

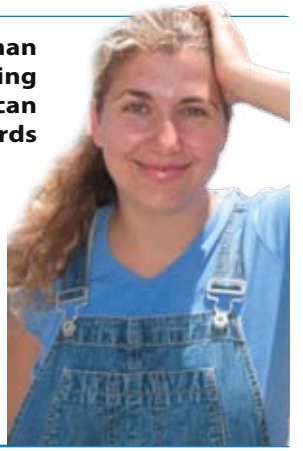


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Monday Paper

Newspaper of the University of Cape Town

Pg 5 - Dr Amanda Weltman named Best Emerging Scientist at the South African Women in Science awards



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National Benchmark Tests create a stir – and a small storm

Results from the new National Benchmark Tests make worrying reading for universities. But despite media headlines, they shouldn't be seen as a reflection on outcomes-based education, say UCT experts. Morgan Morris reports.

From the moment the results from the pilot National Benchmark Tests (NBT) were announced – actually, a copy of the report leaked early – they caused a few flutters among universities.

After all, the tests, conducted with just over 11 500 first-time entering students at seven South African universities* in February 2009, showed that about half of these students would need some form of academic support if they were to complete their studies. This came as no surprise, however, since several cohort studies have shown that only about half the students entering higher education leave with a qualification.

The tests looked at three areas – general academic literacy, quantitative literacy, and straightforward mathematics, based on concepts that are a part of the formal NSC curriculum. Students were marked as proficient (meaning they should succeed in higher education), intermediate (academic support would be needed), and basic (students have serious learning challenges, and bridging programmes would be essential).

Measuring academic literacy, just under half the students were found to be proficient, requiring no additional support. Quantitative literacy is even more worrying, as more than three-quarters of the students tested would need academic support. Most disturbing is that just 7.5% of the 9771 students who did the maths test were categorised as proficient (see graphs). UCT did comparatively well in the maths test, as only half of its students in the sample were identified as needing no or very little additional support.

That kind of surge in demand for academic support would, it's agreed, test the resourcefulness and resources even of universities with established support programmes, let alone those not so well-prepared.

And as 2009's first-year university students are the first graduates from South African schools' new outcomes-based education (OBE) curriculum, the dots from the NBT

results were connected to the OBE's National Senior Certificate (NSC) qualification. "The final pilot phase of the National Benchmark Tests Project is a damning indictment of the implementation of outcomes-based education, and raises questions about the validity of National Senior Certificate results," wrote *The Star*.

It didn't help matters that Professor Theuns Eloff, chair of Higher Education South Africa (HESA), the organisation that had called for the NBT, was widely quoted as saying that most university students could not read, write or comprehend at the required levels.

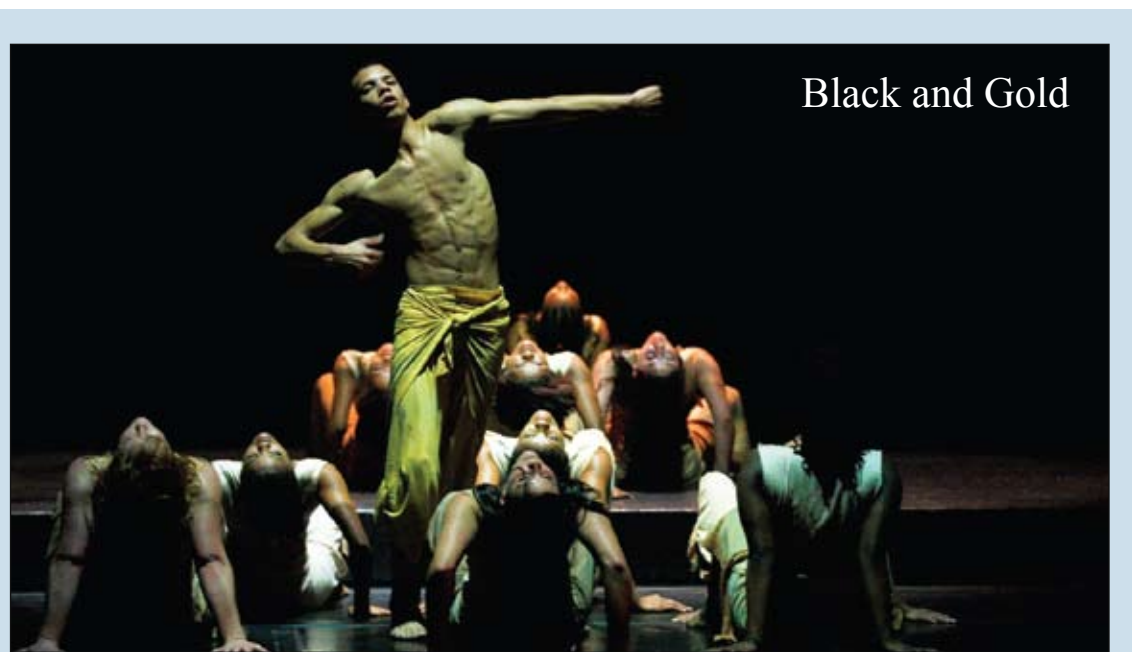
Not so fast, cautioned Professor Nan Yeld, dean of the Centre for Higher Education Development (CHED) at UCT and head of the NBT study. Yes, the NSC is not a useful-enough guide – on its own – to universities as yet, but both OBE and the NSC are still very new, notes Yeld.

"When you introduce a brand-new curriculum, and a brand-new qualification, there're going to be some teething problems," she says.

Even Professor Joe Muller, education policy specialist with UCT's School of Education and one of those advocating scrapping OBE, agrees that pinning the current troubles on OBE is a bit of a stretch.

"The school system as a whole is still in poor repair and it will improve only gradually. So I don't think OBE can be blamed for what we are seeing now."

The NBT, first called for by HESA in 2005, was never intended to be a test of either OBE or the NSC, says Yeld.



Dance in all its forms took centre stage last week at the 5th annual Baxter Dance Festival. The programme covered a wide spectrum of dance genres, from ballet to jazz, hip hop to contemporary, Spanish dance to physical theatre – and everything in between. Top local talent (from both established and emerging dance companies) and choreographers from all over the Western Cape showcased their work. This year's commission was awarded to Mamela Nyamza, a rising star in the dance industry. Her work was performed alongside pieces by the EOAN Group, the Cape Dance Company, Jazzart Dance Theatre, La Rosa Spanish Dance Theatre and InSPIRations, as well as students from City Varsity, Stellenbosch University and many other dance schools.

"The NBT, actually, was not meant to say much about what's happening at schools. What it is trying to do is create a uniform set of instruments so that higher education institutions will know more about what they need to do."

The NBT, rigorously designed and tested, is a more revealing test of students' abilities, says Yeld.

One of the main concerns raised about the NBT is that it would be applied by universities as extra "gate-

keeping".

Not so, says Yeld. Most universities already have some form of admission criteria or tests in place, she notes.

