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Research chair in multi-wave astronomy will underpin study of far galaxies

UCT's newest chair in the Department of Astronomy is an important endorsement of the institution's capacity to build a body of research – and researchers – that will enhance South Africa's reputation as a major hub for ground-based multi-wave astronomy



The Head of the Department of Astronomy, Professor Renée Kraan-Korteweg, is delighted that astronomy at UCT has been awarded the Chair in Extragalactic Multi-Wavelength Astronomy, part of the South African Research Chairs Initiative in collaboration with the South African Square Kilometre Array (SKA) office.

The news was announced at the SKA Bursary and Fellowship Conference in Stellenbosch on 2 December, opened by Naledi Pandor, Minister of Science and Technology.

The Chair in Extragalactic Multi-Wavelength Astronomy is one of five Research Chairs dedicated to the SKA project. The Chairs are awarded for 15 years, and are worth R240 million.

The new Chair will focus on galaxy formation, evolution and cosmology through radio observations and will be 'embedded' in the Faculty of Science's Astrophysics, Cosmology and Gravitation Research Centre.

Deputy vice-chancellor for research, Prof Danie Visser said the announcement endorsed UCT's suitability to host and support the chair.

"The support for the new chair is very good. In particular, the National Astrophysics and Space Science Programme and Cosmology Group computing laboratory and the national Centre for High Performance Computing will provide excellent computational tools for the activities linked to the Chair," he added. "A high-speed wireless connection is under construction to link the KAT office with UCT and the South African Astronomical Observatory."

South Africa as a hub

"South Africa is rapidly becoming a major international hub for ground-based multi-wavelength astronomy, by virtue of its geographical advantage and the construction of world-class facilities," said Kraan-Korteweg.

Both South Africa and Australia have been short-listed to host the SKA, which will consist of thousands of dishes and radio-wave collecting devices, offering vast computing power (according to an online report, Dr Bruce Elmegreen of the Physical Sciences Department of IBM's Research Division estimates that the SKA's computing power will be equal to all the people on the planet doing a billion calculations per second simultaneously.)

If South Africa is chosen as host, this equipment will be spread over a vast area of the arid Karoo, but will act as one instrument with a joint receiving surface of one square kilometre.

This will detect very faint radio-wave signals from deep space – radioactivity left after the big bang, when the Universe is thought to have come into being – allowing astronomers to look back in time, back to the early origins of the Universe.

Both bid contenders are building radio telescopes or 'pathfinders' to contribute to the SKA technology. Each pathfinder telescope will be a premier telescope in its own right.

South Africa has begun construction on the Karoo Array Telescope, or MeerKAT, in the Northern Cape, which will contribute to the development of the technology required for the SKA. This offers a radio telescope of 80 12m dishes. In addition to the Southern African Large Telescope (SALT) it will significantly

boost the country's research capacity in astronomy and provide opportunities for technology and knowledge transfer.

Speaking at the announcement on 2 December, SA SKA project director Dr Bernie Fanaroff said: "The SKA represents an unrivalled opportunity in Africa for high-level capacity-building in telecommunications, imaging technology, receiver technology, high-speed computing, antennae engineering, space physics and advanced computation."

High-level skills development

The new Chair in the Astronomy Department augurs well for the development of radio astronomy through undergraduate and post-graduate student programmes at UCT. Many are supported by SKA bursaries. Hosting the SKA in South Africa will boost the development of high-level skills and cutting-edge technology infrastructure in Africa, and will also attract expertise and collaborative projects to the continent.

Already the South African SKA Youth into Science and Engineering Programme is feeding a steady stream of high-level expertise into the continent's SET system that will help Africa advance radio astronomy and its related sciences and technologies.

Among the student research promoted at the conference were the six "most innovative SKA research projects", including two from UCT: one by Jason Manley (titled *Large N Correlator*), and one from Edward Elson (titled *New insights into the dynamics and evolution of the blue compact dwarf galaxy NGC 2915* - see story on pg 4).

(Helen.Theron@uct.ac.za)

UCT's strengths in astronomy

- UCT is the only South African university with an astronomy department.
- The university has implemented a research strategy that focuses its resources into strategically selected clusters of activity and postgraduate training. This includes accredited research groups that operate as clusters of research excellence, one of which is Extragalactic Astrophysics and Cosmology.
- From a department of three academics, one postdoctoral research fellow and a handful of graduate students, the department has grown to a complement of 10 academics, 22 postgraduate students, and four postdoctoral research fellows.
- The astronomy department hosts another



SARChI Chair in Astrophysics and Space Science, awarded to Professor Erwin de Blok in 2007. His appointment resulted in a significant growth in the number of postgraduate students and postdoctoral

research fellows and the establishment of a research group specialising in extragalactic radio astronomy. De Blok is also a member of the MeerKAT International Science Advisory Committee.

- The department implemented an astrophysics undergraduate programme in 2005 which has been very successful in attracting black South African students. Of the 43 students registered for an astrophysics major at UCT this year, 74% are black and 35% are women.
- To date the National Astrophysics and Space Science Programme, partly hosted at UCT and which is open to all African students, has graduated 86 honours and 36 master's students.

Space odyssey: Prof Renée Kraan-Korteweg, head of the Department of Astronomy, which has been awarded the chair in Extragalactic Multi-Wavelength Astronomy.

Birds have something to say on climate change



Dr Marianne de Villiers.

While climate-change predictions and modelling – essential for policy design – are as cutting-edge and sophisticated as they come, they remain, as their critics like to point out, flawed and full of holes.

Then why not turn to birds to help fill the gaps? In a 16-page illustrated booklet, *Birds and Environmental Change: Building an early warning system in South Africa* (http://www.adu.org.za/docs/climate_change_booklet.pdf), scientists from the Animal Demography Unit (ADU) at UCT and the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) describe

how bird monitoring and research can provide telling warning signs of the impacts of climate change.

