



Monday Paper

Newspaper of the University of Cape Town

**Pg 4 John Samuel appointed
VC's special assistant on school
education**



24 August – 13 September 2009

Volume 28#12



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
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Mossel Bay site shows early modern humans used fire to engineer stone tools

Two UCT archaeologists, doctoral candidate Kyle Brown and lecturer Dr David Braun, are part of a team reporting that early modern humans used fire to turn flaky silcrete into stone tools

In the 14 August issue of the journal *Science*, in the paper *Fire As an Engineering Tool of Early Modern Humans*, evidence has been reported that early modern humans living 72 000 years ago on the coast near Pinnacle Point, Mossel Bay, employed pyrotechnology – the controlled use of fire – to increase the quality and efficiency of their stone tool manufacturing process.

An international team of researchers, including Brown and Braun (Braun is Brown's principal supervisor and Professor Judith Sealy is co-supervisor), deduce that "this technology required a novel association between fire, its heat, and a structural change in stone with consequent flaking benefits". Further, their findings suggest our early modern ancestors were capable of complex cognition processes.

"We show that early modern humans – 72 000 years ago, and perhaps as early as 164 000 years ago, in coastal South Africa – were using carefully controlled hearths in a complex process to heat stone and change its properties, the process known as heat treatment," said lead author Brown, field and laboratory director in Mossel

Bay for Arizona State University's Institute of Human Origins.

"This knowledge is then passed on, and in a way unique to humans, the technology is slowly ratcheted up in complexity as the control of the heating process, cooling and flaking grows in sophistication," added the Institute of Human Origins' Professor Curtis Marean, project director and a co-author on the paper.

This creates a long-chain technological process, the researchers explain, that requires a complex cognition, and probably language, to learn and teach.

The heating transformed a stone called silcrete, which was rather poor for tool making, into an outstanding raw material that allowed the early modern humans to make highly advanced tools.

"Here are the beginnings of fire and engineering, the origins of pyrotechnology, and the bridge to more recent ceramic and metal technology," said Brown.

According to Marean, the silcrete bifaces are re-usable tools with many potential functions: effective hunting

weapons, excellent knives, and items of value for exchange.

"This explains why people would invest so much effort in wood collection and heat treatment for their production."

Marean said that the expression of cognitive complexity in technology by these early modern humans provides further evidence that this locality may have been the original location for the lineage that leads to all modern humans, which appeared in Africa between 100 000 and 200 000 years ago.

"There is no consensus as to when modern human behaviour first appeared, but by 70 000 years ago there was good evidence for symbolic behaviour. Many researchers are looking for technological proxies for complex cognition, and heat treatment is likely to be one such proxy."

(The team is working on the South African Coast Palaeoclimate, Palaeoenvironment, Palaeoecology, Palaeoanthropology Project, known as SACP4, funded by the National Science Foundation and the Hyde Family Foundation, and supported by Arizona State University.) **MP**



Stratigraphic layers visible in this lower section of the archaeological site at Pinnacle Point, Mossel Bay, date from 79 000 to 86 000 years ago. An international team, including two UCT researchers, has discovered evidence that early modern humans employed pyrotechnology to hone their stone tool-manufacturing process.

Alumni concert shows off home-grown talent

The audience in the Baxter Theatre were in for a treat on August 13 as some of South Africa's most renowned musicians – and products of the South African College of Music (SACM) – lit up the stage at the annual UCT Alumni Concert. Now in its third year, the concert celebrates SACM graduates and, at the same time, aims to raise funds for music bursaries.

Award-winning soprano Pretty Yende gave a taste of her talent. UCT graduate, Nina Schumann, associate professor in piano at the University of Stellenbosch and her husband, Louis Magalhães, delivered a world-class performance.

Jimmy Dlodlu, a regular on the South African music circuit, jazzed

up the evening, as did popular singer Melanie Scholtz, who lectured in jazz vocal studies at UCT from 2004 to 2005.

Rounding off the evening was the ever-popular UCT Big Band, directed by Mike Campbell.

"And they all did this for free," said deputy vice-chancellor Professor Thandabantu Nhlapo. "We really appreciate the fact that our former students wish to keep up their relationship with UCT. They consider that the university was central in opening doors to their careers and this is their way of giving back."

Nhlapo said that the Department of Alumni and Development (DAD) was seriously considering the issue of sponsorship for future concerts. "This

would then unlock the potential of the concert to generate funds to turn the bursaries idea into a reality."

He also expressed his deep satisfaction that the concert had returned to the Baxter (last year it took place on upper campus). "It's the four-cornered collaboration of the SACM, the Baxter, UCT's DAD and the performers that really does it for us."

Nhlapo gave special thanks to Associate Professor Mike Campbell, Professor Kamal Khan and Gillian Lindner, all of the SACM, as well as Dr Jim McNamara's team at DAD: Lungile Jacobs, Jasmine Erasmus, Monde Mjebeza, Alex Plaatjies, Anita Wildeman and Thulani Madinginye, for their energy in organising the concert and making it a success. **MP**



Deputy vice-chancellor Prof Thandabantu Nhlapo (left) with soprano rising star Pretty Yende – fresh from the Hans Gabor Belvedere International Singing Competition in Vienna where she won all the first prizes – and tenor and SACM student, Given Nkosi, with whom she performed at the concert.

New consortium will build African health research capacity

UCT will play a pivotal role in the Southern African Consortium for Research Excellence (SACORE), one of seven new international consortia formed by the Wellcome Trust's African Institutions Initiatives to develop local institutional capacity and health research.

Underpinned by £30 million (R420 million) in funding from the trust, this initiative includes more than 50 institutions from 18 African countries, and hopes to get African universities more involved in African health research endeavours.

Home to some of the poorest countries in the world (the bottom-ranked 25 countries are in Africa), the continent carries a high burden of disease, particularly HIV, TB and malaria.

The seven consortia will be led by African institutions, with partners in Europe, the US and Australia. Their task will be to build a critical

mass of sustainable local research capacity by strengthening universities and research institutions and developing vital networks.