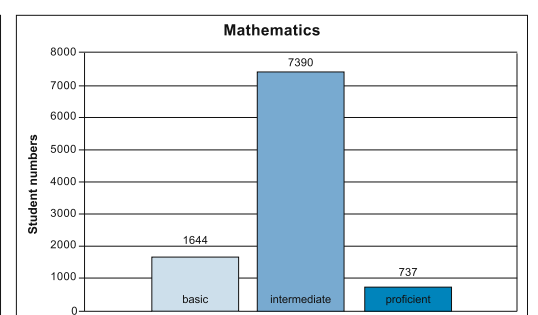
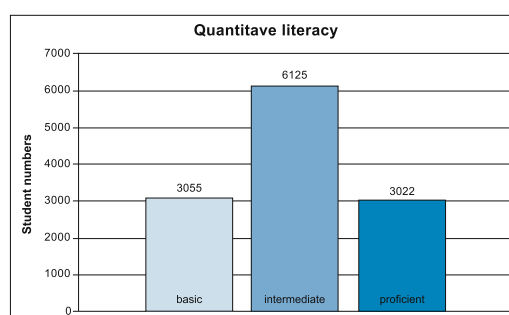
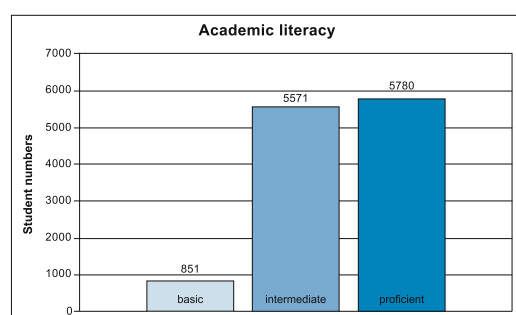
"There would be no more gate-keeping with the NBT than there is in the system already – the NBT is about higher education finding out as much as it can about students' educational needs."

And the NBT is not going to be the final word in student testing, says

Yeld. Work is already under way to develop and fine-tune tests of potential, a means to find more students who can succeed at university.

UCT will meet with faculty deans and faculty managers to discuss the NBT this week.

* Participating universities: UCT, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Mangosuthu University of Technology, Stellenbosch University, Rhodes University, University of the Western Cape and Wits University. **MP**



Science and ethics in global warming

CHRIS MCEVOY

The social and economic effects of global warming on developing countries was the focus of a symposium presented at UCT recently, the German-South African Research Lecture Series 2009.

The event, titled *The science and ethics of global warming – facing future challenges: consequences and opportunities*, included two lectures and a panel discussion.

Professor Hans von Storch, director of the Institute of Coastal Research in Geesthacht, Germany, spoke on the role of ethics of science in the study of climate change.

“Scientists provide a service to society,” he said. “Our job is to give explanations of complex

phenomena, and if we don’t like our answers, it doesn’t matter. We don’t have to please ourselves, or those who hire us.”

He also warned against interpreting scientific findings through the filter of our own culture and prejudices.

“Global warming has quite rightly become a political debate, which spills over into science, where scientists can act as stealth advocates for value-based agendas,” Von Storch said.

“In this process, the authority of science can erode, as it becomes difficult to distinguish authentic science from the opinions of non-governmental organisations or other value-driven social actors.”

UCT’s Professor George Philander, also of Princeton University in the US and director of the African Centre for Climate and Earth System Science in Cape Town, explored the reasons why the debate on global warming has become polarised and emotional.

“The connection between science and human affairs is very complex,” he said. “Science tells us nothing about ethics, and scientific findings have no ethical implications.”

Philander also argued that the debate on global warming is political, not scientific. “It’s often presented as something to fear, but we could also use global warming as an opportunity to bridge the divide between science and society. Africa needs an optimistic voice, and hopefully this issue will attract students to science.”

MP



Polarised debate: Attending the symposium were Prof George Philander and his wife, Hilda.

Communication on the button thanks to Vula’s SMS service

The UCT open-source service, Vula, has launched a new SMS facility, which allows site-owners to communicate with students and users through their cellphones.

SMS notifications can now be used to send important reminders to groups of users; for example, to inform health sciences about changes in lecture schedules. The service can also be used to communicate with staff and non-UCT users, such as people who register for a conference held at the university.

“The Vula service takes advantage of the fact that UCT already has cellphone numbers for most students in the Peoplesoft system, which supplies information to Vula,” explains Stephen Marquard of the Centre for Educational Technologies, which



manages Vula.

“Lecturers don’t have to collect or manage lists of cellphone numbers to keep in contact with students, and the numbers of individuals are private, as senders select recipients by name rather than by number.”

Users may also opt out of the service if they wish.

“The long-term success of the

service will depend on it being used appropriately, so that SMS notifications are perceived as useful, rather than as an intrusion,” adds Marquard.

Presently, the service only supports South African cellphone numbers, but international numbers are expected to be added shortly.

Future plans for the new Vula service include allowing users to request information or submit questions and receive replies by SMS. This will be implemented for students who need information urgently but don’t have internet access.

The SMS service operates on a cost-recovery model. UCT departments may pre-purchase SMS credits for use on Vula at R0.30 per message.

For more information, log in at <http://www.vula.uct.ac.za>. MP

Higher education communicators share best practices

Maximising media resources and marketing academics and their expertise and were topics communications practitioners from Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal universities tackled when they met in Cape Town on 4 September.

The Media and Publications Workshop at the UCT Graduate School of Business was organised jointly by UCT and Marketing, Advancement and Communication Education (MACE).

Workshop co-ordinator, Aloysius Gowne of UCT’s Communication and Marketing Department, said the event had provided a welcome platform for institutions to show how their media and publications units function – and discuss their successes and solutions to the challenges facing higher education in this area.

“Most importantly, the idea was to learn how to work smarter, use new technologies, share resources, save costs and promote environmentally friendly publications,” Gowne said. MP



Maximising media: Presenters at the MACE indaba included (from left) UCT’s Helen Theron and Aloysius Gowne, consultant Jane Notten, MACE’s Adrian Rorvik, UKZN’s Deanne Collins and UWC’s Luthando Tyhalibongo. (Front) Consultant Illa Thomson.

Musicians from Michigan on campus

Deputy vice-chancellor Professor Thandabantu Nhlapo welcomed three visiting musicians from the University of Michigan at a function on 2 September. During their 10-day stay at UCT, the visitors conducted workshops, master classes and con-

cert lectures for students at the South African College of Music. “We’re honoured to have such high-profile musicians in our midst,” said Nhlapo. “Ten days is a short time, so we hope we can encourage you to come again soon for a longer visit.” MP



Attending the function were (from left) Prof Daniel Herwitz, Emer Prof George Shirley, Prof Bright Sheng, Prof Paula Ensor, Assoc Prof Daniel Washington, Prof Thandabantu Nhlapo, and Prof Kamal Khan.

UCT researchers coasting to TV stardom

If you haven’t yet seen the acclaimed series, be sure to catch *Shoreline*, the 13-part environmental documentary series currently airing on SABC2, and featuring two UCT researchers as co-presenters.

Historian Nomalanga Mkize and marine biologist Eleanor Yeld co-present the documentary with Gavin Whitelaw, an archaeologist from the Natal Museum.

Shoreline, produced by Homebrew Films in Cape Town, explores the nearly 3 000 kilometres of South African coastline, stretching from the desert border with Namibia on the Atlantic coast, southwards around the tip of Africa, and then north to the border with Mozambique on the Indian Ocean.

Combining scenic photography with background on the communities and often unseen natural riches, the series explores how the environment and historic events

have shaped the lives of coastal communities. The presenters aim to unlock the archaeology, history and natural history of the coastline, as well as uncover its current activities and attractions.

Presented by acclaimed stage and screen actor, Peter Butler, each

episode of *Shoreline* visits a stretch of the coastline to get a sense of its character, using stories to take viewers to the life at the water’s edge.

Shoreline is broadcast on SABC2 on Mondays at 19h30.

For more information, go to www.shorelinesa.co.za. MP



Expert eyes: *Shoreline* is presented by (from left) Gavin Whitelaw, Nomalanga Mkize, Peter Butler and Eleanor Yeld.

Lifetime achievement award for Ndebele

Emeritus Professor Njabulo Ndebele, author, scholar and former vice-chancellor of UCT, has received the 2009 National Research Foundation (NRF) President’s Award for Lifetime Achievement.