Keep an eye, for example, on the correlation between reproduction rates of the blue crane *Anthropoides paradiseus* and rainfall in the Nama Karoo region – the better the rain, the better the fledglings' chances of survival. On the flip side, drier weather around Cape Town could spell a rosier future for the peregrine falcons *Falco peregrines*, so watch their numbers.

And because spring arrives earlier in Eurasia than it used to, it's been noted that barn swallows

Hirundo rustica now leave South Africa 11 days earlier on their seasonal breeding migration than they did a decade and a half ago.

Many of the findings in the booklet are based on data collected for scientific programmes by trained members of the public.

"In SA (and elsewhere in the world), there are plenty of enthusiastic and knowledgeable members of the public who spend much of their leisure time birding," says editor Dr Marianne de Villiers of the ADU.

"There is thus a large and willing 'workforce' of people who can help collect data on birds – perhaps more so than for any other faunal group."

"Birds are certainly not the only group of species affected by global change, nor even the most affected," write SANBI's Guy Midgley and Phoebe Barnard in their introduction. "But they are certainly among the most visible and evocative to us as a society, and are thus an important window into the broader changes in ecosystems."

While the contributors admit that not enough is known to put all the trends in bird populations and distributions described in the booklet down to climate change, the long-term data should be enough to set alarm bells ringing.

(M.Morris@uct.ac.za)

Eternal summer for school



UCT's Summer School, directed by Medee Rall, will celebrate its 60th birthday next year.

Unique in Africa, UCT's Summer School has had a long and distinguished history. For six decades, as the university's premier public outreach event, it has offered courses and lectures ranging over arts and humanities, science and conservation, history, philosophy and contemporary studies, as well as practical art, languages and writing courses.

Planned and co-ordinated by the Centre for Extra-Mural Studies, it annually attracts approximately 3 000

students from all over the world.

In celebration of the event, which runs from 15 to 23 January, artist Gwen van Embden is creating *Bits, Bites and Tweets*, a commemorative artwork around a central pillar in the Leslie Social Sciences Building. This interactive installation engages with the theme of evolution as played out in the various adaptations of Galapagos finches, first noted by Darwin more than 175 years ago.

Students will be classified as members of a symbolic finch species according to their areas of study, and the appropriate symbolic finch will

accompany their registration cards. The exhibition website, <http://ss60.uct.ac.za>, has quick links and access to social networking tools such as Twitter.

Summer School's 60th anniversary will also be celebrated by two receptions. At the opening, on 15 January, the speaker will be Dr Stuart Saunders, former vice-chancellor, and at the second, on 22 January, the speaker will be vice-chancellor Dr Max Price. Two free lectures are offered on a first-come, first-served basis, one of these being by Dr Laurine Platzky, on the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

The co-ordination and smooth running of Summer School requires a great deal of planning and preparation to maintain its high reputation. Student assistants, all currently studying at UCT, are presently in training at the Centre. Summer School is a demanding and very 'real' work experience, and the skills and work ethic acquired by the students have made them highly employable on graduation, both within UCT and in the wider world.

(For general info, visit the Summer School website at <http://ems.uct.ac.za>) MP



Long arm of the law: (From left) Assoc Prof Elrena van der Spuy, Emmanuel Muvunyi (SFAR) and Prof Evance Kalula in Kigali, Rwanda.

Law faculty recruits students in Rwanda

The deputy deans who hold the postgraduate studies and internationalisation portfolios in the Faculty of Law travelled to Kigali recently to meet with prospective students.

Earlier this year an exchange agreement between the Ministries of Education of the governments of South Africa and Rwanda paved the way for a group of 19 students to register for the LLM programme in the faculty.

The recent visit aimed at consolidating the exchange agreement, streamlining administrative processes and administering language proficiency tests to a second round of prospective students. The UCT delegation was hosted by the director of SFAR, Emmanuel Muvunyi.

During their brief visit Professor Evance Kalula and Associate Professor Elrena van der Spuy also attended the opening session of the Judicial Open Week, at which issues relating to justice sector reform in Rwanda were discussed.

The Honourable Chief Justice spoke about far-reaching institutional reforms involving the modernisation of infrastructure, and the develop-

ment of technological skills and human resource capacity within the justice sector.

The discussions also touched on the challenges confronting the reform of the judicial sector in post-conflict jurisdictions. The delegation paid a brief courtesy call to the Minister of Education. A visit to the Genocide Memorial Museum brought the visit to a fitting conclusion.

"Fifteen years after the blood events of 1994, life in Kigali seems to have transformed itself," Van der Spuy said. "The city is situated on rolling green hills. The vegetation is lush. The streets are clean. More importantly, public perception reflects an absence of concerns about public safety – in sharp contrast to South Africa."

Among the students there was eagerness to explore the possibilities of exchange, she added.

"As a potential host institution, UCT also stands to benefit from the presence of a cadre of motivated postgraduate students who will bring their comparative experiences to bear on wider African conversations about law, justice and democratisation." MP

Neo-liberalism seeks to dominate Aboriginal affairs

Tension is building in Aboriginal affairs in Australia as mainstream employment and education departments and environmental agencies pursue different pathways for the development of the country's indigenous citizens living in remote areas.

The dominant state project of improvement seeks to integrate the Aboriginal population into the mainstream, while at the same time, environmental agencies provide support for indigenous Australians to remain living on a huge indigenous estate that covers a massive 1.5 million square kilometres, an area larger than South Africa, where only 100 000 indigenous Australians reside.

