

Monday Paper

Newspaper of the University of Cape Town



February 18 - March 2, 2008

Volume 27#01



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
IYUNIVESITHI YASEKAPA • UNIVERSITEIT VAN KAAPSTAD

Shaking and stirring

Campus came alive during the past weeks as lifelong students, enjoying the smorgasbord of offerings at UCT's Summer School, mingled with an eager clutch of first-years, trotting after faculty orientation leaders. Parents' Day and Orientation Week were followed by registration, with all the clubs and societies on hand to sign up new members. The Freshers' Braai was a forerunner to SAX Appeal Day on 14 February, followed by the Big Bash, presented by RAG, on 15 February.



Fun times: Clockwise, from top left, Sarah Forsyth makes her way to Tugwell Hall, with a little help from parents and friends; Parents' Day at on 2 February saw Derek Muller in action, explaining the routes and routines of the Jammie Shuttle; Doug Carson takes a break at the Freshers' Braai on 7 February; Second-year property studies student Nametso Maikano of Botswana signed up during IAPO's international students registration day on 30 January; Orientation leaders take international students on a tour of upper campus; DJ Yumna of UCT Radio struts her stuff during Orientation Week; Razia Parker (left) of the Muslim Student Association signs up was Tasneem Johnson; Summer Schooler Helen Cairns gets her hands dirty modelling clay.

Greetings from the Vice-Chancellor

As the 2008 UCT academic year starts and classes officially open their doors, I am delighted to welcome new and returning students.

A community of nearly thirty thousand students and staff begin another annual academic journey involving the teaching, research and social outreach which is the lifeblood of our existence. This is seasonal activity that has been going on for more than 175 years.

We are justifiably proud of our historic record, and are continuously dedicated to improving it. I welcome all newcomers to the UCT community, confident that they, too, in various ways, will contribute their enormous talents diverse experiences to our university.

The university has, of course, never been completely at rest. It never really is. Since late last year, faculties have been preparing for their annual

intake of new and returning students. While many of us enjoyed the holiday season, there were many colleagues at work – ensuring that all is done to make the intake of the 2008 students as smooth as possible. In addition, the ever popular Summer School was run, and many researchers used the summer teaching break to pursue research activities.

I thank all members of the UCT community who were involved in the work leading up to the registration. This year in particular the processes ran smoother than before and I congratulate all involved. UCT depends on such outstanding contributions of staff to maintain and forever build on its traditions of excellence.

As most of you know, I am now in the final stretch of my tenure at UCT. I leave on 30 June 2008 and Dr Max Price will begin his time as Vice-Chan-

cellor of UCT on 1 July 2008. I am working directly with him to ensure an efficient operational changeover. Interacting with him in this regard, and meeting his family, have been a pleasure.

Our transition plan is steering our actions as we go through these last six months and into the first six under Dr. Price's leadership.

This includes securing a strong executive office throughout the next 12 months, taking full cognisance of the impact of the executive changes in my office which will take place in the coming months, namely the retirement of Prof Martin West, Prof Martin Hall's move to the Graduate School of Business, and the recent resignation of Prof Cheryl de la Rey.

A proposal for the interim arrangements to deal with these changes has been developed and will be considered

by Council in early March.

The proposal has as its aim the smooth and stable transition, but also to place the new Vice-Chancellor in the strongest possible position to recruit and develop his new executive team.

I will communicate the final plan to you as soon as consultation has been concluded.

As we begin a new academic year, all of us must be fully aware of the larger changes taking place nationally, continentally and globally. In particular, we are experiencing leadership changes nationally. We are called upon to be responsive to the imperative of greater conservation of energy. We face the challenge to improve our national system of education in its entirety. We desire peace, security, and stability in Africa to ensure sustained development. Crucially, we need to

respond to the call for more effective governance of world affairs. These and many other challenges will impact on us in some ways in the coming months. They call on us to be citizens with critical awareness - more so on a university campus. The world needs its universities more than ever. This presents UCT with enormous opportunities.

All in all, it is a situation that brings with it immense possibilities for intellectual invigoration, renewed energy and an enjoyable and productive year.

Indeed, the miracle of universities is that as we all come and go as individuals, they seem to grow more strongly. Every new year makes us aware of the privilege of this marvel.

*Professor Njabulo S Ndebele
Vice-Chancellor and Principal*

Cutting-edge facility launched

UCT's Department of Human Biology launched its new Advanced Microscope Imaging Facility on 28 January.

The facility was established through the joint efforts of more than 20 co-applicants and with funding from the NRF National Equipment Programme, the Cancer Research Trust and UCT.

One of the key pieces of equipment is the Zeiss LSM510 Confocal Microscope, which is capable of performing a multitude of functions required in cutting-edge cell biology and biomedical research.

The launch function took the form of a day-long introductory workshop on confocal microscopy, which included several demonstrations, discussions and a guided tour.

"This imaging facility is not only for the benefit of the scien-



In focus: Dr Joerg Lindenau, Zeiss applications specialist from Jena, Germany, at the new Advanced Microscope Imaging Facility.

tists here at UCT," says Faculty of Health Sciences Deputy Dean Professor Kit Vaughan. "It is both a national and a regional asset, and we welcome its utilisation by all interested scientists, whether they are from academia or industry."

Although it has not been officially commissioned yet, the facility is already participating in several projects, and publications using data generated there are expected to be submitted soon.

CHRIS MCEVOY

Morris's finding listed in Time top 10

The 24 December 2007 edition of *Time* magazine has listed the Hofmeyr skull finding among its top 10 scientific discoveries of 2007.

Titled *Man's Migration out of Africa*, the article came in ninth on the list and eighth on their website.

It's significant that the Hofmeyr skull, found in the Eastern Cape in 1952, was dated only early in 2007 by an international team of scientists. That team included UCT's Professor

Alan Morris (anatomy).

The skull revealed the first fossil evidence that modern humans left Africa between 65 000 and 25 000 years ago.