“The role that art and literature play in political struggle has been a central theme in Ndebele’s work,” said a statement from the NRF.

One of South Africa’s literary icons, Ndebele has received worldwide acclaim for his work, which includes *The Cry of Winnie Mandela*, the children’s book *Bonolo and the Peach Tree*, *Rediscovery of the Ordinary*, and *Fools & Other Stories*.

Much of Ndebele’s working life has been in academia. He also chaired the South African University Vice-

Chancellors’ Association.

Vice-chancellor Dr Max Price said: “UCT is doubly proud that Emeritus Professor Ndebele, named by the NRF as a leading light among South African writers, continues to work as an academic at UCT, having also contributed his wisdom and leadership to UCT as its former Vice-Chancellor.” MP

Green belt, protected frogs are high priority in green campus plan

MYOLISI GOPHE

When Dr Richard Hill braved showers to visit a site earmarked for a new building at UCT last year, part of the multi-million-rand middle campus development project, he wanted to understand the environment better, the usual procedure at the beginning of an environmental impact assessment process.

But his walk along the Lover's Walk-Burg Road-Glenara site on 5 September 2008 with Geoffrey de Wet, director of UCT's Physical Planning Unit, unearthed a population of Cape Rain Frogs (*Brevicaps gibbosus*), a threatened species.

At the time, Hill, of the Department of Environmental and Geographical Science, was unhappy about the university's proposal to construct the Student Administration Building there, arguing for the conservation and enhancement of the green belt that separates the middle campus from neighbours in Rondebosch.

A member of UCT's Building and Development Committee, Hill also found that the frogs live in burrows under the mowed buffalo lawns

of the vice-chancellor's garden.

This frog species is classified as "vulnerable" in the South African Red Data List of threatened species. The Cape Rain Frog was apparently the first African frog to be described by Western science, in 1550 AD. It is found in a limited range in Cape Town and Piketberg. In the southern suburbs its range is being drastically reduced by the increasing density of suburban re-development and paving. Given their vulnerable status, conservation of these frogs and their environment has been prioritised in the UCT Green Campus Action Plan.

The building was subsequently moved to the middle campus after Dr Henri Comrie, an urban designer, reported to the Building and Development Committee that the new plaza north of the Faculty of Law should be enclosed by three buildings, including the new School of Economics to the east and another building on the west for student administration.

"Sheltered by the new buildings, students will be able to sit out in the sun and have food and drinks between lectures. The security of users

is enhanced by 'eyes in the buildings' overlooking the square."

Hill was quick to point out that the issue is more about maintaining the healthy environment in the Japonica Walk-Bremner Woodland-Glenara green belt than about the frog *per se*.

"The frog is an indicator species that says we have been managing our environment very well. The Glenara site is the core of this green belt because it has been fenced off from public access for so long," he explained.

Hill also contended that UCT needs more storm water retention systems to protect downstream properties from flooding. This site is a perfect area for achieving that.

With the frog population in mind, an environmental assessment by a specialist is to be commissioned soon to plan the storm water system.

"In South Africa there is a great need for social and economic development. Planning must not be seen as a competition between frogs and people for environmental space. We need green belts and development." **MP**



Green piece: Dr Richard Hill - "We need green belts and development."

African science and technology development takes shape

Scientists need to advocate strongly for the development of science and technology on the African continent, as heads of state lack commitment to do so, said prominent scholar Professor Jean-Pierre Ezin.

Speaking at an open lecture, *Establishing a Pan-African University*, at the Muizenberg-based African Institute for Mathematical Sciences (a collaborative project between UCT, Stellenbosch University and the University of the Western Cape), Ezin said only two countries on the continent had fulfilled a decades-old agreement for each nation to dedicate one percent of its gross domestic product (GDP) to the development of



Develop Africa: Prof Jean-Pierre Ezin science and technology.

"To win this battle, we decided to set up the Pan-African University (PAU)," he said.

Ezin is a commissioner in charge of human resources, science and technology for the African Union Commission, an executive branch of the African Union. He is also the director of the Institute of Mathemat-

ics in Benin.

The PAU will see five centres of knowledge established in Africa's southern, central, eastern, northern and western regions, based on the topic of strategic importance in each region.

For instance, in Southern Africa, the PAU node is to be set up at Stellenbosch University to focus on space science, linking to the region's bid to host the Square Kilometre Array. Other nodes will be established next year and in 2011, and will focus on the science of water and energy, earth and life sciences, basic science and technology, and social science and governance. **MP**

Private and public sectors should share education costs

The issue of free education is firmly rooted in the legacy of apartheid, Department of Higher Education director of constituency affairs Babalwa Ntabeni-Matula told a student assembly at UCT earlier this month.

Ntabeni-Matula traced the debate around free basic and higher education since apartheid-era education policies, the Freedom Charter, the democratic Constitution, and recent resolutions taken by the ANC at Polokwane, which clearly pointed to the ruling party wanting to make free education a priority.

She said it was not clear that the Constitution guaranteed free education. A more recent White Paper on transformation of the Higher Education sector also avoided the issue of free higher education, arguing that it was not sustainable or affordable for the country.

However, Ntabeni-Matula said in fact no studies had been done on whether the country could afford free higher education or not.

She said that while higher educa-



Share costs: Department of Higher Education director of constituency affairs Babalwa Ntabeni-Matula (Photo courtesy of The Nelson Mandela Foundation.)

tion institutions today admitted an increasingly large number of students from poor backgrounds, students from middle-class and wealthy families still tended to be disproportionately well-represented.

She said that while education generated social benefits for society at large, the private sector was a huge beneficiary of the country's education system, and educational qualifications signified lifetime benefits and privilege for successful students.

For these reasons, the costs of higher education should be more equitably shared between the public and private sectors.

While it was clear that the National Student Financial Aid Scheme could not assist all the needy students in the country, Government has initiated a review of the scheme to address shortcomings such as the problems faced by rural students.

A recent colloquium on student funding proposed the introduction of a graduate tax, the principle being that students who had benefited from receiving free public education would be obligated to contribute towards the studies of others. Citing the United States Peace Corps programme, however, she said that a graduate tax did not have to be a monetary tax.

Answering a question on fee increases at UCT, Ntabeni-Matula said: "As long as there is no free (higher) education, institutions are obliged to ensure their programmes run efficiently; and part of that is to charge you fees, whether you like it or not." **MP**

UCT has lion's share of re-rated A-researchers

Eleven researchers from UCT had their A-ratings confirmed by the National Research Foundation in September, an unprecedented number from a single South African university in one year and more than half of all the A-ratings awarded.

They are: Professor William Bond (botany), Professor Jean Cleymans (physics), Emeritus Professor George Ellis (mathematics and applied mathematics), Emeritus Professor Brian Warner (astronomy), Professor Michael Kew (medicine), Professor Eric Bateman (medicine), Emeritus Professor George Branch (zoology), Professor Jill Farrant (molecular and cell biology), Professor Raj Mesthrie (English and linguistics), Professor Mark Solms (psychology), and Pro-

fessor Kit Vaughan (human biology).

Vice-chancellor Dr Max Price said: "I congratulate the individuals who have maintained or improved their international standing in the research community. It is also a remarkable achievement for the University to have recruited, facilitated and retained so many leading scientists."

"It positions the university as a leader in attracting post-graduate students and research projects and grants, and in enabling us to pursue our mission of producing the next generation of academics for South Africa and the continent."