So said Professor Jon Altman (above right), director of the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research at the Australian National



University, in his seminar, *Commodification of Environmental Knowledge: An alternative development strategy for the Australian indigenous estate*. The event on 24 November was

presented by UCT's Environmental Evaluation Unit and the Department of Social Anthropology as part of the collaboration between UCT and the Australian National University. MP

Faculty of Health Sciences

BRAIN-BEHAVIOUR INITIATIVE

The Brain Behaviour Initiative (BBI), is an expanding signature theme at the University of Cape Town. The BBI encourages applications from:

- ▶ Master's in Neuroscience students;
- ▶ Doctoral students;
- ▶ Postdoctoral Fellows ; and
- ▶ Clinical Research Fellows (for those with an MB ChB degree).

Further information can be found on our website ([www.http://www.psychiatry.uct.ac.za/cubbi](http://www.psychiatry.uct.ac.za/cubbi)).

Applicants for the Fellowships should send a copy of their CV, as well as a one-page outline of potential research directions, to Prof. Dan Stein at dan.stein@uct.ac.za.

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University of Cape Town

Outstanding care wins top award for Roux

His quest to provide quality healthcare for HIV-infected children in Africa has driven UCT paediatrician Dr Paul Roux to new heights.

Over the past 25 years, Roux has spearheaded a number of initiatives that are benefiting children and their families, and, in some instances, paving the way for government programmes.

Now his efforts have earned him the Excellence in Healthcare Award from the Health Professions Council of South Africa. The accolade recognises the outstanding contributions of organisations or individuals to health care in South Africa.

Roux, a senior lecturer with the Division of Paediatric Medicine in the School of Child and Adolescent Health, was honoured for establishing the Paediatric AIDS Treatment for Africa (PATA) programme, an NGO dedicated to the improvement of quality of health care delivered to African children living with the virus.

PATA was started after Kidzpositive, another NGO Roux initiated, had begun to deliver anti-retroviral treatment to children at Groote Schuur Hospital in May 2002, two years before the South African government



began its ARV roll-out.

Roux launched a 'visiting treatment team' programme in 2004, when he discovered that there were "well-educated colleagues" in Africa who, at that time, had not treated

patients with anti-retroviral treatments "because they were frightened to start something they had not done before". This initiative led to the establishment of PATA in 2005.

The organisation borrowed its

name from a Miriam Makeba song, Pata Pata, meaning "reach out" in kiSwahili and "to touch" in isiXhosa and isiZulu.

By reaching out and touching communities and health profession-

als, and helping to build capacity in Africa, PATA aims to create a ripple effect of treatment action that will give a growing number of children access to life-saving antiretroviral therapy and holistic care.

It is a network of treatment teams that includes doctors, nurses, counsellors and pharmacists who work to improve quality of health care through self-initiated projects.

After each annual conference, teams are invited to choose quality improvement tasks to be done in their clinics, with incentives put in place to encourage their implementation.

"We try to be very practical and avoid a lot of academic stuff," Roux said.

So far, PATA has 150 teams running projects that involve more than 120 clinics in 23 countries.

"PATA does not tell people what to do, but helps them discover common goals and how to collaborate to get things done."

Listening to other people's ideas is what excites Roux, and gives him and PATA the energy to move forward, he added. Through the nomination by Professor Heather Zar, Roux's colleague in the division, this is the first time that PATA and its work has been acknowledged. **MP**

Royal visit cements South Africa-Norway relations

Global challenges require global solutions, and the time has come for South Africa and Norway to examine how to consolidate and develop their co-operation, said Queen Sonja of the Norwegian royal family at UCT on 26 November.

Opening the seminars on Co-operation in Research and Higher Education, Queen Sonja said research is dependent on sharing knowledge and ideas.

In this regard, she thanked the scholars and students present, saying that through their work, solutions to

pressing problems could be found.

Since 1995, South Africa and Norway have enjoyed "extensive co-operation" in various fields such as science, energy and medicine, she said.

"With the opening of today's seminars, the two countries are entering into a new phase in strengthening that partnership."

At the seminars, topics such as climate change, environmental awareness and science were examined.

Vice-chancellor Dr Max Price

noted that the relationship between the two countries provides a platform for Western Cape universities to engage in international research partnerships and co-operation. (Podcast and videoclip available on the website.) **MP**

Royal treatment: (From left) Norwegian Minister of Research and Higher Education, Tora Aasland, South African Minister of Science and Technology, Naledi Pandor, Queen Sonja and King Harald V of Norway, and VC Dr Max Price.



No more monkey business with baboons



Tali Hoffman's supervisor, Dr Justin O'Riain, keeps a watchful eye on his subject.

If baboons are something of a nuisance to locals, it could well be because, as UCT doctoral student Tali Hoffman has now shown, humans are encroaching all the more on the baboons' stomping grounds on the Cape Peninsula.

As part of her doctoral research with the Baboon Research Unit in the Department of Zoology, Hoffman

has compiled a series of digital maps – based on months-long tracking of baboon movements, and some 25 000 GPS points that came out of that exercise – that pinpoint the baboons' home range on the Peninsula – from Tokai to Cape Point – to a very fine scale.

And, no, baboons don't just hang out up on the mountains somewhere, well clear of humans.

"They require the same areas of land that humans steer towards – our low-lying, flatter land," explains Hoffman. "For humans it's easier to build on, for baboons it's richer in resources."

Hoffman's maps have now been accepted by the Strategic Development Management Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning in the Western Cape, which means that any new developments will have to take into account the baboons' habitats. (And even if developments go ahead, there will have to be some kind of mitigating provisions.)

At the very least, it's hoped that the maps will curb the growing conflict between baboons and humans, says Hoffman's supervisor, Dr Justin O'Riain.

"Tali's maps are the single most important juncture in the history of our attempts to conserve this baboon population."