SACORE's director is Dr Newton Kumwenda of the College of Medicine in Malawi. Other partners include Zambia, Zimbabwe, Botswana and the UK. UCT is one of an inner ring of supporting partners, via the Clinical Infectious Diseases Research Initiative (CIDRI) in the Institute of Infectious Disease and Molecular Medicine (IIDMM).

The institute's Professor Robert Wilkinson, a senior Wellcome Trust Research Fellow, said that while each consortium operated independently, common goals were leadership training and professional development, the provision of PhD and postdoctoral fellowships, and the provision of up-to-date equipment.

Two intermediate tutor posts have been established to train SACORE trainees who come to

UCT. There is also funding for two courses in laboratory methods.

A joint meeting between CIDRI and the Malawi programme, to be held in that country from 30 August to 2 September, will provide an opportunity to kick-start the SACORE venture.

In addition, CIDRI will fund four young scholars, Emmanuel Chigutsa, Patrice Gqamana, Rebecca Tadokera and Johan van der Watt, to perform further research on infectious diseases prevalent in Southern Africa.

The boost will "establish them on the research ladder".

"CIDRI anticipates making up to 25 such awards in the next three years or so," said Wilkinson.

The Wellcome Trust has also awarded R11 million to Honorary Associate Professor Stephen Lawn to continue his HIV research at UCT, in conjunction with the London School of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene



Key players: Profs Bongani Mayosi and Robert Wilkinson will play a major role in the Southern African Consortium for Research Excellence, one of seven new consortia funded by the Wellcome Trust to boost research and research capacity in Africa.

and the IIDMM's Desmond Tutu Centre for HIV Research.

A prize fellowship was awarded to Kerryn van Veen to continue

her work on pericardial tuberculosis, linked to Professor Bongani Mayosi (Department of Medicine) and Wilkinson's research groups. **MP**

National Research Chair for Borhat

Haroon Borhat, director of the Development Policy Research Unit (DPRU) and professor in the School of Economics, is now also one of ten new South African Research Chairs announced by science and technology minister Naledi Pandor.

The context of Borhat's Chair is the theme of economic growth, poverty and inequality.

Established in 2006, the South African Research Chairs Initiative (SARChI) is a key part of the Department of Science and Technology's drive to fund human resources development.

Making the announcement, Pandor said R50 million has been ring-fenced to fund new Research Chairs in financial year 2010/11.



"Our investment in Research Chairs will allow our higher education institutions to attract and retain the best and brightest amid intense

sustained international competition for scholars and scientists," said Pandor.

Of his research focus, Borhat said: "There is very little debate, if any, among economists around the notion that a high level of economic growth is essential for poverty reduction. But there is strong evidence that economic growth is a necessary condition for poverty reduction, with some economies more able to achieve pro-poor growth than others.

"Evidence also shows that economic growth is a necessary but not sufficient condition for poverty reduction. It is in this context that my proposed research will attempt to examine these 'sufficient conditions' within the South African context." **MP**

Watch over academic freedom – Chetty

While it is something of an international coup to have academic freedom enshrined in the Constitution, it would be "presumptuous" of South African academics to assume that it's always going to come easy.

This was the message of Professor Nithaya Chetty of the University of Pretoria, as he delivered UCT's 2009 TB Davie Memorial Academic Freedom Lecture on 12 August.

Chetty was at the centre of a furore on academic freedom at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in 2008. His lecture was as much a call to academics to be alert to the growing threats to academic freedom as it was a catalogue of those threats. These include a lack of public understanding and appreciation of the need for academic freedom, a poor understanding by academics themselves of their roles and responsibilities, and an "interfering government hand".

But there are also threats from within, said Chetty. Among these he singled out the marginalisation of the academic voice on matters that concern the academic functioning of universities (senates are losing their status, he cautioned), the "increasingly litigious nature of universities" bred



Champions: Prof Nithaya Chetty called on academics to make a strong and unrelenting case for the importance of academic freedom.

by a growing managerialist ethos, and the increase in corporatisation of research.

For much of his lecture, Chetty called on "ordinary academics" such as himself to do their bit to secure academic freedom.

"Academics need to understand much more profoundly the forces that have come to bear on our quest for an academically freer university system,"

he said. "It is perilous for us academics to simply insist on academic freedom without understanding and engaging with those sectors who, for whatever reasons, view things differently."

In the end, he noted, it will be the academics who must champion the cause.

Find the full TB Davie Lecture at www.uct.ac.za/news/lectures/tbdavie/ **MP**

Top chemistry medal for Caira



Gold medallist: Prof Mino Caira, director of the Centre for Supramolecular Chemistry Research, has clinched the SACI Gold Medal for 2009.

Professor Mino Caira, director of the Centre for Supramolecular Chemistry Research, has been awarded the South African Chemical Institute's (SACI) Gold Medal for 2009. This award honours outstanding scientific contributions to the field of chemistry or chemical technology.

"I'm greatly honoured to be ranked among the distinguished chemists who have been past recipients," said Caira.

"In 2002 I received the award of Doctor Honoris Causa for pharmaceutical research from the University of Medicine and Pharmacy in Romania, but it is also pleasing and reassuring to receive recognition from SACI, the official professional institute for chemistry in South Africa.

"I share the honour with my colleagues and students in the Department of Chemistry, and with my external collaborators, all of whom, in one way or another, have supported or contributed to my research output, which is the basis for the award."

Caira's research is directed mainly towards altering the physical

properties of medicinal compounds to improve their performance as therapeutic agents.

The goal of this 'molecular tuning' is to diversify by producing novel drug forms with a technological edge, or with the potential for different applications, such as controlling drug release rates from tablets or capsules, reducing adverse side effects, or rendering the drug more palatable.

"A source of significant personal satisfaction in training students in this research area is knowing that in generating these new drug forms and exploring their solid-state chemistry, they learn not only to use appropriate modern analytical techniques to characterise them, but to anticipate problems that frequently arise in pharmaceutical manufacturing, and be innovative in addressing them," said Caira.