"It is this commitment to quality that establishes UCT firmly among the community of world-class, research-led universities." **MP**

DASO, independents control SRC

The Democratic Alliance Students Organisation (DASO) affirmed its control of student politics at UCT when seven of its eight candidates were elected to the Students Representative Council (SRC) for the 2009/2010 term.

According to the provisional results announced on 31 August, only DASO's Tsepo Serakalala did not make it.

Their closest rival in the past, the South African Students Congress (SASCO), saw a decline, with only two of its five candidates making it onto the new council.

Independent candidates won six seats, while new organisations the Congress of the People UCT and Free UCT (FUCT) did not secure enough votes to see any of their combined 11 members voted onto the 15-member council.

The provisional results show that DASO will have Tara Dales, who secured the highest number of votes, as well as Erik de Ridder, Joseph Ball,



Shannon Bernhardt, Zamantungwa Khumalo, Richard McLaverty and Michell Mpike on the new student body. Independent candidates Mbali Mbatha, Melvyn Lubega, Sizwe Mpofo-Walsh, Saif Islam, Wandile Mamba and Lwando Maki were also elected, as were SASCO's Sumaya Hendricks and Londeka Mkhize.

The election poll for these elections was 42%, almost the same as in 2008.

Chris Ryall, the current SRC president, is to convene a constituting meeting. **MP**

Is Big Brother really watching?

STEFFNE HUGHES

“My boss says I used too much Internet bandwidth last month. How does she know how much I used when I don’t even know? And why does she even care? I still finish all my work on time.”

The reality is that in South Africa, high Internet bandwidth costs mean that UCT simply cannot afford to waste bandwidth. By providing managers with regular reports on their staff members’ bandwidth usage we hope to change usage behaviour patterns and utilise this precious resource more efficiently. After all, we’ve been managing telephone usage in the same way for years.

UCT spends R700 000 per month on Internet bandwidth, yet our researchers, academics and students still battle with slow Internet access speeds. So, what is the difference

between us and other organisations? For a start, UCT embraces the Internet as a learning and research tool, and doesn’t deny anyone access to it. Some organisations don’t allow everyone to access the Internet – you first have to prove that it is necessary to your job function. Other tertiary institutions charge their staff and students for their Internet usage. UCT, on the other hand, provides it at no personal cost to the individual.

Your manager keeps an eye on how much you have downloaded – not what you downloaded!

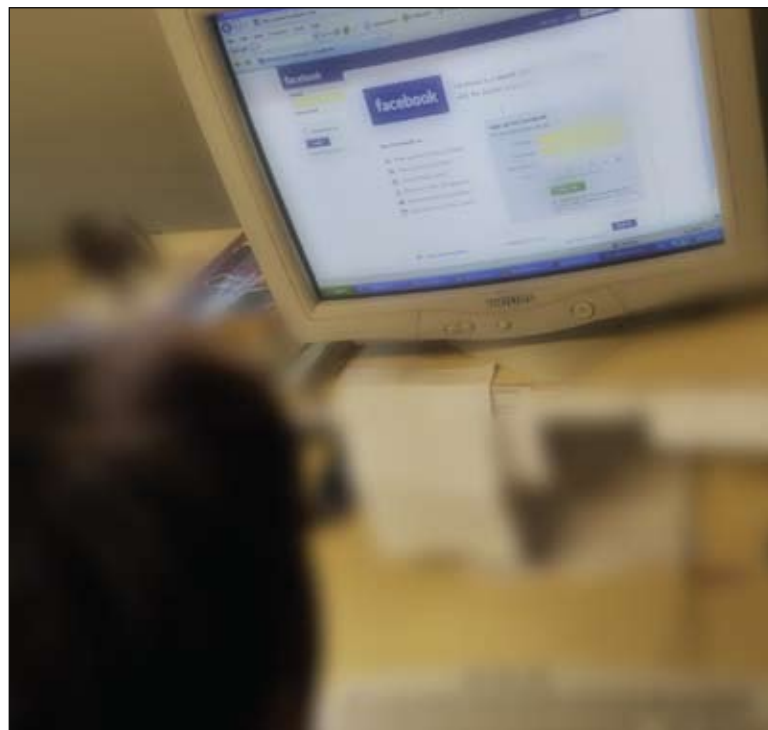
Even though the university doesn’t monitor what you’re downloading, you need to remember that it is illegal to download movies, music or any other material protected by copyright laws. Downloading this kind of material also sucks up huge amounts of Internet bandwidth that could be put to better use. While

moderate personal use is acceptable, excessive non-work or non-academic use of bandwidth is considered to be abuse.

Do you know how much you download?

You probably have a vague idea, but if you need something more accurate, try this out. Go to <http://ciq.uct.ac.za> - a commercial tool that shows your Campus Internet Quota. Click on “Personal statistics”, log in and make a note of your recorded usage. Browse around one of your favourite websites for a while, then go back and check your usage again. You’ll probably be shocked. Most people underestimate their usage until they use a tool like this.

You may think that changing your Internet usage would be a drop in the ocean, but imagine what over 30 000 collective drops could do for all those thirsty researchers out there. **MP**



GroupWise remediation project review

Towards the beginning of the year, problems with GroupWise and the instability of the email system at UCT were highlighted, and ICTS made a commitment to campus to address and resolve these issues. Since then quite a lot has happened, and we have made progress in a number of areas.

What progress has been made so far?

A GroupWise remediation project group, including members of ICTS and other representatives from campus, was formed to identify and address email-related problems. One of the first steps was to migrate all GroupWise components and post offices from the older Netware platform onto a more stable SLES Linux operating system. Improvements were made to the internal system monitoring tools and an email status indicator was added to the ICTS website. WebAccess capacity issues were addressed, and ICTS engineers are on standby to offer extended support for the email system.

After the move to SLES, an audit was conducted on the entire system by external Novell engineers and their local partner. ICTS implemented their suggestions for improvement and once again the system was audited, and passed muster.

ICTS then began the process of upgrading all components of the email system to GroupWise 8, Novell’s latest version. Once all the back end components of the email system had been upgraded, the latest client was rolled out to customer desktops.

A network-related problem



Action plan: “We remain fully committed to remedying all issues affecting the UCT GroupWise implementation in the shortest possible time” – ICTS executive director Sakkie Janse van Rensburg.

affecting a number of services on campus, including email, was also resolved.

What is the current status? What work is being planned?

ICTS is working directly with Novell developers to address five outstanding issues. One of the issues affects people who don’t use a GroupWise client to access their email. They have been plagued by the instability of the IMAP connection to the GroupWise mail server. This is a recognised bug being dealt with by Novell, and we hope to see a solution soon.

Another issue is the instability of the student post office. Once the student examination period is over, and following a recommendation from Novell, we will split the large, single Student post office into a number of smaller post offices to improve stability and access. We will ensure that the system runs efficiently

by removing old or expired student mailboxes and making sure that students don’t exceed their mailbox quotas.

Three other issues are also currently being investigated by ICTS, and as soon as we have enough data we will log calls with Novell if we require their assistance. In addition, we are planning to increase the availability of the WebAccess and IMAP connections by adding resources to these components.

ICTS will chair a sub-committee of UICTC (University Information and Communication Technology Committee) with members drawn from the Academic and PASS unions and the SRC. The purpose of the sub-committee will be to determine which email system would best deliver an enterprise-class solution to the campus community. The results of the investigation will be presented to the UICTC. **MP**

New structure for social responsiveness forum

The Social Responsiveness Colloquium, an annual event to highlight “good and innovative practices” between UCT and the community, was held at UCT on 19 August.

Including a programme of presentations and discussions, the colloquium was, for the first time, structured around presentations from three major categories of external constituencies, namely government, business and civil society.