To further illustrate the value of Hoffman's work, she also received the award for the best oral presentation by a student at the 2009 Fynbos Forum, hosted by the Botanical Society of South Africa. **MP**

Unit punches "way out of its league"

DataFirst, the "very small" survey data archive and training facility in the Faculty of Commerce, was honoured by Statistics SA with an award in the Data Dissemination category on 23 November.

Statistics SA and DataFirst are involved in a US\$370 000 project to support the accurate use of national statistics. Their work, the Data Quality Project, is funded by the Andrew W Mellon Foundation. It aims to support the quality and usability of Stats SA datasets for local researchers, especially those involved in measuring poverty, inequality and unemployment; and to build capacity in assessing data quality.

Acting Dean of Commerce Professor John Simpson said: "We are so proud of DataFirst, as it is a very small research unit that punches way out of its league. Achieving recognition from Stats SA shows that we are making a significant difference to evidence-based policymaking, both in South Africa and across the continent."

DataFirst's director, Matthew Welch, said: "Accurate data is necessary for drawing up and implementing effective government policy. Maintaining up-to-date, accurate information



UCT's Lynn Woolfrey, with Statistician-General Pali Lehohla.

is also the only way a country can measure its progress in economic and social development. DataFirst keeps up to date with the best research in this field internationally. Through this project, this expertise is made available to foster the work of Stats SA for nation building."

DataFirst does similar work outside South Africa on a project of the International Household Survey Network's Accelerated Data Program (ADP), sponsored by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. DataFirst installs data management tools and trains staff at national statistics offices in African countries. **MP**

Dark energy thesis wins medal

Renee Hlozek's work on dark energy has won her this year's prestigious S2A3 Medal from the South African Association for the Advancement of Science.

The medal, which comes with a R15 000 prize, is for original research at master's level, and is awarded annually by each South African university and university of technology to the most outstanding master's degree research student in a scientific discipline.

Hlozek (pictured) obtained her master's in astrophysics at UCT and is currently on a Rhodes scholarship, reading for her DPhil at the University of Oxford.

She is working on data from the Atacama Cosmology Telescope, a



telescope in Chile, which measures small fluctuations in the cosmic

microwave radiation from the early universe. These small fluctuations

give information on what the universe is made of, and how it evolves with time.

Her master's thesis was about challenges in the study of dark energy, the mysterious form of anti-gravity believed to be responsible for the acceleration of the Universe.

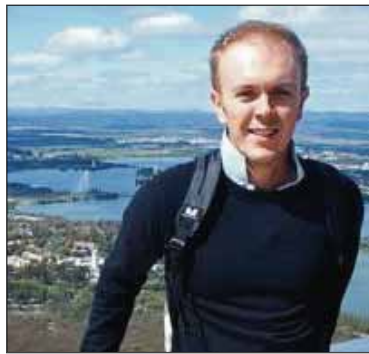
"It is called dark energy because, while the evidence suggests that it makes up around 70% of the total energy density in the Universe, we don't know what it is. So we are in the dark, so to speak," Hlozek explained. The topic excites her because there are so many unanswered questions in cosmology, and so much to learn.

"I am passionate about trying to unravel these mysteries." About the medal, Hlozek said: "I

really enjoyed my master's and my time at UCT, and it is a real honour to receive recognition for this work. I worked on projects that interested and inspired me, and I was lucky to have a great supervisor in Professor Bruce Bassett and an excellent research group to work with and share ideas with. For example, working together as a team, two other students, Prof Bassett and I developed and released a statistical code package that has been downloaded over 1 000 times internationally, and is used both for teaching and for research purposes.

"That would not have been possible without group interaction and mentoring, and this medal reflects what a wonderful research model that is." **MP**

Study of "one of the darkest galaxies known"



Edward Elson

At the recent South African Square Kilometre Array Youth into Science and Engineering Programme, two UCT postgrads, Jason Manley and Edward Elson, were among six students whose projects were chosen for presentation.

Titled *New insights into the dynamics and evolution of the blue*

compact dwarf galaxy NGC 2915, Elson's project is a detailed study of the properties of a sample of nearby dwarf galaxies. These systems form a unique morphological class of galaxies, being relatively small, low-mass collections of stars, gas and dark matter. In the standard cosmological model of the Universe, dwarf galaxies are thought to dominate the cosmic scenery in terms of number density, far outnumbering the large spiral and elliptical galaxies.

"Being scraggly collections of stars, dwarf galaxies are not particularly impressive simply to look at, yet they serve as unique laboratories in which to test theories of star formation, as well as our understanding of the properties of dark matter. Dark matter is known to constitute about 25% of the mass-energy budget of the Universe, yet we have hardly any idea of what it really is. Dwarf galaxies

can help in this regard since they, in particular, are known to be very dark-matter-dominated systems, having their stellar components embedded in large dark matter halos. The inferred dark matter properties of these galaxies can be directly compared to theoretical predictions from state-of-the-art numerical simulations of dark matter halo formation."

Elson says that using a dwarf galaxy's observed stellar dynamics to trace the dark matter is a powerful technique, yet it does not allow one to probe the outer parts of the dark matter halo.

"We have carried out radio-frequency observations of the gas content of a nearby dwarf galaxy, NGC 2915, for which we now have the highest-quality data set ever obtained."

These data are used to study the galaxy's dark matter content out to a

distance of 20 times the extent of its stellar disk.

"This is not always possible for dwarf galaxies, but in the case of NGC 2915 it is, since surrounding the optical core is a huge, rotating gas disk," Elson adds. "Neutral hydrogen gas (HI) is an important component of most galaxies. HI synthesis observations of the gas within a galaxy provide us with a detailed measure of the gas distribution and, very importantly, the gas dynamics. For NGC 2915 we determined the rotation velocity, as a function of radius, of the gas orbiting the galactic centre. Newton's laws directly link these measured rotation velocities to the total amount of mass contained within their orbits.