"This is a highly prestigious award which brings great honour to Mino, the Department of Chemistry and UCT," said the head of the Department of Chemistry, Professor Allen Rodgers. **MP**

Price's proposed plan will address concerns following Paul Ngobeni case

In a communiqué to UCT staff, vice-chancellor Dr Max Price has proposed an urgent workshop for the Senior Leadership Group (SLG) as well as other measures that will address the pace and nature of transformation at UCT, selection and support processes, and weaknesses in the university's disciplinary processes.

This follows the aftermath of the disciplinary hearing involving former deputy registrar Paul Ngobeni, and his subsequent departure from UCT.

Ngobeni was appointed as deputy registrar in August 2007. Following his appointment, a number of complicating factors led to a protracted and difficult disciplinary case. Price eventually annulled the disciplinary case brought against Ngobeni.

Nonetheless, Price said the case had highlighted areas of concern for the university.

The subsequent process will be led by acting deputy vice-chancellor Professor Crain Soudien, who will deliver a report that spells out the patterns of UCT employees' working experiences - and ways in which various organisational units are dealing with them.

Among other things, the SLG workshop will examine the information and findings of the recent institutional surveys conducted at UCT. Price also plans a "360-degree feedback system" for all senior managers and deans that will test how staff in their units felt about the inclusiveness and openness of the institutional culture in these units.

He urged the UCT community to implement an acceptable code of behaviour, "particularly when we differ with one another", and promote a culture of debate.

In his communiqué, Price urged staff to use the structures put in place for unresolved incidents of racism or discrimination, such as the Discrimination and Harassment Office, or formal grievance procedures.

In addition, he also called for an examination of UCT's human resources processes.

"Are our HR processes robust enough to deal swiftly with complicated cases? Recognising that there will always be a need for standard disciplinary procedures, I would like to put on the transformation agenda the exploration of alternative dispute-resolution mechanisms, that seek to restore relationships rather than having winners and losers. Such alternative processes could be strengthened by the introduction of an ombud and could, where appropriate, be applied to student conflicts as well."

Price added: "As a broader initiative we must interrogate our selection processes, our induction processes, the support systems available during times of conflict, and the disciplinary processes themselves."

Freedom of speech was also addressed. Price said that while UCT does not restrict employees from talking to the media, employees had a responsibility to point out whether they are writing in their personal, professional or official capacities.

"I propose, following a suggestion from the Academic Freedom Committee, that we review our disciplinary procedures to see whether we can increase transparency and management accountability by opening disciplinary cases related to public statements by an employee."



VC visits Nzimande and members of parliament

Dr Blade Nzimande, Minister of Higher Education, and Vice-Chancellor Dr Max Price met in the Minister's office on 18 August.

"The purpose of the meeting was to establish more open communication channels between us," said Price. "We have met on various public occasions but it is the first time that the Minister and I have had a one-on-one meeting. We discussed the challenges we face in the higher education sector and talked particularly around issues of funding models and curriculum reform. I have invited the Minister to come and spend a morning with us here at UCT. He has accepted and we will soon set that date."

"The intention will be, on the one hand, to demonstrate some of our many areas of excellence and examples of best practice, which we believe could inform his thinking on national policies, and on the other, to expose him to some of the real challenges we face as an institution. Of course, the Minister is not a stranger to our campus. His daughter is cur-



Meeting of minds: Dr Blade Nzimande and Dr Max Price, photographed at the Third Anti-Racism Colloquium in July.

rently studying at UCT and he will no doubt weigh up all we show him against his vicarious experience of UCT as a parent! (That is how I find out what's going on in the institution.)"

In a separate meeting, also on Tuesday, Price met with the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of Parliament, Max Sisulu and Nomaandia Mfeketho as well as the Chair and Deputy Chair of the National Council of Provinces MJ Mahlangu and Thandi Memela.

"The meeting was to explore the opportunities for enhancing UCT's engagement with parliamentarians and policy development. Government provides a large part of our income, and as a public institution with significant expertise in various areas we should attempt to expand our impact on society through supporting policy development through research in these areas, and by sharing our expertise with those tasked with good governance. It really is about ensuring that the resources at UCT are having the maximum possible impact." **MP**

Samuel will marshal efforts to improve school education

Vice-chancellor Dr Max Price has appointed John Samuel as his special assistant and strategic advisor to develop a co-ordinated plan that will enhance UCT's bid to improve school education in South Africa.

This is one of the areas Price highlighted in his inaugural address last year and in a subsequent strategic goals proposal. Samuel's appointment is a temporary, five-month contract, from 1 August to 31 December 2009.

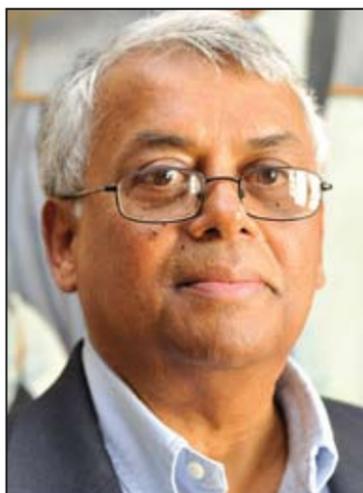
"This is an urgent imperative," said Price. "UCT can and must play a significant role in this way. There is already an extensive network of innovative, school-based work, driven by various departments within UCT, to improve learning and learner performance in schools."

He said an enhanced and co-ordinated approach to these interventions has the potential to bring "serious role-players" together to improve schools and better prepare learners for higher education.

UCT intends to roll out a plan of action next year.

Until recently, Samuel was the chief executive and chairperson of the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls. Before this he was chief executive of the Nelson Mandela Foundation.

Under his leadership the founda-



John Samuel has been appointed as Special Assistant to vice-chancellor Dr Max Price to help UCT develop a co-ordinated plan that will enhance the university's bid to improve school education in South Africa.

tion commissioned three major national studies that influenced policy development in this country and internationally, including Emerging Voices (2003-2004). This dealt with the critical challenges of rural schooling. The work resulted in the former Minister of Education setting up a rural school forum to develop strategies to tackle these challenges.

Between 1994 and 1997 Samuel was deputy director-general of the national Department of Education. In 1996 the Minister of Education appointed Samuel as head of the Department of Education's transformation task team, which shaped a new vision and mission and set benchmarks for significant internal reform.

