getting a consistent description of small-scale, high-energy effects in gravitating systems.

Murugan and other string theorists believe it's not possible to quantise gravity on its own. To study quantum gravity effects in a lab environment, for example, requires astoundingly high energies to accommodate the relative weakness of gravity, the weakest of the four forces.

But, says Murugan, once you push energies up that high, all the forces get so tangled up that it makes no sense to make sense of them individually.

"At that point, the four interactions all start speaking to each other. They become so strongly coupled you can't disentangle them."

"That sounds sensible," holds Ellis, "but I do not think that string theory is necessarily the only way to go to achieve this result." He opts, instead, for "the broad nature" of an alternative programme for quantising

gravity called Loop Quantum Gravity, which uses technical methods that have also been used successfully to quantise other forces. But, admits Ellis, "both programmes are speculative and incomplete, and we do not have evidence that either is correct - or that either is wrong. The situation is that we know very well



how things work at lower energies than [the high energies that] occurred in the first few seconds of the very early universe. We have to extrapolate from the known to the unknown to understand higher energies, and there are different ways to do this. We can't yet prove which is right and which is wrong."

But the argument hints at another, much trumpeted, claim of string theory. As things stand, the weak and strong nuclear forces and electromagnetism live happily together in quantum field theory,

but remain at odds with gravity, as described in Einstein's Theory of General Relativity.

String theory, though, has been hailed as that one theory that, when all the pieces fall together, would be that oh-so elusive Theory of Everything, the mathematical theory that would finally unify the fundamental forces of nature into one, clean, formulation.

But that may just be poor marketing, says Murugan.

In a reductionist model, where matter is broken down into ever-smaller building blocks - from molecules to atoms to nucleons to quarks - when building back up, you eventually hit a wall of complexity that we don't understand, he argues. By billing it as a Theory of Everything, string theorists may have done themselves a disservice.

"It sets up expectations that can't be met," says Murugan.

Either way, string theory continues to win new converts. At least at UCT, where Murugan's group has just launched an honours course.

"It's an exciting field because things are moving so fast," says Migael Strydom, one such honours student. "And it's got some interesting mathematics."

Murugan's even had to turn down some applications for sheer lack of personnel. (Dr Amanda Weltman, who runs the group with him, is currently based at Cambridge University. For now, the group consists

of two faculty members, one postdoctoral research fellow, three doctoral students and an MSc student.

And with generous support from the likes of the National Research Foundation and the Department of Science and Technology, things are looking up for the group.

"The scientific community here in South Africa is growing significantly," says Dr Alex Hamilton, the postdoc who joined the group from the US. This at a time when financial support for scientists is taking something of a nosedive in the US. (A recent *Newsweek* article suggested that US scientists are making a cross-Atlantic exodus to Europe and the Large Hadron Collider in Switzerland.)

And thanks to the telecommunications

revolution, even geographically isolated South Africa can get in on the action. The electronic archive he dips into daily has gone a long way to levelling the playing fields, says Murugan.

"Now Calcutta is as competitive as Caltech."

The String Theory Group is also attracting several overseas visitors over the coming year. In December, it's staging a small meeting of local and international scientists to huddle over topics of interest to researchers in the group.

And come August 2009, Murugan and Ellis will take their difference of opinion to the next level at Foundations of Time and Space: Reflections on Quantum Gravity, a gathering of minds at UCT to celebrate Ellis' 70th birthday. Here they will table viable tools - Murugan's String Theory and Ellis' Loop Quantum Gravity among them - to bring together Quantum Field Theory and General Relativity.

Such is the interest in the meeting, which promises to bring together some of the leading names in the field, that Cambridge University Press has already signed on to publish the proceedings.

"We're hoping that this book will be the benchmark for Quantum Gravity and where the field stands at the moment," says Murugan.

It may well become the envy of others who scour their electronic archive in the mornings. **MP**



Pushing boundaries: UCT's String Theory Group includes, from left, Migael Strydom, Dr Alex Hamilton, Dr Jeff Murugan, Obinna Umeh and Andrea Prinsloo.