The first session, titled *External Partners Reflecting on their Partnerships with UCT with Comments on Good Practices*, included presentations from Samantha Waterhouse, of Resources Aimed at the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect, Mzolisi ka Toni, of Disabled People of South Af-

rica, and Peet du Plooy, of the World Wide Fund for Nature – South Africa.

The second session, titled *Comments on Opportunities for New Partnerships: An assessment of UCT’s strategic concept paper on social responsiveness*, featured a presentation by Dr Alan Hirsch, deputy head of policy co-ordination and advisory services in the Office of the Presidency.

Deputy vice-chancellor Professor Jo Beall said: “It is hoped that this innovative approach will not only stimulate debate about UCT’s social responsiveness practices, but will also carve new ways of engagement and strengthen UCT’s mission in playing an active role regarding the country’s challenges.” **MP**



Role players: Photographed at the Social Responsiveness Colloquium were (from left) deputy vice-chancellor Prof Jo Beall, Dr Alan Hirsch (Office of the Presidency), Mzolisi ka Toni (Disabled People of SA), Peet du Plooy (World Wide Fund for Nature-SA).

Greater transparency needed - AFC statement on Paul Ngobeni matter

The UCT Academic Freedom Committee has previously criticised the practice of universities pressing disciplinary charges against their members for expressing their considered opinions on issues of public interest. In this context, it is necessary for us to respond to the recent disciplinary charges against

the former deputy registrar of UCT, Paul Ngobeni.

Ngobeni was charged with making it impossible to continue a working relationship with the professors of the Faculty of Law, who gave advice on legal issues for which he, as deputy registrar for legal services, was responsible. The charge against

him was not one of defamation, but defamation was an integral element of the charge, as it was this that was alleged to have made the working relationship impossible.

The AFC has discussed the Ngobeni case with members of UCT senior management. We do not wish to comment on the merits of the

proceedings against Ngobeni. However, we view with serious concern any charges brought by a university against one of its members for expressing their views in public debate. We believe this should only be done in exceptional circumstances and as a last resort.

We believe that far greater trans-

parency is necessary in cases of this kind, in order to avoid the danger that such proceedings would have the effect of suppressing public debate, or debate within the university. We welcome the vice-chancellor’s proposal to look into UCT procedures in such cases with a view to making them more transparent. **MP**

UCT physicist is best emerging woman scientist

UCT once again made a strong showing in the annual Department of Science and Technology's South African Women in Science Awards, taking top spot in two categories.

Physicist Dr Amanda Weltman was named the Best Emerging Scientist, an award which recognises a young scientist for an outstanding scientific contribution in natural sciences or engineering. Weltman, who has received fellowships from Columbia University in the US, Cambridge University in the UK and NASA, is the co-author of two papers proposing the chameleon mechanism (in which scalar fields change depending on their environment), one of the hottest new topics in contemporary theoretical cosmology.



Cut above: Physicist Dr Amanda Weltman.

Plant physiologist Professor Jill Farrant took first runner-up in the Distinguished Woman Scientist category. The second woman to receive an A-rating from the National Research Foundation (NRF), and the first in the natural sciences, Farrant has earned wide recognition for her work, which currently focuses on

resurrection plants. Professor Diane Hildebrandt, chemical engineer at the University of the Witwatersrand, took first place.

A Fellowship for a Woman Scientist, awarded in fields in which participation by women is traditionally low, went to Zizipho Mbulawa, a PhD researcher in medical virology. Mbulawa is researching the association of the human papilloma virus with cervical, penile and other cancers, as well as with genital warts in both men and women. The research for Mbulawa's MSc was of such a high standard that her degree was upgraded to a doctoral project. Sharing the fellowship was Buyisiwe Sondezi-Mhlongu, a physics lecturer at the University of Johannesburg. **MP**

Conference harnesses new ideas of quantum gravity



Big questions: Emeritus Prof George Ellis had plenty to ponder at the *The Foundations of Space & Time* meeting on quantum gravity.

Just as hosts Dr Jeff Murugan, Dr Amanda Weltman and Emeritus Professor George Ellis had planned, *The Foundations of Space & Time: Reflections on quantum gravity* stood apart from most meetings on the topic by dint of its mixed bag of specialists, topics and even aims.

For one thing, the five-day meeting, held at the Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study in August, was partly a tribute to Ellis, UCT's cosmologist laureate, and partly an opportunity to bring together some of the (other) foremost minds working on the topic, one of the most challenging in theoretical physics. Quantum gravity attempts to marry the fields of quantum field theory and general relativity into one clear unifying theory – an ambitious 'Theory of Everything', as some have dubbed it – a pursuit that has inspired but also frustrated some of the world's finest minds for the better part of a century.

As no single school of thought has

as yet come up with such a fundamental theory of time and space, Ellis, Murugan and Weltman decided to throw a catalogue of viewpoints at the problem. They called together string theorists (such as Murugan and Weltman), champions for loop quantum gravity (who count Ellis among their number), and as many other approaches as they could muster.

Delegates hailed from as far afield as Oxford University, the Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics in India, the University of California, Utrecht University in the Netherlands, the Albert Einstein Institute in Germany, and the University of Rome, to name but a few. The spectrum of topics under debate was equally diverse, ranging from string theory and loop quantum gravity to spin foams and causal sets.

But even for these great minds, there was something of a learning curve.

"There are various approaches

to quantum gravity that start from quite different viewpoints, and there is a tendency in the field for people from one group not to interact much with those from other groups," says Ellis. "So some of those there were meeting ideas from other approaches in a new way, and probably for the first time."

The meeting may have been chaotic at times, but it showed there there's still plenty for everyone to learn about quantum gravity, observes Murugan.

"What is clear is that even though the field is most certainly one of the most difficult in physics," he says, "it is still very much alive and as exciting as when Einstein was thinking about these issues in the 50s."

News from the meeting will go further, as Cambridge University Press has agreed to publish a book drawn from the results of the gathering. Murugan, Ellis and Weltman are currently fine-tuning the text. **MP**

Slums: The future of African urbanisation



Almost all future urban growth in African cities will take the form of slum growth. This is just one of the stark differences between urbanisation in Africa and elsewhere.

So noted Professor Edgar Pieterse, director of UCT's African Centre for Cities in the Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment, in his inaugural lecture on 26 August.

Titled *African Cities: Grasping the Unknowable*, Pieterse's lecture described the African city as an "elusive mirage clouded by limited data".

Despite the fact that Africa experiences the fastest rate of urbanisation compared to all other regions, with the United Nations predicting that the continent will double its urban population in the next two decades, there is an "absence of a well-rounded body of thought on the specificities of African urbanism," he said.

Pieterse argued that there has been a "tendency to focus on individual or micro practices in order to surface nuance, texture, variability, diversity and of course, contingency".

"We need to find ways in which we can clarify the knowledge agenda that will be able to articulate macro-trend data and perspectives with

insights about the novelty of contemporary urban life as it comes into being at this late capitalist moment, when Africa remains an afterthought, an invisible placemat for larger power struggles, and the globalised allegory for failed modernisation," he said.

Pieterse described African macro-urbanisation trends, starting with the fact that the continent is still in the beginning of its urbanisation transition, with only 38% of the population living in cities at present. Another trend is that the vast majority of African urbanites reside in small cities with populations of less than half a million, which is "fundamentally different to the typical scenario of megacity explosions that is popularly associated with urbanisation".

Another unique and concerning trend is slum growth.

"Informal, autoconstructed, makeshift shelters house 62% of African urbanites. In other words, the shanty city is the real African city," said Pieterse.