In 1997 he was appointed head of the new division for higher education, responsible for preparing the Green and White papers on higher education, which became the basis for restructuring higher education in South Africa.

"It is my intention to use John's expertise to develop an action plan in the area of UCT's participation in improving school education," said Price. "This initial work will also steer us in understanding if a pro-vice-chancellor's position in this area is appropriate – what the job descriptions or expected objectives would be for such a post.

"It will also write funding proposals to take to donors to support longer-term interventions. John will be visiting various departments and student volunteer societies to gather information and to get an understanding of what is being done. Staff are also welcome to get in touch with him directly on ext 4805." **MP**

Social responsiveness: New award for top achievers

With social responsiveness high on the list of vice-chancellor Dr Max Price's seven strategic focus points, UCT has established a brand new award in the area.

The Vice-Chancellor's Social Responsiveness Award is allied in its intention to the Distinguished Teacher Award, and provides an institutional signal to the UCT community that social responsiveness is an important institutional priority.

This year it carries a R20 000 purse. Nominations and applications for the first award close on 31 August.

"This is part of the vice-chancellor's commitment to providing support and appropriate incentives for expanding and strengthening social responsiveness," said deputy vice-



chancellor Professor Jo Beall.

The new award will also complement existing honours such as the Alan Pifer Award, given to outstanding welfare-related research in the fields of medical, economic, scientific, engineering and social research

that furthers the welfare of disadvantaged communities.

"But the new award has a much wider scope, in that it can be given to people who demonstrate that social engagement has enhanced the teaching and learning process. In other words, it is not just for research," added Beall.

While the social responsiveness award can also be given to people who are active in socially engaged research, additional criteria have been added, such as evidence of shared planning and decision-making, and contributions to brokering new relationships or partnerships.

(For more information contact Sonwabo Ngcelwane, ext 2103, or email sonwabo.ngcelwane@uct.ac.za) **MP**

Role model wins Stella Clark award

Unique teaching methods, a great passion for learners and going out of her way to help them have won teacher Lavinia Boer the fourth Stella Clark Teacher's Award from the Centre for Higher Education Development at UCT.

Vice-chancellor Dr Max Price presented Boer, a staffer at Rhodes High School, with a R5 000 prize, and her school received R1 000 towards educational resources.

She was nominated by her former student Nangamso Hlathana.

Stella Clark was a senior lecturer in the Language Development Group in the Centre for Higher Education Development until her death in 2005. The award was established through donations from her family, friends and colleagues from South Africa, the UK, the US and Japan.

It honours teachers who go beyond



Passionate educator: VC Dr Max Price presents teacher Lavinia Boer with the Stella Clark Teacher's Award for 2009.

the call of duty in providing excellent education, often in difficult circumstances. Annually, UCT students are invited to nominate secondary school teachers who have helped to make it possible for them to come to university.

Boer, who studied at UCT in 1991, used to teach Afrikaans at Marian Roman Catholic High School, where her learners called her a 'living legend'.

Hlathana was one of them, and said Boer was a hard-working, committed and disciplined individual – a role model for both learners and colleagues.

"She had a great passion, and went the extra mile for her learners, especially those who were Xhosa-speaking," she recalled.

Hlathana said Boer used to let them play games and act scenes from prescribed books as some of her teaching methods.

Boer also taught female learners life skills, and started a hiking club with another educator.

"When she left in 2007 it was the most devastating news for us," said Hlathana.

However, she continued to tutor them in the lounge of her home, and helped Hlathana apply to study at UCT. **MP**

Peer-mediation project is talk of the town



New reality: Learners gather new skills at the Delft Schools Peer-Mediation Project.

When talking about the Delft Schools Peer-Mediation Project, Francois Botha can hardly suppress his enthusiasm.

It's an initiative that Botha, a former magistrate and now director of UCT's Discrimination and Harassment Office (DiscHO), designed and launched this year to teach learners from primary and high schools in the Delft community a suite of tools for resolving conflict. Designed as a mixed-race residential area for Africans and coloureds, Delft has the usual social ills – unemployment, crime, below-par schooling – associated with poor communities in the Western Cape, plus some racial tension.

A hothouse for conflict, then.

"If attitudes, respectfulness, understanding of community and empathy are not nurtured and embraced at schools, then we're fighting a losing battle," says Botha.

The mediation project sprang from a course Botha did in 2008 with the project sponsors, the Africa Centre for Dispute Settlement at the University of Stellenbosch business school.

But it's no one-man show. Botha

built up a solid support network, recruiting and training a group of cluster leaders (young community leaders), parents, principals and teachers who work with the learners at the monthly workshops and keep the project ticking over.

The learners – 20 per school – were also trained as peer mediators at a session at UCT, early in the year. It's given some a welcome sense of responsibility.

"Peer mediation changed my life," wrote one.

"I learned not to fight over unnecessary things like a pen, a ruler, even money," says another.

Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, patron of the Africa Centre for Dispute Settlement, was so taken with the project after an uproarious visit, in July, to Vergenoegd Primary School – where he met most of the learners – that he's lent his name to the programme.

Botha understands Tutu's fervour.

"The project is probably the one in my professional career that's really filled me with a new passion for being involved in social justice issues," he says. **MP**



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Animal Unit establishes embryo transfer lab

UCT's Animal Unit noted that it had a skills shortage in its groundbreaking – locally, anyway – new facility. Recently one of its technologists travelled to France to fill that gap

As just about any medical journal will tell you, the laboratory mouse is the most commonly used animal-research model today.

That's mainly because they're mammals, are relatively easy to maintain and handle, reproduce quickly and, genetically speaking, have quite a bit in common with humans. Given the range of work done, it's not surprising that there are hundreds of established strains of lab mice, ie specific populations that possess a desired trait that makes them suitable for specific research programmes.

The UCT Animal Unit, for example, houses up to 140 strains, totalling thousands of mice. The logistics – space, costs – can cause a few concerns. (The mice are kept under studiously-maintained, specified-pathogen-free or SPF conditions, which means specially designed cages, a prescribed diet, which is not cheap, and distinctive bedding.)