A DAY IN THE LIFE *of the Human Resources Registry*

MYOLISI GOPHE

The Human Resources Registry office is known to its staff members as the "heartbeat" of UCT. It is entrusted with confidential personal information of all UCT staff members, from the Vice-Chancellor down to contract employees. David van Sensie, registry controller, and Oscar Scheepers, registry assistant, are the two staff members working there.

What does the office do?

The office looks after the records of academic, research, professional, administration and support staff, contract employees as well as those of the retirees. Van Sensie and Scheepers see to it that all documents are filed correctly in alphabetical order or according to executive, department, permanent or contract employees ranks. The files contain

personal confidential folders such as letters of appointment, and information on benefits, salaries, pension funds, medical aid, leave, payments and performance records. This information is supplied mainly to the HR staff, who work with UCT staff queries, but general staff may also have access to their files. The office also confirms employment to business organisations when individuals open accounts with institutions such as shops and banks.

What are the challenges facing the office?

Unlike many work environments, the HR Registry has no peak and low seasons. It is an on-going paper chase from January to December. "We will go on until retirement," jokes Van Sensie. The work requires speed, accuracy and good time management. "And we



The heartbeat: Oscar Scheepers and David van Sensie keep the HR Registry ticking over.

must do it right the first time. There is no place for misfiling," Scheepers notes. "It is difficult to keep up with the volume of paper work.

Van Sensie.

What are the highs and lows?

The low points are when people come with long lists of requests. This demands that a number of files be found to extricate the information, "which is terrible". And it frustrates the two men when people mark their requests as urgent but then take ages to collect it. But the fact that Van Sensie and Scheepers are entrusted with the university's confidential information makes them feel great. "We are the heartbeat of UCT," said Scheepers. And they get compliments all the time.

What strange requests have they received?

They often get phone calls from shops and banks demanding payment from people who had pretended to be working at the university but had left long ago.

Skotnes celebrates the San in a book and an exhibition



Unconquerable: Prof Pippa Skotnes brings paintings by George Stow and the San people to the public.

MYOLISI GOPHE

Professor Pippa Skotnes has paid tribute to George Stow and the San people with a book and an exhibition of their work.

Called *Unconquerable Spirit*, the book reproduces all Stow's paintings, as well as examples of the

maps, drawings, notes and poems he produced.

Skotnes, director of the Michaelis School of Fine Art, arranged for the restoration and preservation of Stow's collection of copies of San rock paintings. She presents them as Stow's interpretations of the ideas that moved the San artists and, in part,

as a product of the turbulent frontier wars and the end of the San way of life that Stow witnessed.

Stow arrived in South Africa in the mid 19th century and travelled more than two thousand miles on foot to create a record of the creative work of the San people, who he believed to be the only true aboriginal people of the country.

Skotnes said the Mellon Foundation-funded project, an initiative of her Centre for Curating the Archive, is a tribute to Stow and to the San people who both displayed an "unconquerable spirit".

Skotnes explains: "I wanted to place the collection in the public domain, both to recover Stow from his obscurity and to reveal some of the loveliness of the rock art of the San."

She said the book is also part of an ongoing project to publish all the material related to Lucy Lloyd, who bought the collection of copies of rock art after Stow's death in 1882.

The exhibition is at the Iziko South African Museum until February 2009. **MP**

Cape Jazz tunes booked

Cape Jazz Collection



original tunes
by South African composers

compiled by Colin Miller

Merton Barrow, Hilton and Tony Schilder, Robbie Jansen, Mike Campbell, Mac McKenzie, Mark Fransman and Winston Mankunku. It constitutes, say the editors, an extremely useful resource for music educators, musicians and bands, and signals a landmark development in the documentation and publication of local music, which is extremely under-resourced in this area.