"When we calculate the expected rotation velocities due to the stellar and gas components of the system, we encounter a problem: they are far

too small as compared to the observed rotation velocities. This is evidence for a large unseen mass component, the dark matter. We have determined that the stars and gas in NGC 2915 make up less than 8% of the total mass. At least 92% of the mass in this galaxy is constituted by dark matter. This makes it one of the darkest galaxies known. NGC 2915's large dark matter mass fraction plays a crucial role in the overall evolution of the system and, to a large extent, will determine the eventual fate of the galaxy."

An important unanswered question is whether there are many more galaxies like NGC 2915 out there.

"If so, could they provide us with new insights into the evolutionary links between dwarfs and large spiral galaxies?" Elson asks. "This is a question that South Africa's SKA technology pathfinder telescope, MeerKAT, can help to answer." **MP**

Links with Nobel lab give UCT the cutting edge in structural biology



(From left) Structural biologists pictured in front of the cryo-FEGTEM, acquired from the MRC-LMB, are Jean Watermeyer, Brandon Weber, Jason van Rooyen, Jennifer van Wyk, Serah Kimani, Simon Broadley, Jeremy Woodward and Ndoria Thuku

The epicentre of structural biology in South Africa is UCT's Electron Microscope Unit where students are studying the structures of proteins using techniques that led to the determination of the structure of the ribosome. This is pivotal work that has won three overseas researchers the 2009 Nobel Prize in Chemistry, announced in October.

The three researchers who shared the Nobel Prize in Chemistry this year are Ada Yonath of the Weizmann Institute of Science, Thomas Steitz of Yale University and Venkatraman Ramakrishnan of the Medical Research

Council's Laboratory for Molecular Biology in Cambridge.

The pioneer of the trio is Yonath, only the fourth woman, and the first since Dorothy Crowfoot Hodgkin in 1964, to win the Nobel Chemistry award. She is also the ninth (and first woman) Israeli Nobel Laureate.

The central dogma of molecular biology is that DNA is transcribed to RNA which is translated to protein. This year's winners, the citation says, studied "the ribosome's translation of DNA information" to produce proteins, which control the chemistry in all living organisms. They have shown

"what the ribosome looks like and how it functions at the atomic level".

What clearly differentiates the ribosome from other precisely-ordered biological structures is its scale and complexity.

At that time Yonath started her work the feasibility of the determination of the accurate three-dimensional structure of the ribosome met with considerable skepticism from most of the international scientific community. The only method yielding molecular structures is X-ray crystallography, which requires high-quality crystals.

However, ribosomal properties are unfavorable for crystallisation: they are flexible, heterogeneous and unstable. Yonath believed it was possible to crystallise ribosomes because she was aware that the ribosomes of hibernating polar bears are preserved through the winter because they form crystalline two-dimensional arrays. This observation gave her the courage to persist and ultimately produce diffraction-quality crystals from the ribosomes of a thermophilic bacterium. Since ribosomes are crucial to life, new antibiotics are sought to attack the ribosomes of bacteria, and this is where the immediate application of the work lies.

"More than 50% of known antibiotics are targeted to ribosomes. Among the key discoveries is the precise mechanism of a number of these, information which will certainly lead

to the discovery of new antibiotics", says Professor Roger Hunter, head of UCT's Drug Discovery Signature theme. Indeed, Tom Steitz has established a company for this purpose.

Venki Ramakrishnan is the fourteenth Nobel Laureate to have done his work at the MRC-LMB. Among these laureates are two South Africans, Aaron Klug and Sydney Brenner. Ramakrishnan attributes his success to the availability of the stable, long-term funding necessary to do a project like this.

The LMB continues to play an important role in enabling South Africans to participate in high-profile structural biology projects. It has been a home to Michael Lawrence, who went on to determine the structure of the insulin

receptor, and Alan Roseman who determined the structure of the hepatitis B virus.

Currently, Jennifer Miller (a 2008 graduate of the master's programme in structural biology) is studying G-protein coupled receptors (the target of 25% of commercial drugs) with Richard Henderson. Henderson made it possible for UCT to acquire South Africa's first cryo-FEGTEM when the instrument was no longer required by the LMB.