Which is why over the past two years the unit has slowly rolled out its own mouse-embryo-transfer laboratory, the first of its kind in the

country. While embryo transfers are well established in the agricultural sector in South Africa, it's quite novel in laboratory-animal science and technology circles.

In this technique, embryos are flushed from the fallopian tubes of the genetic mother (usually one who carries natural pathogens) and implanted into a cleaner, lab-bred foster mother.

Embryo transfers have a number of advantages. It's a better alternative to natural breeding for breeding a line of 'clean' mice (free of everyday mice pathogens, viruses or parasites); it's cheaper to import embryos than live mice when in search of a specific strain; and through cryopreservation a particular, perhaps rare, strain can be stored until needed.

Until recently, however, the Animal Unit had little expertise in this field – they could harvest the embryos well enough, but no more than that – and too little spare time to acquire the skills, explains manager Hiram Arendse. But slowly, the varied and growing requests from researchers suggested that it was a niche the unit

would soon have to fill.

"Even though embryo transfers are done routinely around the world, for us it was new technology," Arendse says.

They weren't short of reading material on the subject, but that has its limitations, explains fellow laboratory-animal technologist Jakobus Visser. "You can learn techniques in books," he says, "but the books don't describe the finer details of the work – how do you position the mouse, for example."

But the addition of Hylton Buntting from the Division of Immunology created the much-needed capacity.

Buntting had done embryo transfers in larger animals like cattle and sheep, but had trouble down-scaling his technique to mice. After some 50 attempts, he had yet to manage a successful implant.

Two weeks with experienced technicians at the Lyons labs of the National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) in France changed all that, however.



New paths: Work done by Hylton Buntting on embryo transfers has allowed the Animal Unit to launch a whole new service and laboratory.

"I picked up a lot of the little tricks that they use, just to fine-tune the technique," he reports. "Seeing firsthand what gets done and getting advice from the guys as you're working clarified things a lot."

The trip has obviously paid off, and Buntting has managed three suc-

cessful implants in his 13 attempts since his return, meaning three new litters. It's still early days, though, he cautions.

"In this kind of work, you can get it right once, and the next time you battle again. So it's a matter of repetition and practice." **MP**

Writing not on the wall for calligraphy



If the Tombouctou Manuscripts Project of the Department of Historical Studies concentrated initially on the content of the manuscripts – the scholarship, the ideas – then a recent exhibition at the Gold of Africa Museum in Cape Town took that project a step further. From Istanbul to Timbuktu, an exhibition of original works by master calligraphers from Turkey, Egypt, Morocco and Mali, focused on the Timbuktu written tradition, and the writing itself. The exhibition aimed to place West African manuscripts in the broader Islamic calligraphic tradition. The copying of medieval and modern manuscripts continues unabated today, and calligraphy is seen as a contemporary art form; works are showcased in galleries, and sold to private collectors.

UCT leads research systems – NRF

UCT is the backbone of the research system in South Africa, and its average impact factor has been increasing – an exception to what has been happening in other universities.

This is the view of Dr Albert van Jaarsveld, recently-appointed president of the National Research Foundation (NRF). He was speaking at a function to celebrate UCT's NRF-rated researchers, and to launch the university's 2008 Research Report.

Van Jaarsveld assured researchers that his organisation is fully committed to research. He said the NRF would continue to fund an incentive system for rated researchers in the next few years.

He spoke of the Competitive Funding Scheme to be launched later this year, which is open to discipline-based research programmes.

"Our thinking is that there is a lot of strategic money going to research in particular areas, and there is very little money going to the support of fundamental, basic research."

As money becomes available from Focus Area programmes, it will be channelled to support discipline-based work.



The best: (From left) Dr Albert van Jaarsveld, VC Dr Max Price, DVC Prof Danie Visser and Marilet Sienaert, director of the research office, at the launch of the 2008 Research Report.

"We think a healthy research system should not be about focus only, but should have diversity. Otherwise we will all be doing the same kind of research 10 years down the line."

Van Jaarsveld reminded researchers to apply for the five Square Kilometre Array-related Research Chairs in radio astronomy, which will soon be advertised, and to participate in the NRF peer review process "to turn the NRF into an organisation that we will all be proud of".

The Research Report shows an in-

crease of 12% in accredited research output and an increase of 26% in total research income (to R651.7 million) in 2008.

UCT also saw an increase in awards to postgraduate students, to R83 million. At the end of 2008, UCT researchers held 728 grants from the NRF, valued in excess of R176 million.

Copies of the report are currently being distributed by the Research Office. Additional copies may be requested by contacting Christina. Pather@uct.ac.za. **MP**

Copenhagen climate change negotiations at risk

Equity is critical, and the world cannot solve the issue of climate change without the participation of all nations, including developing countries, argues Associate Professor Harald Winkler of the Energy Research Centre at UCT.

At an open discussion, *Aiming for Copenhagen: Discussing climate change negotiations*, held on 5 August, Winkler said the shared vision suggests that the developing

world and the industrialised countries "are in the same boat". All need to do more, with developed countries still needing to take the lead.

The potential difficulty with reaching agreement in the next United Nations Climate Summit in Copenhagen, Denmark in December is the fact that the developing nations are least responsible for climate change, but are most vulnerable to its impacts.

"But what can the international community do?" he asked. "The underlying question of responsibility is not an easy one. If Bangladesh is flooded, who bears the costs of relocating that population?"

Winkler said the developing countries' economies depend on both fossil fuels and forestry activities, and need technological, financial and capacity-building support from the developed world.

The Copenhagen summit will follow similar events in Bali two years ago, in Montréal in 2005 and in Kyoto and Rio De Janeiro in 1997 and 1992, respectively.

Expectations are for an agreement that will help reduce temperatures to below two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, to avert the worst risks of climate change.

Plans for adaptation and mitigation – and for the implementation of

these plans – will be on the agenda for the summit, said Winkler, who will be part of the South African delegation.

However, Winkler was pessimistic that a break-through would be made at the summit, but said a foundational agreement was still in reach.