"Clearly, for both what we know and do not know, the African city is indeed an edge, a site of danger, for there are an impossible number of dimensions to grasp at once." **MP**

Sea legs for MA-RE

The Marine Research Institute (MA-RE) marked its first annual forum with a chock-a-block programme that mirrored the research range of the institute, an umbrella body for "all UCT research involved in salty water matters", as institute director Prof John Field put it. Titled *Making Waves in Marine Research: A cross section of marine research at UCT*, the forum on 8 September featured 11 talks from a variety of disciplines and departments. Topics included a model for monitoring bird populations, tracking using floaters (birds with breeding territory) as markers; how measures to control abalone fishing boost illegal trade; seaweed diversity; the effects of fishing-rights control on a community in St Helena Bay; and the use of marine biotechnology and satellite

tracking at UCT. Monday Paper will take a closer look at some of this research in an upcoming issue. **MP**



For the birds: Prof Phil Hockey was one of the speakers at the MA-RE research forum.

Male identity on the dance floor

MORGAN MORRIS

As director of the UCT School of Dance, Gerard Samuel wants to put practice into theory.

To this end, he recently launched what he hopes will become a series of annual symposiums. The first meeting, held on 8 August, was titled Mapping the Man, and here panellists, students and guests explored the “identities of masculinity” in dance, and tackled the issue of the training of male dancers in South Africa.

Panellists included Alfred Hinkel of Jazzart, former CAPAB principal male dancer Dr Eduard Greyling, and lecturers Susan Botha, Danie Fourie and Maxwell Rani.

It’s the role of the school and its director to provoke and stir, says Samuel. And while the discussion on the day did not always stay on point, the symposium delivered exactly what he had hoped for – lots

of smart debate.

“It’s important that the School opens its doors to these kinds of discussions,” says Samuel. “This way we engage with dance in a scholarly way.”

Practice – dance itself – is informed by theory, and vice versa, he adds. “The thought process behind the creation is what we want to instil in the next generation of student dancers.”

And to put theory back into practice, Samuel had set a challenge to those student dancers – translate the day’s topic into dance. The result was *Kombuis Dances*, directed by Samuel and performed at the end of the symposium.

In a series of short contemporary-dance pieces, students used the kitchen – where labour is usually divided according to gender – as a setting in which to explore and reinvent those stereotyped gender roles. **MP**



Table dance: Dance students Catherine Martine-Smyth, Lauren Hambly-Wise and Vulani Mdekazi act out kitchen politics in *Kombuis Dance*, part of the School of Dance’s recent symposium on masculinity and male identity.

UCT Book Award nominations closing soon

Nomination for the UCT Book Award has been extended to 16 September 2009. This award recognises outstanding books written by UCT staff, and may be made to a single-authored book or to multiple-authored books. Fictional, artistic and musical works and the like, as well as publications in electronic form, will be considered alongside academic books in any category. These may include manuals and popular works. No restriction is placed on the language in which the book is written, or on the format in which it is produced. The committee will also consider books for the Meritorious Publication Awards. These awards recognise books in specialised fields that merit recognition for their contribution, and promising first-time publications by authors who deserve special recognition and support.

To be considered for the UCT Book Award and/or the Meritorious Publication Award, a book must have been published within the past five years.

Nominators must be UCT staff, who may also nominate their own work. Books previously nominated (except winners) may be re-nominated.

Each nomination must be seconded and should include a letter of nomination, a copy of the book and substantive published reviews.

All nominations should be sent to Colleen Windvogel, Research Office, Department of Research and Innovation, 2 Rhodes Ave, Mowbray. For further information please contact Colleen Windvogel, colleen.windvogel@uct.ac.za. **MP**

Solo album salutes Spanish greats



James Grace, acclaimed guitarist and head of classical guitar studies at UCT’s South African College of Music, recently launched his fourth solo album, *Sevilla – Music of Spain II*.

The sequel to Grace’s debut album, *Granada, Sevilla* is the second in the *Music of Spain* series. Both albums feature works by composers such as Isaac Albéniz, Enrique Granados and Francisco Tárrega, but with *Sevilla* Grace has also included compositions by Joaquín Rodrigo, the composer of the famous *Aranjuez* Concerto, Manuel de Falla, and Joaquín Malats.

“This is an important year for the guitar,” says Grace. “It’s the centenary year of the deaths of

both Albéniz and Tárrega; the great Rodrigo died ten years ago in 1999, and 1909 was the year in which Andrés Segovia gave his debut recital in Granada. I wanted to celebrate all these events, so earlier this year I re-released *Granada* with a bonus track, and with the release of *Sevilla*, I think I’ve succeeded in making 2009 a commemorative year!”

Grace is currently setting up the Stringwise Young Artist’s Trust with the aim of providing financial assistance to students wanting to travel overseas.

Sevilla is released under Grace’s label, Stringwise Records. For more information visit www.jamesgrace.co.za. **MP**

African moot title for UCT law students

It was a coup for the law faculty when UCT’s squad was judged the best English-speaking team at the 18th All African Human Rights Moot Competition, held at the University of Lagos, Nigeria, from 10 to 15 August.

Competing against 49 other African universities, UCT’s team comprised Amy Armstrong and Tracy Hockly as the two orallists, and Christopher Campbell as the advocate.

This isn’t the first time UCT have shown their colours at the competition. In 2008, the university team was ranked third in the English-speaking category, and took the overall top spot in 2005.

“I am also very proud that UCT’s written submission was rated the best overall out of 70 universities; and this was a first for us,” said team coach Professor Danwood Chirwa of the Department of Public Law.

“I really enjoyed the opportunity to experience Lagos,” said Hockly. “It’s an extremely vibrant city, and absolutely massive, with a definite feeling of moving forward in terms of infrastructure. The competition itself was fairly tough, as law students have the tendency to be competitive to a fault. We were all impressed by the

amount of work everyone had put in – especially as African human rights law isn’t something that law students normally encounter at varsity.”

As well as being named best English-speaking team in the preliminary rounds, the team was placed as runner-up in the multilingual final, and Armstrong was judged the second-best English orator.

The annual African Human Rights

Moot Court Competition attracts faculties of law from across Africa to moot a case prepared around topical human rights issues confronting the continent. Now the largest gathering of law academics in Africa, the competition is aimed at giving budding African lawyers the opportunity to hone their advocacy skills and deepen their knowledge and understanding of human rights law. **MP**



Winning Mooters: UCT’s Moot team, including Tracy Hockly and Christopher Campbell, was judged the best English speaking team at the recent All Africa Human Rights Moot Competition in Lagos.

Nominations requested for Creative Works Award

Nominations have been requested for the UCT Creative Works Award, which recognises major creative works (art works, performances, productions, compositions, architectural designs, and so on) produced by UCT staff within the past five years.

The award may be made to jointly-produced creative works. However, in the case of jointly-produced works in which non-UCT persons are involved, the UCT person should have made the most significant contribution to the work. Evidence of this must be supplied with the nomination. Most of the work should have been done during the producer’s time of employ-

ment at UCT. No restriction is placed on the medium in which the creative work is produced. Generally, a single award is made in any one year, and no award will be made if no creative works of sufficient merit have been nominated.

Nominators must be staff members of the university, and may nominate their own work. Nominations need not be endorsed by the person who produced the creative work. Creative works previously nominated (except winners) may be re-nominated.

Each nomination must be seconded and should include the following:

A letter of nomination stating why the nominator is recommending the creative work for this award.

A copy of, or supporting portfolio for, the creative work as appropriate, as well as substantive published reviews or information regarding public response to the work.