Testing the levels of radiation in mud that had filled the skull, they estimated it to be around 36 000 years old and that it matched skulls found in Europe, eastern Asia and Australia, in age and appearance. This underscores the theory that modern man originated

in sub-Saharan Africa and migrated from there.

"Sometimes we have heritage gems stored in old collections that need to be studied," Morris said. "The Hofmeyr skull was finally dated by new technologies and it was the date that gave us its importance.

"I'm sure there is more to discover just by properly examining what we already have in the collections." HELEN THÉRON

Stewart's distinguished career recognised

UCT lecturer, Professor Theo Stewart, has been awarded a gold medal by the International Society on Multiple Criteria Decision Making (MCDM), the first from a developing country.

The society has members from 85 countries with purposes to develop, test, evaluate and apply methodologies for solving multiple criteria decision-making problems, to foster interaction

and research in the field and to cooperate with other organisations in the study of management from a quantitative perspective.

The award is the highest honour bestowed upon a scholar who, over a distinguished career, has devoted much of his talent, time and energy to the field of MCDM, and who has markedly contributed to its theory, methodology and practice.

Stewart has been working in the Department of Statistical Sciences for many years, specialising in operational research. He was announced as the winner when the MCDM held its biannual conference in Auckland, New Zealand, early this month.

"It is great to have such recognition. It shows that even in Africa we can be seen as competing on the world stage," Stewart said. MYOLISI GOPHE

New study examines animal behaviour

Associate Professor Iain MacDonald of UCT's Department of Actuarial Science was one of the contributors to a new study on animal behaviour that meaningfully represents the motivational state of animals by observing their eating routine. Completed over several years, it's a study that has taken the collaboration of three researchers on three continents. Titled *Modelling Time Series of Animal Behaviour by Means of a Latent-State Model with Feedback*, the paper examines the eating behav-

our of eight Scarce Bordered Straw (*Helicoverpa armigera*) caterpillars over a 19-hour period. The purpose was to model the states underlying behaviour, such as hunger and satiety, in a way that can be dissociated from specific behaviours. MacDonald wrote the paper with Professor Walter Zucchini of the University of Göttingen and Professor David Raubenheimer of the University of Auckland. The paper was published in the leading international journal *Biometrics*. CHRIS MCEVOY



Prof Iain MacDonald of the Department of Actuarial Science was one of three contributors to a groundbreaking study on animal behaviour.

UCT man leads international asthma group

UCT's Professor of Respiratory Medicine, Eric Bateman, has been appointed chairperson of the Global Initiative for Asthma (GINA), becoming the first person from a developing country to lead the group.

GINA works with health-care professionals and public health officials around the world to reduce asthma prevalence, morbidity and mortality.

Bateman, the founder of UCT's Lung Institute and head of the Division of Pulmonology in the Department of Medicine, has been involved in GINA for the last six years, four years serving as chair of the 96 country-member body's Science Committee, which develops evidence-based guidelines for treatment of the condition. In this capacity, Bateman has worked hard to improve representation from developing countries and to ensure that the guidelines are global and applicable.

"It's nice that we (developing countries) have made it to leadership positions in asthma care in the world," he said.

An important component of the work of GINA is dissemination and implementation, and the GINA asthma management guidelines are the most widely quoted and used documents for this condition. In their latest revision, edited by Bateman, they have been successfully simplified in the hope of ensuring improved care and access to care for asthma sufferers.



New heights: Prof Eric Bateman has been appointed chairperson of the Global Initiative for Asthma.

The challenge in implementing guidelines is to partner with governments health departments and involve the community at large. "Countries do spend money on treating asthma but some do not spend it well. We need to encourage them to adopt effective strategies and purchase effective treatments," Bateman said.

He added that he was "enthusiastic" about the work and wanted to see improved care for asthma patients around the world in his four-year term. MP

Royal Society funds 'dark energy' research

Astronomers at UCT and the University of Portsmouth in the UK have bagged a grant worth over R2 million to work together on the nature of 'dark energy', which is causing the expansion of the universe to accelerate. The grant is funded by the Royal Society and the National Research Foundation in South Africa,

and provides approximately R680 000 to each university per year for two years, with a possible extension for a further three years. It will allow students and scientists at both universities to learn from each other as well as share facilities as they attempt to solve a conundrum that has puzzled astronomers for many years. MP

Speaker on gender and healthcare

Visiting UK academic Professor Lesley Doyal is scrutinising issues of sex, gender, health and health care in a series of talks at UCT. An honorary professor at UCT and a World Health Organisation consultant, Doyal's first address in sex and gender was on 14 February. Two more lectures are scheduled: Sex, Gender and Health Research on Thursday, 21 February, at 13h30-15h30 in the Post-

graduate meeting room 2, Barnard Fuller Building; and Gender Sensitivity and Gender Politics in Health Care on Wednesday, 27 February, at 14h00-16h00 in the Barnard Fuller Conference room 1& 2. For more information and to RSVP, contact either Di Cooper (Diane.Cooper@uct.ac.za) or Phyllis Orner (Phyllis.Orner@uct.ac.za) of the Women's Health Research Unit. MP

Earth sciences co-operation declaration signed

A declaration of co-operation has been signed between the Africa Earth Observatory Network (AEON-Cape Town) and GeoForschungsZentrum Potsdam (GFZ-Potsdam), marking the start of a second five-year phase of the Inkaba yeAfrica Earth science project.

GFZ-Potsdam is Europe's leading centre of geosciences. In Africa, AEON, hosted by UCT, is leading the way.

Inkaba is a top-level, cross-disciplinary research collaboration project between GFZ-Potsdam and AEON, focusing on Africa.

Why Africa? For starters, South Africa is the locus of dramatic changes in the Earth's magnetic field. And understanding the processes that formed the African continent are vital to an overall

knowledge of how Earth systems operate.

The partners plan to establish a Global Change Observatory in Southern Africa to study climate change in the Southern Hemisphere.