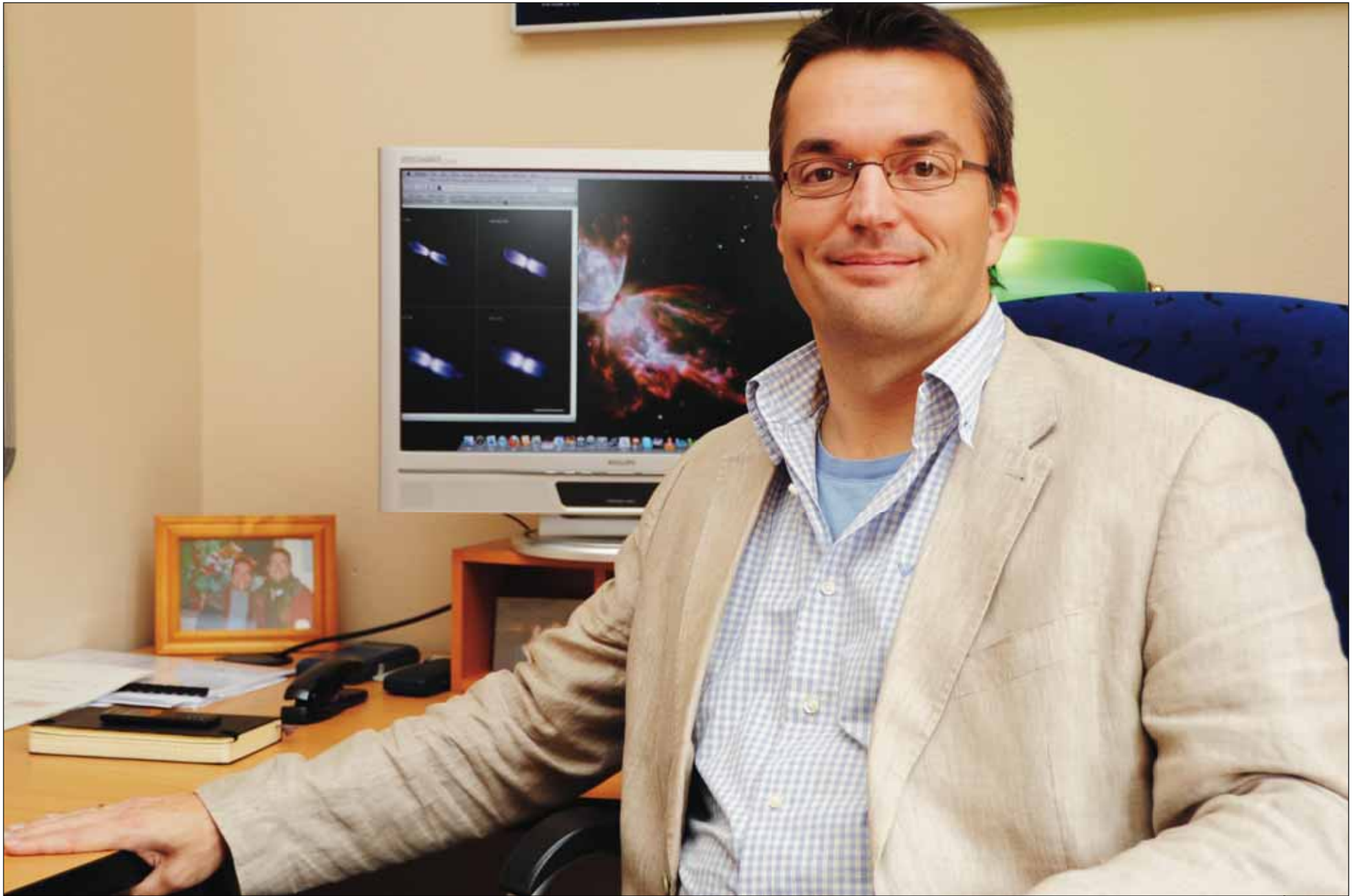
Perhaps the key lesson that we can learn from this Nobel chemistry prize is that anything is possible in structural biology; but it takes time and a stable, supportive environment. (*This report by Professor Trevor Sewell, director of the Electron Microscope Unit.*) **MP**



(From left) Jennifer Miller at the MRC-LMB with Sanjeev Kumar, Richard Henderson and Venki Ramakrishnan.

Death of a star: A white dwarf waits to go kaboom

Astronomers are charting the evolution of a Type Ia supernova, critical for studies of elusive dark energy and our understanding of the Universe's expansion



Mysteries unravelled: Assoc Prof Patrick Woudt is lead author of a paper on a double-star system that is a likely candidate to become one of the long-sought progenitors of the exploding stars known as Type Ia supernovae, critical for studies of elusive dark energy.

It's not often that an academic paper on the evolution of a supernova star – when a large dying star implodes – sends audiences scurrying for YouTube.

But Associate Professor Patrick Woudt and his co-author Emeritus Professor Brian Warner's paper (published in the 20 November 2009 issue of *Astrophysical Journal*) on the unique explosion of a white dwarf star, V445 Puppis, has caused quite a stir internationally.

V445 Puppis and its companion star are 25 000 light years away in the constellation of Puppis (The 'Stern') in our galaxy. This means the light emitted from them was during the Earth's Palaeolithic Period, when early humans were hunting and fishing and practising primitive forms of cultivation.

Fast forward to March 2005, when astronomers using the European South Observatory's (ESO) Very Large Telescope began to receive detailed pictures of the expanding nova shell of V445 Puppis following its outburst in November 2000.

Vampire star

The central star in V445 Puppis had been sucking helium from its companion star, much like a vampire. Hav-

ing tanked up on cannibalised energy, V445 Puppis had become heavy and unstable. The subsequent helium nova outburst – the first ever helium nova observed in the Milky Way galaxy – bumped up its brightness some 250 times, and the star began ejecting a vast amount of matter, several times the mass of the Earth.

Over the next two years, astronomers were able to get some very sharp images of the vampire star's dramatic evolution.

What they saw resembled a bipolar shell, shaped like a bow-tie, initially with a small waist and lobes on either side. The shell – unlike any previously observed for a nova – is moving at about 24 million kilometres an hour.

While the event offers a grandiose display of fireworks, it is also of huge value to astronomers, allowing them to calculate the distance away and intrinsic brightness of this peculiar outbursting double-star system.

Exploding supernovae

This double-star system is a prime candidate for becoming one of the long-sought progenitors of the exploding stars known as Type Ia supernovae, critical for studies of elusive dark energy and our understanding of the

Universe's expansion.

"Becoming a supernova is one way that a star can end its life," says Woudt. "One family of supernovae, Type Ia supernovae, are of particular interest to cosmologists as they can be used as

'standard candles' to measure distances in the Universe – and to calibrate the accelerating expansion that is driven by dark energy."

It's hard to say when – or even if – V445 Puppis will become a Type Ia su-

pernova. The matter piling up on V445 Puppis' surface from its companion star will eventually cause it to exceed the Chandrasekhar limit (named after Indian physicist Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar), which is nearly 1.4 times the mass of the Sun. Once it reaches this threshold it should explode like a stellar thermonuclear bomb.

"One of the major problems in modern astrophysics is the fact that we still do not know exactly what kinds of stellar systems explode as a Type Ia supernova," says Woudt.