"A weak agreement is the worst possible outcome," he explained. "No deal is better than a bad deal." **MP**

UCT partners community dance group

Given their chalk-and-cheese histories, it's uncanny how much the UCT School of Dance and the Eoan Group, a cultural/community organisation based in nearby Athlone, have in common. Geography (since 1969 they've been a 10-minute drive apart) and personnel (a number of dancers have trained or performed with both groups), for example.

And they're true contemporaries, founded within a year of each other – Eoan in 1933, the UCT School of Dance the very next year; and so both are celebrating their 75th anniversaries.

Last week they marked the two occasions by joining forces on *Dynamix*, a four-day season of Afro-contemporary dance at Eoan's headquarters, the Joseph Stone Theatre in Athlone. The groups did separate pieces before combining for *Up the Down Stairs*, choreographed by Eoan's Ebrahim Medell. The show included the works of African



On the same foot: Dancers from UCT and the Eoan Group perform together in *Dynamix*.

dance lecturer Maxwell Xolani Rani, award-winning contemporary-dance choreographer and part-time lecturer Celeste Botha, and a hip-hop burst from Cape Town's own EmileYX? of Black Noise fame.

"Many ties existed previously between the organisations, which share a rich history," said Gerard Samuel,

director of the UCT School of Dance, "and it seemed fitting to revive our friendship, given our shared goals."

The dancers' varied training proved to be no obstacle, and all went very well, reports Shafiek Rajap, Eoan Group director.

"Ultimately, they're all dancers wanting to achieve the same thing." **MP**

Self-empowerment key to transformation

Instilling a sense of pride among staff and addressing imbalances are among the key objectives of the new Communication and Marketing Department Transformation Committee.

The nine-member team will drive the transformation agenda in the department for the next three years, and its chairperson, Aloysius Gowne, believes that they will make a significant contribution to change.

"We can make a difference; we can speak out on elements of injustice," he said.

The team has agreed that employment equity, institutional climate, staff development and social responsibility are key priority areas for transformation in CMD.

"Currently there are challenges in the department's employment equity – the numbers need to be corrected," he said. "And there are not enough blacks in management."

Gowne, who joined UCT in 2008, noted that the working environment could be improved, and that people should speak out and take pride in where they work and what they do.



In committee The CMD Transformation Committee includes (from left, front) Nico Badenhuizen, Aloysius Gowne and Ray Hartle. (Back) Edwina Kanne-meyer, Shumi Chimombe and Charmaine Dublin. (Absent: Rethea Deetlefs and Chris McEvoy).

"At the end of the day it boils down to what you do for yourself at UCT. The situation should be such that people are able to wake up in the morning and be happy and excited to come to work."

The key to this is that staff should be socially responsible, have a sound work ethic, pride themselves on excellence, and be keen on self-empowerment.

"People must be worthy of moving

up the ranks because they have transformed themselves," he said.

The committee meets twice a month, and the chairperson attends the weekly management meetings, meaning that all decisions, suggestions, progress and recommendations regarding transformation issues are addressed constantly.

(Any news from your transformation committee? *Monday Paper* invites you to contact us at ext 3735.) **MP**

Librarians essential to social development

The distinctive characteristic of librarianship in Africa is that there is less emphasis on reading as an entertainment activity and more on its educational purpose, said Professor Peter Underwood at a public lecture at UNISA recently, part of the UNISA/IFLA Regional Office of Africa Public Lecture Series.

Underwood hails from UCT's Centre for Information Literacy, and his lecture dealt with the broad issue of African librarianship in the global context.

The lecture series was instituted in 2008 by UNISA Library, in association with the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA).

This provides a platform for eminent African librarians to deliver lectures on a broad range of issues concerning Africa and international librarianship. Underwood's 2009 lecture explored testament and professional experience. In it, he discussed the nature of librarianship as

a profession, and its importance in the social development of Africa.

"Libraries and librarianship have a long history on the African continent; the most notable early example is that of the Royal Library of Alexandria, Egypt, founded during the Ptolemaic dynasty," he said.

"In the modern era, it is noticeable that many African leaders (such as Nelson Mandela and Kwame Nkrumah) have supported the establishment of libraries and the role of librarians in social development and education. For many people, a public library provides a space for study as well as access to the information resources they need. This is the distinctive characteristic of the profession in Africa: there is less emphasis on reading as an entertainment activity, and more on its educational purpose."

Librarianship has always been a highly "socially networked" profession, he said.

"No library can ever have a stock

sufficient to service all requirements, and there is always a need to borrow or gain access to materials held by other libraries. The development of Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) provides a more efficient way of creating these important links. The development of electronic sources of information has not reduced the need for this 'social networking', and librarians continue to work together as a worldwide community of practice."

But Underwood also pointed out that, almost paradoxically, ICT had not made the task of finding information easier.

"The searching algorithms used by generally-available search engines, such as Google, are crude; and the skill of the librarian is to be found in the construction of searches that yield relevant information. To understand and express the information needs of a user often requires the twin capacities of a counselor and Sherlock Holmes!" **MP**

Public lectures stir vital debates

The newly established Gordon Institute for Performing and Creative Arts (GIPCA) is presenting a series of public lectures, to generate intellectual curiosity and get the community to engage with the intellectual life of UCT.

Called *Great Texts/Big Questions*, the talks form part of GIPCA initiatives to engender a culture of exchange of ideas, opinion or conjecture, and are co-ordinated by the institution in conjunction with the Centre for Creative Writing.

Thought leaders of national and international prominence will each discuss the personal significance of a particular book or artwork.

The lectures start at 17h00 in the Hiddingh Hall at Hiddingh Campus, and will run throughout the year.

The events kicked off on 6 August, with novelist, playwright and academic André Brink taking the stage and discussing *Don Quixote* by Miguel de Cervantes.

He was followed by AIDS activist Zackie Achmat (pictured) on 13



August, and cartoonist Jonathan Shapiro (AKA Zapiro) on 20 August. Professor David Benatar, head of the Department of Philosophy, will be the next speaker (on 27 August), followed by neuroscientist Mark Solms (3 September) and former UCT vice-chancellor Dr Mampela Ramphela (1 October). **MP**

Love with a dose of comedy and pathos

There'll be no need for tissues at Donizetti's *L'Elisir d'Amore* (The Elixir of Love), a joint Cape Town Opera and UTO Opera School production, playing at the Baxter Theatre from 23 to 29 August.