As developments at Davos have shown, earth stewardship has never been more imperative.

"In 10 years business schools will be teaching Earth stewardship science," said UCT's Professor Maarten de Wit (geological sciences), AEON director.

The second phase of the Inkaba project will see a bigger commitment to people; among them 21 postdoctoral and 44 PhD students from various universities, including newcomers to the project, the Universities of the Free State and Fort Hare. **HELEN THÉRON**



Collaboration: The German Minister for Education and Research, Dr Annette Schavan, attended the signing of the co-operation declaration.

Journal cred for academic website

The Department of Education has accredited LitNet Akademies, a sub-site of Professor Etienne van Heerden's cultural website, LitNet (www.litnet.co.za), as an online academic journal.

"The development was initiated as part of our wide-ranging offering on books, literature and cultural debate on the site," Van Heerden of the Language and Literature said.

He is also the online journal's editor.

Van Heerden added that LitNet Akademies is set to develop into a vibrant new academic journal.

Contributors will enjoy the standard benefits under the subsidy scheme for accredited, peer-reviewed journals.

"As far as I know, LitNet Akademies is the first Afrikaans online journal to enjoy subsidy status."

Van Heerden has secured substantial funding via the Stigting vir Bemagtiging deur Afrikaans, which means that, on top of the subsidy, the writer of a peer-reviewed article on LitNet Akademies will receive R8 000 to further their research.

LitNet Akademies will not be charging

any page fees. The online journal will publish Afrikaans research in the humanities, such as history, psychology and literature.

The advisory board consists of academics from South Africa, the UK, and the Netherlands.

"LitNet Akademies hopes to stimulate research by especially a younger generation of academics, but hopes to attract substantial contributions from established experts in the different disciplines in the humanities," Van Heerden said. **MP**

Healthy coffers for RAG 2007

RAG 2007 raised R1.3 million for SHAWCO last year, bang on target and well almost double the amount raised in 2006.

The main money spinners were the Big Bash (around R200 000), touted to be the biggest student party in the Southern Hemisphere, *Sax Appeal* (around R600 000, with 30 000 to 34 000 copies sold on *Sax Appeal*

Day) as well as the Soweto String Quartet concert in Kirstenbosch (R50 000) and sales of the RAG diary to students (R200 000). The latter was sponsored by Nedbank.

"Essentially, all our projects were successful, meeting their targets," said RAG 2007 chair, Steve Preston.

They also secured close to R1 million in corporate sponsorships

from Nedbank, Old Mutual, the V&A Waterfront, South African Breweries, Pick 'n Pay and the Peninsula Beverage Company.

"RAG 2007 has thrown down the gauntlet to RAG 2008 and challenged them to at least match if not exceed R1.3 million," said Spencer Fincham, vice-chair (marketing/public relations). **HELEN THÉRON**

Farrant bags the silver

Professor Jill Farrant of UCT's Department of Molecular and Cell Biology has won the senior (silver) medal of the South African Association of Botanists (SAAB).

The medal is awarded for excellence in research and for service to the association, and is one of its highest honours.

But winning awards is nothing new to Farrant. Among her numerous honours are the South African Association for the Advancement of Science bronze medal, the South African Biological Society Captain Scott Memorial Bronze Medal for her MSc research and the SAAB bronze medal for her PhD. She was also awarded the National Research Foundation (NRF) President's award.

Farrant was offered an NRF chair at the University of KwaZulu-Natal,



Another win: Prof Jill Farrant won the silver medal of the South African Association of Botanists.

but declined the offer after UCT offered her an equivalent research chair in molecular physiology of plant desiccation tolerance, which she will

hold until 2011.

Farrant is currently the vice-president of SAAB, and will take over as president in 2009. **MP**

NEWS WRAP

Unity is strength as teams scoop CHED award

Three academic teams have won the inaugural Centre for Higher Education Development's Award for Collaborative Educational Practice after their projects were found to be "excellent examples of collaborative practice".

The CHED Award was launched last year and three groups won a total of R40 000.

The winners are Associate Professor Gay Morris and Liz van Breda for their Learning Through Drama and Theatre project, a second-semester BA course in the Department of Drama, in which student groups devise theatre-in-education programmes to be performed at schools; Dr David Jacobs and Dr Justin O'Riain for their Field Course in Behavioural Ecology, a three-week field camp for innovative teaching methods and collaborations in the three Western Cape universities; and Professor Saalih Allie and Andy Buffler for producing a *Student Work Book*, materials to support the teaching of practical first-year physics laboratory skills.

Jeff Jawitz of CHED said they were excited about the quality of the applications and the winners proved that their projects were not just "nice ideas" but sustainable and effective teaching practices. **MYOLISI GOPHE**

Nashua around campus

Nashua Cape Town has been appointed as the new copy and print vendors for UCT. Its UCT subsidiary, Campus Copy and print, offers a range of services, from collection and delivery to course material/readers, as well as office stationery like business cards, compliments slips, letterheads, brochures, etc. All of its copy/print depots are equipped with email facilities, so if staff have documents they need printed from an electronic format, any of the depots on campus can assist. The Nashua helpdesk can be reached at either extensions 4813/15 or at email ucthelp@cape.nashua.co.za.

Researchers score with patent incentive paybacks

Fifteen UCT researchers from the health sciences, science, and the engineering and the built environment faculties have benefited from a collective R232 000, awarded by the Innovation Fund for South African patents granted in 2006.

The money is an incentive to encourage researchers to file patents.

Research Contracts & Intellectual Property Services (RCIPS) apply annually on behalf of UCT inventors. Individuals receive

between R8 000 and R20 000, depending on the number of inventors associated with each patent.

UCT also received more than R280 000 from the Innovation Fund's Patent Support Fund, which supports tertiary institutions in their IP protection endeavours. This is a 50% refund of expenses UCT incurred for the protection of intellectual property.