The closing date for nominations has been extended to Wednesday 16 September 2009. All nominations should be sent to Colleen Windvogel, Research Office, Department of Research and Innovation, 2 Rhodes Ave, Mowbray. For further information please contact Colleen Windvogel, Colleen.Windvogel@uct.ac.za. **MP**

Call for Alan Pifer Award nominations

Nominations are invited from deans, heads of department and directors for candidates for the 2009 Alan Pifer Research Award. This award is the Vice-Chancellor’s annual prize in recognition of outstanding welfare-related research.

The award is offered annually to one or more top researchers at UCT who are engaged in medical,

economic, scientific, engineering or social research which has demonstrated relevance to the advancement and welfare of South Africa’s disadvantaged people.

Each nomination should include:

- A full motivation.
- The nominee’s curriculum vitae.
- The nominee’s publication record.

The closing date for nominations has been extended to Wednesday 16 September 2009. All nominations should be sent to Charmaine McBride, Research Office, Department of Research and Innovation, 2 Rhodes Ave, Mowbray. For further information please contact Charmaine McBride, charmaine.mcbride@uct.ac.za. **MP**

EVENTS

South African Transplant

Congress: Thursday 24th to Sunday 27th September 2009
Spier Estate, R310, Lynedoch Road, Stellenbosch
Janet Sirmongpong. Tel: 021 406 6733. Fax: 021 448 6263
Email: janet.sirmongpong@uct.ac.za

Beyond Reconciliation

Conference: Dealing with the Aftermath of Mass Trauma & Political Violence
Wednesday 02 – Sunday 06 December 2009
Baxter Theatre & Kramer Building, UCT Middle Campus, Woosack Drive, Rondebosch
Janet Sirmongpong. Tel: 021 406 6733. Fax: 021 448 6263
Email: janet.sirmongpong@uct.ac.za

ICTS Courses

Courses Offered During September:
14-15 - Groupwise 8 Level 1 (AM)
17-18 - Groupwise 8 Level 1 (AM)
16-18 – Visio Level 1 (PM)
AM (9:00-12:00) / PM (13:30-16:30)
www.icts.uct.ac.za/Training/ICTS
Training/Course Booking Form.

The Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Max Price,

has pleasure in inviting you to the Inaugural Lecture of Professor Colleen M. Adnams (Department of Psychiatry and Mental Health, Faculty of Health Sciences) on *Intellectual Disability In South Africa: Quo Vadis?*
Wednesday 16 September 2009 at 17h30, Student Learning Centre Lecture Theatre, Anatomy Building, Faculty of Health Sciences, UCT. Guests to be seated by 17h15. Refreshments will be served after the lecture. Please RSVP for catering purposes to: Centre for Extra-Mural Studies Tel: 0216502888 Fax: 0216502893 E-mail: ems@uct.ac.za. For more information: <http://www.uct.ac.za/calendar/events/inaugurals/>

The Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Max Price,

has pleasure in inviting you to the Inaugural Lecture of Professor Alan Rycroft

(Department of Commercial Law) on *The problems of process pluralism, or Why are we resolving our disputes so badly?*
Wednesday 30 September 2009, Lecture Theatre 2D, Robert Leslie Social Science Building, University Avenue, Upper Campus, UCT. Guests to be seated by 17h15. Refreshments will be served after the lecture. RSVP: Centre for Extra-Mural Studies Tel: 0216502888 Fax: 0216502893 E-mail: ems@uct.ac.za. For more information: <http://www.uct.ac.za/calendar/events/inaugurals/>

Darron Araujo, funded by The David & Elaine Potter Fellowship, invites you to attend a Seminar Programme: "Sounding Self: Exploring vocal identities and how these can shift for the South African student performer"

on Friday 18 September from 10h00-16h30. Due to length of this seminar, it is only possible to attend either the morning or afternoon sessions should time allow. Venue: TB Davie Seminar Room, Postgraduate Centre and Funding Office, 3rd level, Otto Beit Building, University Avenue, Upper Campus, University of Cape Town. Refreshments & lunch will be served. Kindly RSVP to: Stacey Moses at Stacey.Moses@uct.ac.za or Tel: 0216505065.

Prof. Jo Beall, Deputy Vice Chancellor, University of Cape Town has the pleasure of inviting you to the Seminar "Internationalisation for Transformation": Monday 21 September 2009 at 17h45 for 18h00. Venue: All Africa House, Common Room, Middle Campus, Next to Kramer Building, UCT. RSVP for catering purposes: Cally De Wall no later than 18 September 2009: Tel 0216504152 or E-mail Cally.DeWall@uct.ac.za

Philosophy Department

Tuesday 20 October @ 20h00
Philosophy Society Meeting: Dr Elisa Galgut (Philosophy, UCT)
Title: *Do paintings resemble what they represent?*

Venue: Room LS1A, 1st floor, Robert Leslie Social Science Building Elizabeth Gubb. Tel: 0216503316. Fax: 0216505203

VACANT POSTS

EXECUTIVE AND ACADEMIC POSTS:

Lecturer/Senior Lecturer/ Associate Professor:
Engineering Management; closing date: 28 September 2009; Tel: 021 021 650 2220; roslyn.daniels@uct.ac.za

Professor: Political Studies;
closing date: 28 September 2009; Tel: 021 650 2220; Roslyn.daniels@uct.ac.za

Lecturer/Senior Lecturer: Historical Studies, closing date: 28 September 2009; Tel: 021 650 2192; charlotte.snyders@uct.ac.za

Director: IIDMM, Department of Medicine, closing date: 30 September 2009; Tel: 021 650 2220; Roslyn.daniels@uct.ac.za

Senior Lecturer/Associate Professor: Demography, (CARE), closing date: 30 September 2009; Tel: 021 650 2220; Roslyn.daniels@uct.ac.za

Senior Lecturer/Lecturer: Private Law; closing date: 2 October 2009; Tel: 021 650 2220; Roslyn.daniels@uct.ac.za

Economics Internships: Faculty of Commerce; closing date: 2 October 2009; Tel: 021 650 2192; charlotte.snyders@uct.ac.za

RESEARCH AND PROFESSIONAL, ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPPORT POSTS (PASS)

IT Helpdesk Consultant & Front Office Customer Service Administrator: CSD (ICTS), Tel: 021 650 3012; closing date: 16 September 2009; penny.thompson@uct.ac.za

SAP R/3 Administrator: Percy FitzPatrick Institute of Ornithology; closing date: 28 September 2009; Tel: 021 650 3291; hilary.buchanan@uct.ac.za

ALL UCT VACANCIES CAN BE VIEWED AT: [HTTP://WWW.UCT.AC.ZA](http://www.uct.ac.za), CLICK ON "VACANCIES".

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Rondebosch: Furnished 5 bedroom, 2.5 bathroom, pool, garden, double garage. Adjacent RBHS, letting January-December 2010 possibly earlier: R17500pm. Contact Tim: 0216503643 or tim.dunne@uct.ac.za

George: House to rent immediately, stone's throw from Fancourt. R5500/mth. 3 Beds, 2 baths, lounge, dining, kitchen, laundry, garage, auto gate, alarm, pool. Contact: 0835081186.

Plumstead: To rent: One bedroom mezzanine loft apartment just off Main Rd. Neat small complex with secure off-street parking. Walking distance to shops and station. Available 1 October. Contact: Dave 0729824181.

Rondebosch: Furnished Garden Flatlet for quiet, single, non-smoking Post Grad. Safe parking available. From 1st October 2009 - R2300 per month. Contact: 0216852462.

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Contact: 0216332719 or 0826886729.

For Sale: 2 x Biggie Best Sofas - cream as new condition. Length 1.84m with spare set of covers for each sofa - R8 000 including covers. Contact: Valerie on 0218528157.