"Originally, the ambition was to produce a *South African Jazz Real Book*, but with limited resources at our disposal, it became clear that the costs

in terms of research, editing and publishing were too high for a national focus," said Miller, who received assistance from several local musicians in compiling the collection. "Hence we have restricted it to a more manageable collection of jazz compositions from the Cape."

That SA jazz book is on the backburner for now, but not forgotten.

The *Cape Jazz Collection* is available from www.sheetmusic.co.za and at some local music-instrument retail outlets. **MP**

Three wise-cracking men on show



Smart: Rabinowitz, Lottering and Moosa will have you hanging on for dear life.

Take the son of a Pentecostal preacher, a Muslim doctor and a Jewish linguist. Shake well under the direction of David Kramer and you have *Three Wise Men*, a *regmaker* for the festive season at the Baxter Theatre, from 18 November to 10 January 2009.

Marc Lottering, Riaad Moosa and Nik Rabinowitz, three of Cape Town's funniest sons, will be just the tonic you need, in an evening of comedy with a difference. The show combines the talents of all three comedians and includes elements of stand-up, character sketches, music and song, with a live band on stage, led by Donvino Prins.

Tickets for *Three Wise Men* cost R70 to R120, except for New Year's Eve, and there are special discounts available for group bookings of ten or more. Performances run from Mondays to Fridays at 20h00, and on Saturdays at 18h00 and 21h00. Advance booking is recommended via Computicket at www.computicket.com or 083 915 8000. **MP**

UCT jazz graduate and arts project manager Colin Miller has launched the first *Cape Jazz Collection*, a book of original tunes by South African composers, at UCT's South African College of Music. The event saw some of the Cape's legendary jazz musicians and a roomful of music aficionados gather to toast the first ever book of Cape Jazz sheet music.

The title was five years in the making and features 39 original compositions by musicians such as

ERRATUM

The Monday Paper edition of 6-19 October, vol 27 no 17, incorrectly listed Candice van Reenen, Roger Wallace and Julie Nadler-Visser as staff members of the Research office. They actually form part of Research Contracts & Intellectual Property Services (RCIPS).

Jake White gets his Ikey stripes



Getting started: Biokineticist Tiaan Campher plugs in Matthew Rosslee for a series of fitness tests as the UCT Rugby Club kicked off its 2009 Varsity Cup campaign.

HOWARD KAHN

UCT head coach John Dobson has enlisted the help of some high-profile coaches and sports scientists as the Ikey Tigers attempt to go one

better in next year's FNB Varsity Cup tournament.

The Ikeys topped the log after an exciting inaugural Varsity Cup league campaign, before beating Pukke in a drama-filled semifinal encounter and

Bob have plenty of experience and they're used to winning, but the nice thing is that they will add something different with their amazing intellectual capital."

Dobson, the man credited with

then going down in injury-time to the Maties in a pulsating final in April.

Dobson, however, is refusing to rest on his laurels and, along with assistant coach Robbie Fleck (who continues to look after the UCT backline), World Cup winners Jake White and Bob Skinstad have joined the Ikey Tigers management team as technical advisors for the 2009 Varsity Cup.

Skinstad and White will join Dobson, Fleck, former Bok lock Selborne Boome (line-out specialist) and scrumming expert Paul Day (a former Western Province prop) in a truly world-class coaching unit.

"It's great news having Jake and Bob involved with us next year," said Dobson.

"Bob will initially start working with the loose forwards, but he won't be limited to that alone, while Jake will look to help us as much as possible, given his commitments with Saracens.

"It goes without saying that Jake and

turning UCT rugby around, continued: "We don't have money like the other universities to contract coaches or players, and we don't have a rugby academy at UCT either.

"However, in involving Jake, Bob and others we're trying to give the players an education in rugby – a high-level rugby MBA, in a sense.

"We need to attract players to the club, and hopefully an opportunity of working with some of the biggest names in world rugby and exposure to this intellectual property will benefit us, and the players, in more ways than one. We are a nursery – we have produced the most Springboks after Stellenbosch – and we would like talented young thinking players to seriously consider UCT.