The beneficiaries are Emer Assoc Prof Richard Loewenthal, Dr Barak Morgan, Prof Ed Rybicki, Dr Arvind Varsani, Dr Fred Nicolls, Bernard Osstendorp, Gordon Forbes, Glen Heinrich, Prof Margit Harting, Assoc Prof David Britton, Emer Prof Gerhard de Jager, Douglas Hatfield, Assoc Prof Dee Bradshaw, Jerome Francis and Sameer Morar.

Among others, their inventions target the treatment of acidic mine drainage water, the human papilloma virus, semi conductors, and the recovery of minerals by froth flotation.

Assoc Prof Vernon Coyne, Dr Brett Macey and Dr Kim ten Doeschate of the molecular and cell biology research group also received R60 000 for their patent for probiotics that they developed to speed up the growth and reduce mortalities of farmed abalone.

Fellowship

Emeritus Professor Alexander Petroianu of the Department of Electrical Engineering has been nominated as a Fellow of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineering (IEEE). A non-profit organisation, the IEEE is a leading international professional association that advances technology. Petroianu's area of expertise is powers systems analysis and his nomination recognises his contribution to analytical tools for system security and training system operators.

New work on TRC

New from the pen of Distinguished Professor Philippe-Joseph Salazar (Centre for Rhetoric Studies) comes a co-edited book with Distinguished Professor of Rhetoric at the University of South Carolina.

Published by New Africa Books, *Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa: The Fundamental Documents*, is described as a groundbreaking volume, providing "an explicit and often startling view of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission".

"In the name of understanding the commission's development work and findings, it features a rich variety of materials, including many selections from the TRC's archive of testimony and its final report that have yet to receive public scrutiny.

The volume grapples with the difficult concepts of truth and reconciliation and why these words have challenged international pre-conceptions about the "power and potential of African politics".

New financial aid policy opens doors for students

This year will see UCT up its contribution to financial aid by R4 million to R45 million - and along with this increase, there are some drastic changes to funding policy, which aim to increase accessibility to UCT and address equity issues.

With some savings from 2007, UCT's total contribution will be R51 million. Add this to the many other bursaries and loans, and a total of just over R100 million will be distributed to up to 3 500 UCT

students in scholarships and financial aid assistance.

Policy changes to financial aid include:

- Expected Family Contributions payments have been reduced by up to 50%, making them more affordable, especially for lower-income families;
- for the first time, set-value bursaries are being offered to undergraduates in their first years of study, making UCT's financial aid more marketable and attractive to

prospective students;

- all South African citizens including permanent residents, are now eligible for funding, and
- living allowances have been increased to closer reflect the current cost of living, and to allow students to find accommodation in more accessible areas to UCT.

Deputy vice-chancellor Professor Thandabantu Nhlapo explains the reasons for the policy change.

"Our concerns were that the financial aid system was not

capturing the capable but poor students that we really wanted; that many middle-class families were excluded by an income that placed them outside financial aid parameters, yet in real terms could not afford UCT fees; that UCT was putting in significant amounts of money into financial aid to assist the National Student Financial Aid Scheme, yet we were marketing our offering wrongly by stressing the loan component, instead of the bursary aspect. We were also pos-

sibly violating the law in not offering financial aid to South African permanent residents.

"I think the new financial aid policy has become an important tool in our drive to get the best students to UCT, whatever their origin or past circumstances. I am very happy with it, and I think if we continue to improve our practices, we will make a real contribution to access to UCT for students from previously disadvantaged backgrounds." **CHRIS MCEVOY**

LETTERS

Dear Editor

While I am as pleased as anyone over the inclusion of UCT among the top 200 universities in the world (*Monday Paper*, November 26th), I find ironic the comment by Prof Cheryl de la Rey on our excellent score (68/100) on citations to work published by UCT researchers. She is quoted as saying that "...we emphasise the importance ...of peer-reviewed publications in high-impact journals..."

I am afraid that this has little to do with UCT as an institution or its expectations, but a lot to do with the individuals doing the work: in most cases there is no incentive for high-level publication, other than the desire for personal and group betterment, and possibly the expectation that good publications will be rewarded when it comes to promotion. Despite the fact that publications in recognised journals are rewarded by subsidy from the Department of Education to the tune of R70 000 or more each, the Faculty of Health Sciences and the University Research Committee give merely a token amount to researchers on the basis of publications during any given year, compared to what is actually brought in. In fact, there is not even a recognised avenue any more for reimbursement of publication costs - and it can cost R10 000 or more to publish a scientific paper in the new online free-access journals such as the BMC series. This seems to be rather unfair, given the high potential return to the University of what ends up being unrecompensed research fund expenditure!

A lot of this seems to have to do with the unchallenged assumption by Profs de la Rey, Tim Noakes, Kit Vaughan and Daya Reddy - stated in a *SA Journal of Science* opinion piece by the three latter UCT dignitaries recently - that monetary reward of scientific output would lead to people publishing a lot of marginal articles in marginal journals, so as to maximise their income. I have previously challenged this perception in a Science Faculty meeting,

where I pointed out that, like any hypothesis, it could be tested - and very simply in this case. Just give a reasonable amount of money back to every research group that publishes well and often, and watch the results! For smaller and less well-funded research groups in particular, such returns could be very welcome and a very simple means of increasing research productivity.

It is also easy to penalise salami science - thin-slicing of research reports in mediocre journals - by linking returns directly to impact factors, or by simply not rewarding anything published in journals ranked below the top 5 or 10 in a given field.

While we as researchers are constantly told that UCT subsidises research, I must point out that it is research grants to individuals that directly support the living and working expenses of most of the Science and Health Science and EBE postgraduates, and that these students also bring in considerable direct subsidy and contribute to publication subsidy income - which I have never seen explicitly acknowledged in any UCT balance sheet.

I heard it said recently that the "UCT brand" attracts good researchers, and that people want to be here because of the prestige of the institution. I will diffidently point out that much of this prestige, and a lot of what the UCT hierarchy lauds about our productivity, comes from the people who are responsible for the research excellence - and not from some nebulous brand concept.