L'Elisir d'Amore is a mixture of sharp comedy and heartfelt pathos, while the famous aria *Una furtiva lagrima* (One Furtive Tear) has been a showstopper in the repertoire of the great tenors, from Enrico Caruso to Pavarotti.

L'Elisir d'Amore is ideal for introducing the different voices and personalities of the young voices of the Voice of the Nation Studio and the UCT Opera School. The three Adinas are Nokrisemesi Skota (a winner of the SAMRO International Singing competition), Yandiswa Makade-Mayeki and Nozuko Teto.

The Nemorinos are voiced by Sunnyboy Dladla, Mlamli Lalapantsi and Given Nkosi, and the Belcores by Aubrey Lodewyk, Thato Machona and Mandisinde Mbuyazwe. The 32 singers in the chorus are all students at UCT.

The new production, directed by Christine Crouse, boasts set designs by Michael Mitchell, costumes by Maritha Visagie and lighting by John T Baker.

Opera School director Kamal Khan will conduct the UCT Symphony Orchestra for this sunny opera, sung in Italian with English subtitles.

Performances are on 23 August at 18h00; at 19h30 on 25, 26, 27 and 28 August; and at 15h00 on 29 August. Prices are R125 and R175, with a discount of 50% for students. Book at Computicket. **MP**

Farewell to Bernd Müller

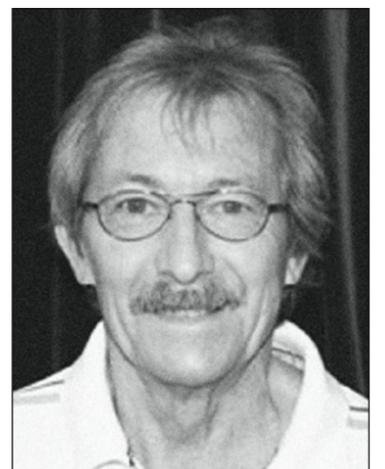
Bernd Müller, a design tutor in the Department of Mechanical Engineering, died on Thursday 6 August.

A keen mountaineer, he was a long-serving member of the department, having contributed to design tutoring for 25 years.

Last year he underwent heart bypass surgery, but withdrew from his tutoring duties only this year. An engineer by profession, Müller also owned a guest farm, Silberfontein, in the Voëlvlei Nature Conservancy.

Here Müller demonstrated his love of nature. He lived in a tent for three years while he built the farm's facilities, mainly using materials he found on the land. He made his own bricks, and felled trees to cut planks.

"Bernd made a major contribution to the teaching of design in the department over many years and will be sorely missed, both by staff and by



numerous students," said Professor Bob Tait.

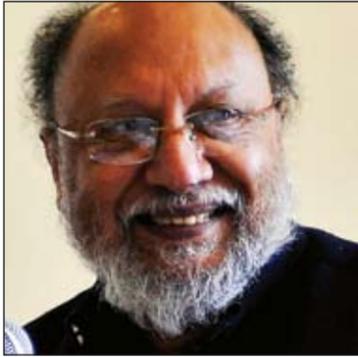
"Our condolences go out at this time to Karin and his family, his son Sascha and daughter Nadja, and his two grandchildren." **MP**

Consider intellectuals outside universities – Nandy

Universities must be the repositories of all levels of knowledge and should be able to confront the reality of diverse systems of information when processing knowledge.

So said Indian political psychologist and social theorist, Professor Ashis Nandy, in his address, *Imagining a South Asian University*, during a Sawyer Seminar keynote address at UCT recently.

A leading public intellectual, Nandy was one of a group who brainstormed the concept of a South Asian University 10 years ago – where seven member-countries in Asia pool resources to create a centre of excellence in which students and researchers work together for human advancement.



Nandy said universities are increasingly becoming centres of knowledge management rather than of knowledge creation.

“Universities globally are supposed to process knowledge for socie-

ties,” he said. “But that has gradually declined in the past decade, and they only process knowledge that is accessible through universities and which is becoming increasingly narrow.”

Nandy gave the example of 100 public institutions in India that offer music as a subject – but not one respected musician has emerged from their programmes in the last 70 years.

“They (musicians) come from different processes (of education).”

Nandy said there were public intellectuals of all kinds outside universities who process knowledge for the sake of society.

“We had to keep that in mind, too, when imagining a South Asian University.” **MP**

Define new concepts of diversity, says Asmal

South Africans need to value multiculturalism in order to create a society that encourage members to see beyond signifiers of religion, race or ethnicity as the sole markers of identity.

So said Professor Kader Asmal in his address, *National Identity and Cultural Diversity* at the fifth annual JD Baqwa Memorial lecture on 5 August.

A former national minister of education, Asmal argued that the construction of society on the basis of a shared vision of the future,

rather than on any mythologizing of our past, best guarantees a peaceful, just, multicultural society in which each individual is offered the best chance for flourishing and fulfilment.

“It means that people who make their homes in South Africa, who had no presence here in the past, should find a place, a sense not just of being, but of well-being, as they too participate, as full members, in articulating a vision of a shared future.”

In his entertaining speech, Asmal said the Constitution protects mul-

ticulturalism, and that there must be more to identity than a description on a passport.

“We are each guaranteed equal claim, irrespective of our differences,” he said. “We have the right to be the same and the right to be different.”

Asmal said “identity politics” is one of the most dangerous forces now at play, and that there is a need to define a new, balancing concept of cultural diversity, liberty and rights, and to define what constitutes national identity. **MP**

Expat business club awards first bursary to UCT student

Second-year BBusSc management studies student, Sonia Ramautar, is the first candidate to benefit from the SA Business Club’s new bursary initiative.

In collaboration with the UCT Trust, the club, an organisation for expatriates in the UK, awards bursaries to promising local business science students. The bursary scheme was launched last year.