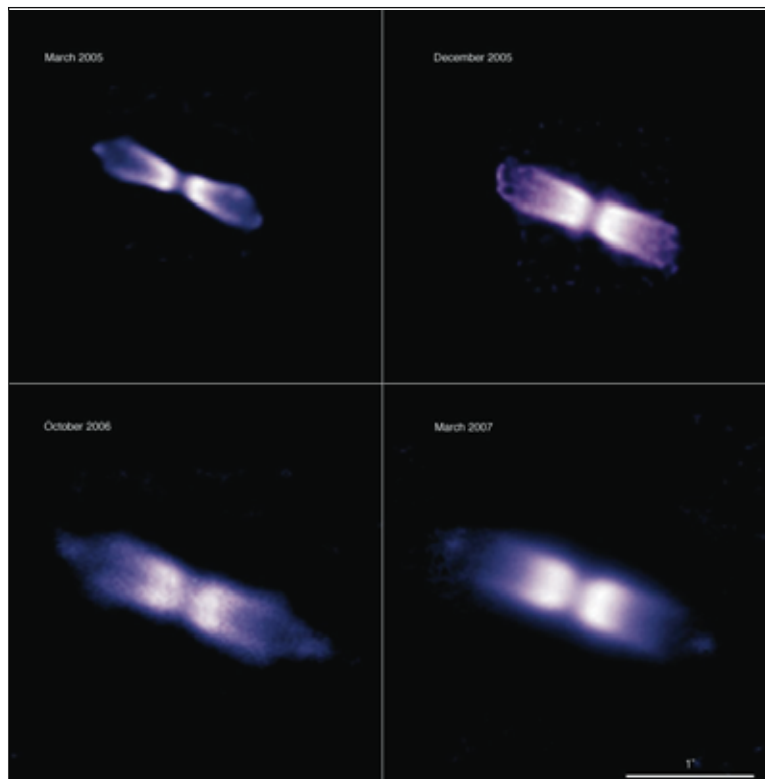
"Whether V445 Puppis will eventually explode as a supernova, or whether the current nova outburst has pre-empted that pathway by ejecting too much matter back into space is still unclear," he adds.

"But we have a pretty good suspect for a future Type Ia supernova!"

If V445 Puppis explodes as a Type Ia supernova, it will be easily visible with the naked eye. It will appear as bright in the night sky as the planet Jupiter, even though V445 Puppis is 25 000 light years away.

(You can take a look on YouTube at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bf50nwry_G8)

(Helen.Theron@uct.ac.za)



Obituaries

Mendel Kaplan, remembered by Prof Milton Shain, director of the Isaac and Jessie Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies and Research

Mendel Kaplan once told me that the key to success was focus. I witnessed it in all his efforts. Details concerned him greatly, but he never lost sight of the big picture. Indeed, he created the big picture.

Mendel, who recently passed away, initiated, led and funded numerous Jewish, Zionist and other projects in South Africa and throughout the Jewish world.

There is much to celebrate in his 73 years: Cape Gate has been transformed from a modest business selling products like wrought iron and garden benches into a vast conglomerate producing its own steel; it became one of the largest privately-owned companies in South Africa. The expansion was largely orchestrated by Mendel and his brother Robert.

Cape Gate is a family concern. Family was Mendel's passion. Contact was maintained across continents. Newsletters found their way to every relative. Mendel and his loving wife Jill loved reunions. Everyone's progress was followed and appreciated. Mendel encouraged their efforts.

Board meetings at the Isaac and Jessie Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies and Research at the University of Cape Town, founded in honour of Mendel's parents, were always exciting. Mendel knew balance sheets were not my strongest suit. But he



would leave that alone.

Projects, conferences and research interested him. There were no formalities. It was always down to business.

No doubt Mendel's law degree from the University of Cape Town and his master's in business administration from Columbia University in New York stood him in great stead. But it was his creativity, vision and focus that set him apart.

Mendel was always three steps ahead. He provided direction and ideas. But he also appreciated contestation. Exchanges were often tense but always underpinned by loyalty.

When Mendel set his mind to something, he was unstoppable. He had a passion for matters Jewish. A deeply spiritual man, he was always

reading, learning and writing. His most recent book recorded his travels as a young man in East Africa. It was written for his grandchildren.

Mendel was immersed in South African and international Jewish affairs. His was a household name in the Jewish world. Although he moved in hallowed circles, Mendel always had time for lesser mortals. More than that, he cared for them.

The Kaplan Centre, too, has appreciated his generosity. I know the Centre meant much to him, although it was only one of many flourishing ventures he created in a life dedicated to the Jewish people, to Israel, to family and to the less fortunate, Jewish and non-Jewish.

Prof Paul Ensor, Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, has added: "Over the years I interacted with Mendel Kaplan often, and greatly enjoyed his forthrightness, his generosity, his curiosity, and his truly wonderful sense of humour. UCT, and the Faculty of Humanities in particular, have benefited materially and intellectually from his tremendous generosity over many years, and we will miss him greatly. He will be remembered through the Kaplan Centre and its ongoing work, and we will find a fitting way of paying tribute to his legacy. It was a great privilege to have known and worked with him." **MP**

Emer Prof Paul Hare, global sociologist



Hare's early notoriety in sociology came from his dedication to small-group research. At Harvard's Department of Social Relations, with Robert F Bales and Edgar F Borgatta, Hare edited the classic 1955 collection titled *Small Groups: Studies in Social Interaction*.

Another focus of Hare's scholarly contributions was functional analysis of social interaction, derived from the work of Talcott Parsons. Hare blended the functional perspective with other theoretical approaches, such as dramaturgical analysis and the creativity hierarchy, as a method for examining social change, which included the US civil rights struggle, global peace movements, India's Shanti Sena, the fight against apartheid in South Africa, and the Hebrew Israelite Community.