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For Sale: Piano Wurlitzer, exc condition - R6800. Contact: 0216505433 or 0214610633 or 0713135234.

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GENERAL

Proofreading and language editing of academic articles, theses and other texts. Contact: 0834831522 or Email: marindacilliers@yahoo.com

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Rumours and poor understanding of science dog Semenya affair

Leaks, rumours and conjecture are the order of the day following Caster Semenya's win at the World Athletics Championships in Berlin. But what's been overlooked is the real science – and some ethical concerns. Morgan Morris reports.

Alas, Caster Semenya's win in the women's 800m final at the World Athletics Championships in Berlin, Germany, on 20 August has not been greeted with national fanfare and celebrations, but rather with controversy, name-calling and a small media circus.

But much of the to-do is based on a poor understanding of the science, says Dr Ross Tucker, a sports scientist and sports management consultant at the Medical Research Council/UCT Research Unit for Exercise Science and Sports Medicine (ESSM). A sex test is not a matter of a quick bathroom check. (Although, apparently, Semenya has been subjected to a few of these over her short racing career.)

"I can't think of a debate that's as complex as this one," Tucker says. "And I can't think of a story in which there's been so much misinformation provided."

"I also think it's about a deep ignorance about the complexity of our bodies and the narrowness of the global understanding of sex and of gender, and the very complex interface and dynamic between them," adds Professor Jane Bennett of the African Gender Institute at UCT.

It's no surprise that Semenya's performances over recent times would raise eyebrows, says Tucker. After all, this is the same athlete who went from 2:11:98 at the World Junior Championships in July 2008, where she didn't even make the semi-finals, to 1:56:00 at the African Junior



Championships in Mauritius in July this year.

Alarm bells went off because her 1:56:00 was the fastest time this year by almost a second. Also, because it's widely accepted that the world record of 1:53:28 was doping-related, it's not the kind of time that one still expects to see. (Today, questions would perhaps be asked about record-holder Jarmila Kratochvílová's sex.)

At the elite level, shaving 16 seconds off one's time in the span of a year is considered highly unlikely, says Tucker. And, going by her run in the finals, many think she can do even better.

"This kind of improvement immediately arouses suspicion," says Tucker.

Naturally, doping concerns were raised first, but suspicion quickly turned to gender. Rumours started doing the rounds that Semenya had

been born a hermaphrodite, a rare condition in which a person is born with what is known as 'ambiguous genitalia', ie both male and female genitalia. Talk that she's never menstruated also fueled the flames.

Hence the tests.

(Terminology remains problematic, and some groups prefer 'intersex' to 'hermaphrodite', while the medical fraternity and others have opted for Disorders of Sex Development, or DSD, as defined in the International Intersex Consensus Conference Statement of 2006.)

Sex tests for women athletes, while still controversial, are nothing new to women's athletics, and were especially common during the golden era of doping in the 1970s and 1980s. The sport is awash with women burdened with nicknames such as 'Hormone Heidi' (shot putter Heidi Krieger who, because of doping,

eventually underwent a sex-change and became Andreas Krieger) and 'Stella the Fella' (Olympic champion Stella Walsh).

Tests have run the gamut from the crude (that bathroom check) to the scientifically nuanced and complex, but have by and large been discontinued by the IAAF. The organisation only calls for lab-based sex tests when a formal complaint or request is lodged. (The International Olympic Committee called an end to sex testing in 1996.)

The IAAF did recently announce that they have dealt with seven other such cases since 2005, and that four of the seven athletes had been asked to stop their careers.

The IAAF breaks DSDs into two broad categories – those conditions that give no unfair advantage, and those that do give some advantage but are still acceptable. As yet, the IAAF has not listed conditions that do give the athlete an unacceptable level of advantage, reports Associate Professor Malcolm Collins, chief specialist scientist with ESSM and the Medical Research Council.

Semenya will have gone through a battery of tests with a panel made up of a gynaecologist, an internal-medicine specialist, a geneticist, a psychologist and an endocrinologist, as well as a specialist on gender and transgender issues. The IAAF will not release these results, as per policy, and will discuss them only with Semenya and ASA, because of medical confidentiality.

But, as expected, the rumour mill did not abide by IAAF policy. Late last week, results of the test were supposedly leaked to the Australian press, suggesting that Semenya was indeed intersex. According to *The Daily Telegraph's* anonymous source, Semenya had no womb and ovaries, and had internal testes, the male sexual organs that produce testosterone. The latter condition carries grave medical risks.

These reports fly in the face of statements made by the IAAF, in which the organisation said that results would only be available in November, and that there can be no assumption that Semenya would be stripped of her medals – it's a medical case, not a doping one, the organisation said. According to the *Telegraph*, the IAAF is considering taking the medal away from the South African.

Tucker's more concerned about what ASA did or did not know before they sent Semenya to Berlin. And about Semenya's right to privacy.

"This case has certainly violated Semenya's rights, medically and legally," he says.

For the moment, the *Telegraph* reports are unproven, says Tucker.

"The point is that even if the article is accurate, and the source is reliable, the actual decision around Semenya would not necessarily be disqualification," he notes. "The crux is that they have to establish that she has some sort of performance advantage as a result of the condition." **MP**

Robinson shatters nine-year record

Mathematics PhD researcher Will Robinson took first place in the PUFFER Ultra Trail Run, smashing the previous record by 10 minutes. The gruelling 80km run, which was held on 22 August, takes runners from Cape Point to Silvermine Dam, through the Tokai Forest to Constantia Nek, along Platteklip Gorge, down to the cable station, then down Kloof Nek and all the way to the finish at the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront.

The start-list included all the previous winners from 2004 to 2008, including Bruce Arnett, who had set the course record of seven hours and 24 minutes in 2000. "At our previous meeting, in May, Bruce had beaten me convincingly at the Addo 100, but I was optimistic about my chances against him over the shorter distance," said Robinson.

In this, the third PUFFER win for Robinson, his speed was challenged by a slight stomach upset.

"It was not too serious, but it was definitely slowing me down, and I had no appetite for any energy



Give it a go: William Robinson (front) on his way to breaking the PUFFER record, and Dion Middelkoop (not competing). (Photo: Trevor Ball.)

gels. So I was pleased when we reached Vlakkenberg, where the route becomes too steep to run."

Robinson came in at seven hours, 13 minutes. In hot pursuit, Arnett took second place at seven hours and 53 minutes, followed by Marc du Rooy and Costa Dimopoulos.

"The most difficult thing about

the race is waking up at 03h15 to get down to Cape Point in time for the start," Robinson quips.

But Robinson is not one to rest on his laurels.

"So I broke the record by 10 minutes, but I reckon a seven-hour PUFFER is possible. I might have to give it a go some time." **MP**

Tribute to a cricket legend

Hylton Ackerman, cricket icon, television commentator and "one of the best batsmen not to play for South Africa", died in Cape Town on 2 September, aged 62. Ackerman suffered from diabetes and underwent regular dialysis treatment. An enthusiastic coach to young cricketers – he worked with the local Plascon Academy for eight years – Ackerman had also coached the UCT first team since 2008. He

paid special attention to instilling a sense of 'old school' values in the students, says the club's administrator, Kobus Olivier. "He's the best coach I've worked with. He had a very special way of working with young guys." In keeping with the international tributes, UCT will honour Ackerman with a minute of silence at its season-opening game, and both UCT and their rivals will don black armbands on the day. **MP**



Talking cricket: Hylton Ackerman, here with Martin Walters and Travis Townsend, will be sorely missed by the UCT players.