Time to stop taxing the geese that lay the golden eggs - and reward them, perhaps?

Aggrieved goose
Science Faculty

Response

The "Aggrieved Goose" presents his/her perspectives and poses questions that may benefit from some contextualisation.

The nub of the issue is the choice and the decision made

by faculties at UCT on how the "research output" income stream is allocated in their budgets. The choice made in our Faculty of Science is to dedicate this income stream to the stimulation of research not via direct financial rewards to active researchers but by employing additional permanent academic staff. This enables research-productive departments to attain the critical mass needed to build and sustain a strong research ethos.

A university that aspires to be research-led correctly attaches great importance to articles published in leading journals. Impact factors and citation counts are, inter alia, measures of our international research footprint. The value placed by the university on these outputs is evident in our Ad Honorem promotion process, including excellence level payments. The NRF evaluation and rating system, as well as its funding system, places emphasis on high-quality, peer-reviewed research outputs.

It seems unlikely that many universities in the top 200 in the world embrace the practice of giving direct financial rewards for research publications to their academic staff.

The allocation of resources will always, correctly, be a hotly debated topic in any university worthy of the name. Correct information about resource allocation is vital in building trust between all of us and provides the appropriate backdrop against which discussion and debate can take place. The distinction between "UCT as an institution" and individual members of staff is ill-defined and unfortunate. We are UCT and each of us contributes in our own unique way to the life and to the reputation of our university.

Prof Kathy Driver
Dean: Faculty of Science

Response

When Daya Reddy, Tim Noakes, Cliff Moran and I wrote our commentary for the *South African Journal of Science*,

one of our primary objectives was to stimulate debate regarding the important role of scholarly endeavour in our country. In particular, we wanted South Africans to think about ways in which we might raise the level of our academic game. This letter by the "Aggrieved Goose" suggests that we may have had some measure of success in extending the debate.

As to the Aggrieved Goose's suggestion there is a hypothesis which can be tested - incentivise research groups by paying them for their publications - the data are already available. There are several universities that earn greater subsidy than UCT from the Department of Education based on the number of their publication outputs. Look at those papers and you will discover that many of them have been published in journals that lack accreditation by the Institute for Scientific Information. Look a little closer and you will see publications of dubious quality.

UCT has been ranked in the top 200 by the *Times Higher Education Supplement* which, as pointed out in our article, suffers from a significant bias introduced by highly subjective criteria (I know because I spoke to the author of the study two years ago). I believe the system developed by the Shanghai Jiao Tong University, though not without its own shortcomings, provides a more objective ranking for UCT, at position 252.

I agree with the Aggrieved Goose: it is our individual scholars rather than UCT's "brand image" which will propel our institution into the top league tables of the world. That's a challenge all of us should embrace!

Kit Vaughan
Deputy Dean, Research and Postgraduate Affairs
Faculty of Health Sciences

Response

Aggrieved Goose is guilty of shooting the messengers. The

focus of the article by the three UCT "dignitaries" was to draw attention to the need for more financial support for science in South Africa. We drew the analogy with the effects of a massive infusion of money into Australian sport after 1976 and which completely transformed Australia's competitiveness in international sport. Australian sport is run according to the dictum: Money in equals medals out. Our point is that if South Africa wishes to be internationally competitive in science then it can only do so if government makes a much greater financial commitment and the money is directed to those who can best use it (ie those who like aggrieved goose publish their work in good journals).

Of course it would be valuable for the individual researcher if UCT were to pass on the publication subsidy to those who write the articles. But this amounts to merely a re-arrangement of the (too few) deck chairs, with science benefiting in the short term with some other University functions suffering. This apparently attractive solution for individual scientists fails in the long term because it does not address the key problem which is too little money in the system to grow and sustain a critical mass of world-class South African scientists.

South Africa has the personnel and much of the infrastructure to be internationally competitive in science, just as Australia always had the athletes to be competitive in many sports. Like the Australian athletes, the greatest need for South African science is the money. But government and not the University has to be the source of those additional funds since the financial need is more than our Universities can provide.

One goal of our article was to pose the obvious question: Why does South Africa invest too few of her resources in science? And what are we, the scientists doing, to change that?

Professor Tim Noakes, Department of Human Biology.

First for UCT women

Ubuntu, or "people's law", should be formally woven into the legal fabric of this country, says UCT's newest National Research Foundation A-rated academic, research professor of law Drucilla Cornell

There's a gentle irony that the first woman at UCT to clinch a National Research Foundation A-rating - and an A1 rating at that - is also a feminist scholar.

Besides women's studies, UCT's 27th A-rated researcher is also a professor of political science and comparative literature from Rutgers University. She has a BA in philosophy and mathematics from Antioch College and her Juris Doctor (JD) from the University of California Los Angeles Law School.

One of only seven A-rated women in the country, Cornell joined UCT just last year as professor in private law, taking up the new South African Research Chairs Initiative (SARChI) chair in customary law, indigenous values and dignity jurisprudence.

Formally, her work is to develop a jurisprudence that encompasses Roman Dutch Law and ubuntu, or "people's law", an amalgam of ethics that can deal with the complex demands of the South African Constitution, bringing together the best of Europe and Africa.

It's work that will involve ethnographic research in six of the nine provinces to study on-the-ground developments in customary law.

For Cornell, ubuntu is "not a simple community ethic but a more profound idea", a signal of a much bigger ethic, one with profound legal and political nuances.

She was instrumental in establishing the Ubuntu Project, one developed out of the Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Studies.

"From the beginning of my ubuntu project, my primary interest was to examine whether or not the proliferation of ubuntu discourses in politics, law and indeed on television and popular culture more generally, could be considered a crucial aspect of the democratisation of the customary in South Africa."

To get close to the community and ubuntu ethic, Cornell did something most white South Africans would balk at. She went to work as a sangoma's assistant in Khayamandi, Stellenbosch, where the sangoma

was everything from a healer and diviner to a legal negotiator.