Quoted in *The South African*, a newspaper for expatriates, the club’s Rebecca Davis said: “It’s been our intention to make some kind of contribution to developing business-minded individuals in South Africa. We’re in a good position to do that, being based in the UK.”



Ramautar, who hails from Durban, commended organisations like the SA Business Club for working to enrich the lives of South Africans back home.

Once she has completed her articles

and qualified as a chartered accountant, she hopes to plough back her expertise back into South Africa.

“It’s an amazing coincidence that the SA Business Club is one of the pioneers in materialising my dreams.”

The SA Business Club, she says, is more than a sponsor.

“They’re an inspiration. I had the privilege of meeting managing director James Durrant of the Blue Sky Group, who took me through the trials and tribulations of his own business. Being a home-grown Capetonian he displays a keen interest in my academic life and in my degree, and even hopes to set up a job shadowing stint at his offices.” **MP**

Finance lecturers build global links in the US

A team from the Finance Section of the commerce faculty’s School of Management Studies recently returned from Charlottesville in the US, where they networked with global academic partners of the Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) Institute.

Dr Francois Toerien and Ashwin Prayag were among the 53 delegates representing 49 universities from 19 countries who attended the 4th CFA Programme Partner Conference.

“We were inducted as new CFA partners and made aware of the benefits of collaborating with global partners in both research initiatives

and in developing curricula. It was also great to connect with the CFA leadership and academics from a range of countries,” said Toerien.

The new partnership between UCT and the CFA, which was signed in Cape Town earlier this year, also opens the door to one of the world’s top international competitions for finance students. UCT is selecting a team to enter this challenge. Last year’s winners, a team from Singapore, were given five minutes on CNN after the prize-giving.

The upbeat mood among academics attending the conference was

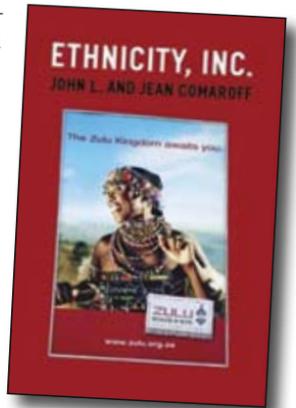
noticeable, Toerien said.

“Studies in finance appear to be anti-cyclical. Despite the global downturn in the economy, the experience of other business schools around the world is that many people are using the recession as an opportunity to study further, so that they are well placed to take advantage of the upswing when it happens.”

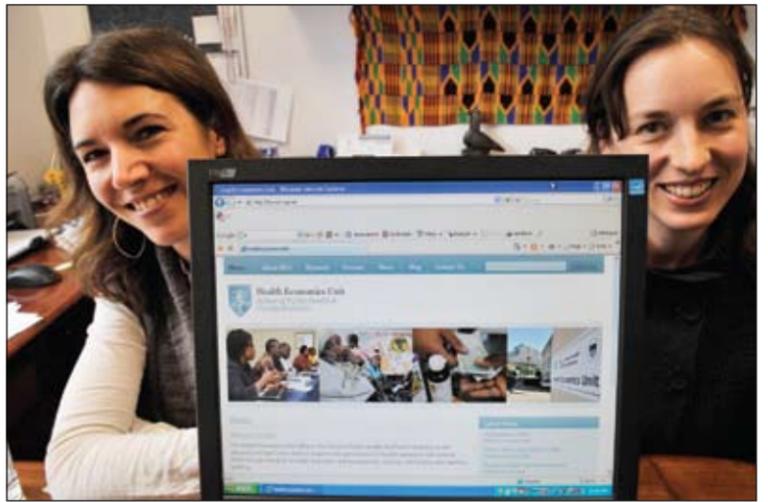
A word of warning from the UCT team to anyone flying into the US: “Make sure you use cable ties rather than locks on your luggage, as the very zealous airport officials cut your locks!” **MP**

New book looks at commodification of ethnicity

Prof John Comaroff and Jean Comaroff, honorary professors in UCT’s Department of Social Anthropology, have released their latest collaboration, *Ethnicity, Inc.* As the title suggests, the Comaroffs explore what they see as the “rampant commodification” of ethnicity. Case studies include a Zulu ethno-themed park, Native American casinos, Scotland’s efforts to brand itself, and a world religion declared as intellectual property. The book has been described as “a penetrating account of the ways in which ethnic populations are remaking themselves in the image of the corporation – while corporations co-opt ethnic practices to open up new markets and regimes of consumption”. **MP**



Unit’s website is a cornucopia of information



Web of news: Health Economics Unit’s communications officer Allison Stevens (right) with director Dr Susan Cleary.

UCT’s Health Economics Unit (HEU) has relaunched their website to provide updates of their latest research, training activities and initiatives designed to develop health economics and policy capacity within institutions across Africa.

“The university’s vision about embedding social responsiveness into academic activities is at the heart of much of what we do at the Health Economics Unit,” explained Dr Susan Cleary, HEU Director.

“The need to relook at our web presence has become increasingly apparent in the context of current public

and policy debates around scaling up antiretroviral treatment and introducing National Health Insurance (NHI).”

“It will serve as a key resource in which to communicate findings from HEU long-term projects, many of which will be wrapped up this year. It will be a valuable tool for academics, students, journalists, government and NGOs.”

The new website features a blog posting about NHI, the latest news items and publications and downloadable articles by HEU featured in the media. Interested parties can also sign up for web update alerts. **MP**

Faculty of Science

The Science Faculty Distinguished Alumni Lecture Series

The Dean of the Faculty of Science, Professor Kathy Driver, has pleasure in inviting you to a lecture by

Professor George Ellis, internationally renowned cosmologist, NRF A-rated scientist and UCT academic for over 30 years, 2006 recipient of the Order of Mapungubwe and co-author with Stephen Hawking of *The Large Scale of Structure of Space-Time*, who will talk on

“Cosmology Today: Understandings and Enigmas”

Date: Wednesday 16 September 2009

Time: 17:00 for 17:30

Venue: Lecture Theatre 2, PD Hahn Building, Upper Campus, UCT

RSVP: Shanaaz on 021 650 5179 or shanaaz.smith@uct.ac.za by 11 September 2009

Refreshments will be served.



University of Cape Town