"Someone like Selborne is among the best line-out coaches in the world, and we all know Fleckie's value as a backline coach. This might be a big management team, but we've assembled a coaching staff that we think will truly add value to UCT and the FNB Varsity Cup."

Away from the training field, UCT will also have the support of the Sports Science Institute of South Africa, with renowned sports scientist Professor Tim Noakes lending his considerable intellectual weight to the Ikeys' Varsity Cup campaign, along with regular first-team biokineticist Tiaan Campher, who will once again whip the players into shape.

"The difference between winning and losing is a small margin," said Noakes. "Our aim is to help John and his players realise this in 2009.

"John has assembled a very talented young squad and I have no doubt they will go on to achieve many great things. The Sports Science Institute of South Africa will be available for the players to use, for fitness and testing, and hopefully we can help turn this talented team into a trophy-winning side."

While the Ikey Tigers shocked both friend and foe with their unique brand of winning rugby in 2008, Dobson is fully aware of the so-called 'second season syndrome', never

mind the fact that he will also have to make do without some of his key men from this past season.

Wing Mat Turner is now playing professionally in England, game-breaking flank Kyle Brown has just been called up to the SA Sevens squad and prop Herbie Mayosi is no longer eligible for the Varsity Cup. Also, a host of other players could be involved with Western Province at Vodacom Cup level next year.

"I guess we're becoming victims of our own success," said Dobson with a wry smile. "A lot of our players have been signed up by bigger and wealthier institutions, but we have to accept that as being part of our vision: to produce new players.

"I would love to have kept last year's team together, but the fact that so many have been snapped up is a testament to our success. But those setbacks aside, Robbie and I have spoken at length about how we can rebuild our squad and once again create a stir with our unique brand of rugby." **MP**

UCT management team for 2009:

Coaching staff:

Head coach: John Dobson
Assistant and backline coach: Robbie Fleck
Technical advisors: Bob Skinstad and Jake White
Scrum coach: Paul Day
Line-out coach: Selborne Boome
Manager: Steve Butt
Strategist: Professor Tim Noakes
Mindfulness coach: Simon Whitesman

Medical staff:

Team doctor: George Domisse
Biokineticist: Tiaan Campher
Head physiotherapist: Gerald Muller
Medical assistant: Eljoh Theron

Article appears courtesy of www.365rugby.com.

Students thrown into the Ocean Race

Three students, Kanya Mdaka, Phillip Mkorongo and Luke Smit, on the Postgraduate Diploma in Sport Management, are putting theory into practice at the multi-million dollar, four-ocean Volvo Ocean Race.

As media assistants, the trio assist World Sport, organisers of the Cape Town stopover, in various aspects relating to media and marketing of the event. This involves everything from sending regular press releases to keeping a lookout for broadcast opportunities on aspects of the race. So, for example, the students managed to get SABC's award-winning environmental

programme 50/50 to do a slot on the race.

The students also liaise with media personnel of the participating teams as well as the Volvo Ocean Race event management media staff, putting them in contact with local media.

With a big event such as the US\$340-million Volvo Ocean Race (boats pull in at 10 major ports around the globe) it's an enviable stage on which the students can cut their marketing teeth.

And hectic. As yachts come into Cape Town at all hours, it's a 24-hour exercise, with updates and press releases going out throughout the

night. (Luckily for the students, busy with exams, they've been excused from these all-nighters.)

The experience complements the classroom material well, notes Mkorongo. "The sports management industry puts a lot of weight to practical experience," he says.

It's the second time students on the programme have tackled events in the real world. In addition to a six-week internship, students also had a hand in running the World Rope Skipping Championships in Cape Town over July and August.

Which will look good on a CV.

"These experiences are beyond valuable," says Mkorongo. **MP**



Real world: Students Phillip Mkorongo and Kanya Mdaka at work on the Volvo Ocean Race.