"I helped stir herbal remedies and helped with the rituals."

Cornell is something of a mosaic. A produced playwright (*The Dream Cure*, *Background Interference*) she has been a political activist since the age of 15. Before embarking on an academic career she was a union organiser.

She played a key role in organising the conference on deconstruction and justice at the Benjamin N Cardozo School of Law at which Jacques Derrida is thought to have made his definitive philosophical turn towards ethical thought.

Cornell is a prolific writer, having authored some nine books and countless articles on critical theory, feminism and postmodern theories of ethics. Her newest offering is a book on actor and director Clint Eastwood, no less, whose work she admires.

"He's working in Hollywood genres to undo the hubris of masculinity and violence." **HELEN THÉRON**



Pioneer: Law faculty's Prof Drucilla Cornell is UCT's first woman to receive an A rating from the National Research Foundation.

Death of 'gentle giant'



Sadly missed: Professor Lafras Steyn's death has shocked staff and students.

UCT is still reeling in shock after the death of Professor Lafras Steyn, head of the department of clinical laboratory sciences and of the division of medical microbiology in the Faculty of Health Sciences.

A well-loved and respected colleague, teacher, mentor, comrade and friend, Steyn died on Monday, 4 February.

Steyn was a principal investigator for the Mycobacterial Studies Group at the Institute for Infectious

Disease and Molecular Medicine.

For his immense contribution to research in the health sciences, UCT honoured him with a Festschrift last year.

Profesor Marian Jacobs, dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences, said the "gentle giant" will be sadly missed, and "our thoughts are with the family, his nearest and dearest at this sad time".

A memorial service for him was held at on 6 February in the Barnard Fuller building in the faculty. **MP**

Biology prizes for senior students of tigerfish and baboons

Postgraduate students Sarah Goodier and Riashna Sithaldeen have won the best presentation oral on paper by a master's student and the best poster in systematics and phylogenetics, respectively.

The prizes were awarded at the Southern African Society of Systematic Biology conference, held in the Drakensburg in January, in association with the South African Association of Biology (SAAB).

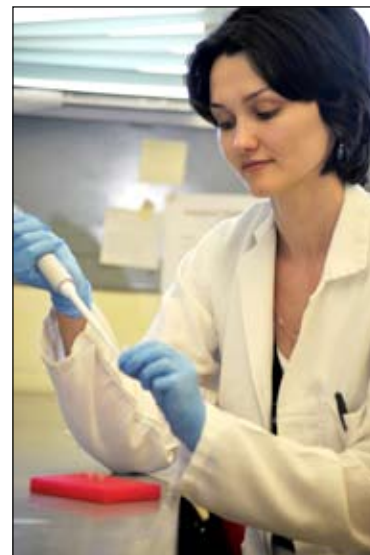
An MSc student, Goodier's presentation was on the phylogeography of the tigerfish (*Hydrocynus vittatus*) in south-central Africa.

Sithaldeen's poster, part of her PhD research (archaeology department), was about the biogeography of Chacma baboons (*Papio ursinus*) across Southern Africa.

The tigerfish is a predatory fish popular with game anglers. Goodier's interdisciplinary study combined molecular genetics (molecular and cell biology department) and geomorphological (AEON), data obtained for the tigerfish to shed light on how biological patterns relate to the drainage topology across the rivers of the subcontinent.

"Patterns of genetic variation of the mitochondrial control region in studied populations have indicated relationships that have allowed for the formulation of a hypothesis, revealing how and from where they came to inhabit their present locations," Goodier explained.

It's a work in progress as the hypothesis of drainage evolution that



Postgraduate students Sarah Goodier (left) and Riashna Sithaldeen have won the best presentation oral on paper by a master's student and the best poster in systematics and phylogenetics, respectively.

best describes the current distribution of the tigerfish could change as more samples from additional sites are included.

"In my master's project we're hoping to expand the sample base and look at the patterns of genetic variation in the mitochondrial cytochrome B region as well as in a nuclear marker."

Sithaldeen's research into the phylogeny of chacma baboons reveals ancient lineages with distinct geographic boundaries.

"Essentially, my research examines the genetic diversity and structuring within chacma baboons in

Southern Africa."

She's particularly interested in their evolutionary history as a response to climatic and landscape changes in the last two million years (the Quaternary).

"What makes these baboons so interesting is that they are able, through their extreme versatility, to occupy a wide range of ecological niches across most of Southern Africa. I'm very interested in how a large-bodied savannah primate with the ability to thrive under most conditions would have evolved in response to climatic fluctuations."

HELEN THÉRON

A DAY IN THE LIFE...

A peek at student registration in the Faculty of Science

What is student registration?

The words speak for themselves, getting students registered to pursue their studies in science – but it is more than that. It is a year-long journey that leaves officials both happy or sad, involving recruitment, admission and orientation. Katherine Thomson, marketing and communications manager, and Amy Rooks, the acting schools liaison and recruitment officer, play key roles in these functions.

How are the students recruited?

The recruitment process begins as early as February, immediately after first-years have been placed. The faculty not only targets matriculants, but also meets with Grade 10 and 11 pupils.

Thomson, Rooks and colleagues visit about 20 schools in the Western Cape to demonstrate why the faculty is the best. They also host various other promotional exercises, like the

Science Day, jammed with science exhibitions. This year the faculty intends to take it's marketing to Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal.

The admission process

The Faculty works hand in hand with the Admissions Office in this regard. When the applications have been received and captured, faculty staff identify those who meet the admission criteria. Provisional offers are made to these students, on condition that they still meet the criteria when the matric results are released. The faculty maintains communication with them via SMS, email and telephone, while waiting for the Department of Education to send the final matric results. Those who have passed are encouraged to take up the offers, and staff help out with things like course structures and accommodation. Sometimes the staff go above and beyond their duty and accommodate the stranded students at their homes until accommodation has been sorted out.

Orientation

At first the officials recruit and train between 20 and 30 orientation leaders from the second- and third-year students. Their task is to mentor and guide the new students when they arrive. The leaders need strong interpersonal skills, among other things, to communicate with the students.

One of the main tools developed by the faculty is the Orientation Booklet, which contains all the information about, well, orientation.

Orientation includes academic advice about courses and programmes, assessment tests and questionnaires, computer training, campus and library tours, as well as introductions to student services like the Careers Office, the Counselling Service and Students' HIV and AIDS Resistance Programme.

The highs and lows of the job

Rooks said the best moments of her job are when calling students to inform them that they have been ac-



Hard at work: Katherine Thomson and Amy Rooks play a key role in the registration of students in the Faculty of Science.

cepted at UCT. "You can hear them jumping and shouting on the phone." The worst are when she has to tell them they haven't made it. Sometimes students don't check whether they have been accepted or not, and

just turn up at the university during the admission period with their bags.

"That is sad and it is important for us to encourage them that it is not the end of the world."

MYOLISI GOPHE

There is still life in South Africa

A comprehensive exhibition of South African still-life paintings is currently on display at the Old Town House in Greenmarket Square, Cape Town.

Curated by Historical Studies' Professor Michael Godby, the exhibition, titled *Is There Still Life?*, explores the history of still-life painting in South Africa and its continuity and change.

Works by artists such as Robert Hodgins, William Kentridge, Sam Nhlengethwa and Gerard Sekoto are

among the approximately 90 pieces on display.

Although still-life painting came to South Africa from Europe, local artists have distanced themselves from its point of origin to claim a distinctly African identity - although this can take on a variety of forms, depending on both the historical moment and the historical relationship of each artist to Europe.

"One reason why South African artists, like artists elsewhere, are drawn to the representation of still-

life is the idea that painting still life somehow identifies one as an artist," says Godby. "Because of this authority, artists here, as elsewhere, routinely test the definition of the genre."

A recent review in *Business Day* examines the purpose of the exhibition. "The question posed in the title of the exhibition itself, *Is There Still Life? Continuity and change in South African still-life painting*, implies an interrogation of recent and contemporary interpretations of the genre by local artists. But it also brings up the

problem of definition: what is still-life painting? What kind of painting can be included in or excluded from this category? The wide variety of works selected by curator Michael Godby would seem to endorse this problematisation: the subjects portrayed range from hospital equipment and kitchen utensils to rat traps and fighter jets, while the styles employed reveal realist, Impressionist and abstract influences."

Is There Still Life? runs until 31 March. CHRIS MCEVOY

Daphula not the first

Last year *Monday Paper* (Vol L26#18) we ran a story on third-year opera singer Mzo Daphula, sports co-ordinator for the 2007/2008 Student Representative Council, who believed himself to be the first music student to be elected to the SRC.

The student from De Aar suggested that the South African College of Music's location might have had something to do with this.

"Music students tend not to mingle with students on upper campus."

This 'isolation' may have cut them off from mainstream issues, including running for the Student Representative Council.

But that's not true, says UCT registrar Hugh Amoore and staffer Haajirah Esau.

Amoore wrote to say: "There certainly have been music students on the SRC before; the SRC of which I was a member had one, Jacques de Vos Malan, and he was neither the first nor I think the last.

"I was on the SRC in 1972/1973 (with Laurine Platzky, a UCT Council member among others); Geoff Budlender was on the SRC in the year before; Laurine stayed on for the next year and was SRC president in that year (1973/1974). There must have been a music student on the 1971/1972 SRC as well, as each faculty elected one member (there were 10 faculties, of which Music was one) and there were a further 11 students elected by the student body as a whole."

Esau points to an SRC member in 1996, one Ayanda Hollow, a first-year percussion student at the SACM who wrote in his election manifesto: "My involvement with African culture in the form of music, theatre, dance and visual art will ensure that Salif Keita and not Michael Jackson, John Kani and not Macbeth, are our real role models as African intellectuals."

HELEN THÉRON

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S OPEN LECTURE

The Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of Cape Town, Professor Njabulo S. Ndebele invites members of staff and students to attend the Vice-Chancellor's Open Lecture:

GUEST SPEAKER

President Mary Sue Coleman, University of Michigan

"Expanding the Role of Universities in a Shrinking World."

Mary Sue Coleman has led the University of Michigan since being appointed its president in August 2002. President Coleman is regarded as a national spokesperson on the educational value of affirmative action and diverse perspectives in the classroom. Her extensive leadership positions in higher education include having served on the Association of American Universities Executive Committee, the Internet2 Board of Directors, the National Collegiate Athletic Association Board of Directors, and the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics. Elected to the Institute of Medicine in 1997, President Coleman is also a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. She co-chaired a major policy study of the Institute of Medicine, examining the consequences of uninsurance, and has become a nationally recognized expert on the issue.

Date: Tuesday, 4 March 2008

Venue: Kramer Lecture Theatre 2, Kramer Law Building, Middle Campus

Time: 13:00-14:10 (Guests to be seated by 12:45)

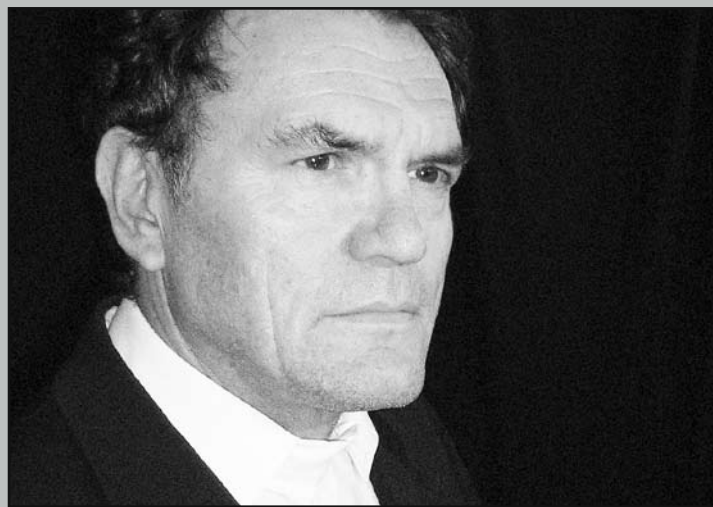
Enquiries: Tel: 021-650 5160

Tickets can be collected from Wednesday, 20 February to Friday, 22 February from the Communication and Marketing Department at UCT.

The office will be open from 08h00-16h30 daily.

The physical address of the Communication and Marketing Department is Welgelegen, Chapel Road Extension, Rosebank

Double nomination for Peter Krummeck's Red George at the Baxter



Actor, playwright and director Peter Krummeck's latest play, *Red George*, which has been nominated for two Fleur du Cap Awards, takes to the Baxter Sanlam Studio stage for a two-week run from February 12 to 23. Krummeck plays seventeen

different characters and frequently two people on stage at once. His psychological interpretation of each character and the authenticity of the script have been highly praised in what many now regard as his 'hall mark' subtle humour. MP

Monday night live varsity rugby league kicks off

Set Monday nights aside for rugby that rocks.

That was the message at the recent launch of the FNB Varsity Cup, brain-child of World Cup '95 icon Francois Pienaar.

The new league, which goes under the slogan Rugby that Rocks, will showcase the talents of university players under 25. Importantly, it will bridge the gap between the schoolboy and provincial arenas, a chink in South Africa's rugby armour.

Games will be played on Monday nights and some screened live on SuperSport.

Endorsed by the South African Rugby Union and SASSU, eight university clubs will participate. Big-name sponsors include Steinhoff International, Canterbury and South African Breweries.

The concept was modelled on the successful college Monday Night Football league in the US and is designed to showcase talent at local universities.

Stars like Jean de Villiers cut their

teeth playing for varsity clubs and administrators and coaches are hoping the new league will produce more in his mould.

"This competition should keep the next echelon of rugby players who are not entirely ready for the big scene yet, in the country, and help them develop their skills locally," Pienaar said. Pienaar is chair of the Varsity Cup board.

A FNB Varsity Cup Festival will be held in George over the Easter Weekend. The league includes a residence rugby league.

Kick-off is on 18 February with UCT vs NWU-Pukke. It's a home game at 17h30 so unfurl your Ikey banners.

(The eight competing universities also include: the University of Stellenbosch (Maties) University of Pretoria (Tuks), Tshwane University of Technology (TUT), Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU), North West University (NWU-PUKKE), University of the Free State (Shimlas) and the University of Johannesburg (UJ). **HELEN THÉRON**



Kick off: FNB Varsity Cup's Francois Pienaar (left) and Duitser Bosman (right) with UCT player Herbert Mayosi at the launch of the FNB Varsity Cup, a new rugby league.

Up and at 'em



Lobbying: Over Orientation Week, sports clubs were out in droves recruiting members for the coming year. Here Ntombi Nkwababa of the Basketball Club teaches newcomers the art of dunking; Grant Petersen tries his hand at the climbing wall, set up by the Mountain & Ski Club; Khanya Gwaza ponders his next move with the Chess Club; and the Yacht Club invites sailing enthusiasts to row their boat.



Cream of the publishing crop



Good as their word: Prof Vicki Lambert, Dr Julia Goedecke and Assoc Prof Malcolm Collins are among the authors of the suite of UCT articles that proved so popular in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine*.

Who do you go to for trailblazing research in sports science and sports medicine?

The UCT/MRC Research Unit for Exercise Science and Sports Medicine (ESSM), if the (renowned) *British Journal of Sports Medicine* is anything to go by. ESSM researchers penned eight of the 20 most-cited articles that appeared in the journal in 2004 and 2005, director Professor Timothy Noakes heard in December.

The articles cover everything from the central-neural regulation of fatigue to water intoxication and the performance of Ironman athletes.

Noakes puts the achievement down to, firstly, the researchers' ever-sceptical minds. "We analyse everything and do not simply accept 'the facts'," he says.

The unit also studies multiple rather than single areas of the body to understand how the whole fits together.

And, finally, researchers are encouraged to write, write and write some more.

"It is no good having work unpublished," says Noakes. "You might as well not have done it in the first place." **MEGAN MORRIS**

Trotters are trotting it up

The Liesbeeck Saturday Trotters are trotting further and longer.

After travelling far and wide across Cape Town and visiting popular tourist destinations in the larger Western Cape, the students from the Liesbeeck Gardens Residence extended their journeys further into the country and into neighbouring nations over the December vacation.

Their 6000km-drive began in Cape

Town, before venturing into the "treeless" provinces of the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal, and then turning inland to Lesotho, Swaziland and Mozambique, before ending back at the Mother City.

The group was started by master's student Hope Gangata. The aim is to broaden students' minds, foster close bonds at Liesbeeck and, above all, have fun, says Gangata.

The Trotters' latest trip involved six students; two each from Namibia and Zimbabwe, a Malawian and another from Botswana.

Gangata said the visit was an eye opener.

"It was amazing how the architecture of the houses changed across the land, from the modern houses of Western Cape to the simpler houses

of Eastern Cape, the stone houses of Lesotho to the beehive huts of KwaZulu-Natal and Swaziland, to the grass huts of Mozambique."

The diversity of the group helped them to communicate in the different areas they visited. And the Trotters are not done yet.

This year they plan a "Cape Point -to-Equator-visit", a journey that may

see them travelling to the Great Lakes in the region, such as Lake Malawi, Lake Tanganyika and Lake Victoria.

Gangata said the journey would pass through Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Malawi, Uganda, Rwanda, Kenya, Tanzania and Zambia.

"Who knows, Cape-to-Cairo might not be a dream after all in 2009," he says. **MYOLISI GOPHE**