Hare's greatest professional legacy is his life as a model of the sociologist engaged in the currents of social history, across nations and diverse peoples, propelled by his Quaker values to "bear witness" and be a participant observer of social

action for peace and justice.

The Sociology Department, and particularly current members associate Professors Ken Jubber and David Lincoln and administrative assistant Ramela Bhaga (all three of whom knew Hare in the 1970s), paid homage to him.

"He was a world-renowned scholar who during his UCT involvement helped grow and shape the Department of Sociology intellectually. Moreover, in 1975 he founded the journal *Social Dynamics* at UCT and was its first editor. The endurance and quality of this journal bears testimony to his foresight, and to the research and publishing he stimulated. As a person, he will be particularly remembered for his political activism in the department and in Cape Town, and for his emphasis on consultation and consensus decision-making."

Hare is survived by his wife, June Rabson Hare; their sons, Simon and Andrew; four children from a previous marriage: Sharon, Diana, Mally and Christopher; and two granddaughters, Eva and Lulu. **MP**

Paul Hare, a global sociologist passionately engaged in the world around him, has died at 86. Emeritus Professor Paul Hare, head of the Department of Sociology from 1973 to 1980, died on 31 October in Beer Sheva, Israel.

Hare was Professor Emeritus in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Ben-Gurion University, Israel, and an affiliate of the University's Jacob Blaustein Institutes for Desert Research.

Ad hominem

UCT recently honoured top-performing academics and scientific and technical staff who moved up a rung by way of the ad hominem promotions process.

"To be promoted ad hominem at UCT is a great honour: the rules are stringent and the process rigorous," said deputy vice-chancellor Professor Danie Visser.

"As DVC overseeing the process, I read the documentation relating to every application, and attend the final meeting of each faculty's ad hominem promotions committee.

"I have been greatly impressed, firstly by the great work done by the applicants, and secondly by the consistency in standard that is achieved across the university."

In each faculty the ad hominem promotions committee consists of the dean, a DVC, two outside deans, and a number of other members of the faculty, as determined by the Faculty Board.

This committee scrutinises each application and, after debate, makes its decision by secret ballot. A recommendation for ad hominem promotion requires a two-thirds majority vote; and in addition, two of the three outside members (the DVC and the two deans) must support the recommendation.

"The recommendation of each faculty's committee is presented to the Vice-Chancellor, who finally signs off on the promotions," Visser added. "Clearly, each person who has made it through this tough process can be very proud."

AD HOMINEM PROMOTIONS

Faculty of Humanities

Prof Gobodo-Madikizela (Dept of Psychology)
Prof Hendrik Hofmeyr (College of Music)
Assoc Prof Carrol Clarkson (Dept of English Language and Literature)
Assoc Prof Imraan Coovadia (Dept of English Language and Literature)
Assoc Prof Geoffrey Hyland (Dept of Drama)
Assoc Prof Fritha Langerman (Michaelis School of Fine Art)
Dr Tanja Bosch (to Senior Lecturer, Centre Film & Media Studies)
Daniel Galloway (to Principal Technical Officer, Little Theatre)

Faculty of Science

Dr David Braun (to Senior Lecturer, Dept of Archaeology)
Dr Isabelle Ansoorge (to Senior Lecturer, Dept of Oceanography)
Dr Greg Smith (to Senior Lecturer, Dept of Chemistry)
Assoc Prof Mike Lucas (Dept of Zoology)
Assoc Prof Hussein Suleman (Computer Science)
Assoc Prof James Gain (Computer Science)
Faedah Davids (to Principal Scientific Officer, Dept of Molecular and Cell Biology)
Dr Brandon Weber (to Principal Scientific Officer, Electron Microscope Unit)
Dr Cornelia Klak (to Chief Scientific Officer, Dept of Botany)

Faculty of Engineering & the Built Environment

Prof Keith Cattell (Dept of Construction and Economics Management)

Prof Michael Claeys (Dept of Engineering)

Assoc Prof Brandon Collier (Mechanical Engineering)
Assoc Prof Genevieve Lang (Mechanical Engineering)
Assoc Prof Marianne Vander (Civil Engineering)
Assoc Prof Jennifer Whittal (Architecture, Planning and Geomatics)

Faculty of Commerce

Assoc Prof Edwin Muchap (Economics)
David Priilaid (Senior Lecturer (Economics))
Assoc Prof Anton Schlechter (Management Studies)
Dr Albert Touna Mama (to School of Economics)
Prof Alexandra Watson (Dep)

Faculty of Health Sciences

Prof Jake Krige (Surgery)
Prof Carolyn Williamson (Clinical Science)
Prof Michael Lambert (Human Physiology)
Prof Mohamed Jeebhay (Public Health)
Assoc Prof Robert Dunn (Surgery)
Assoc Prof Marc Mendelson (Internal Medicine)
Assoc Prof Helen Wainwright (Physiology)
Assoc Prof Sandrine Lecour (Cardiology Research)
Assoc Prof John Hewitson (Surgery)
Assoc Prof Denver Hendrick (Physiology)
Assoc Prof Athol Kent (Obstetrics and Gynaecology)
Assoc Prof Crick Lund (Psychiatry)
Assoc Prof Muazzam Jacobson (Physiology)
Dr Chelsea Morroni (to Senior Lecturer, Health and Family Medicine)
Dr Theresa Burgess (to Senior Lecturer, Health and Rehabilitation Sciences)
Lucretia Petersen (to Senior Lecturer, Health and Rehabilitation Sciences)

Faculty of Law

Tracy Lee Gutuza (to Senior Lecturer, Legal Studies)
Julie Mary Berg (to Senior Lecturer, Criminology)
Assoc Prof Alfred Barnard (Criminology)

The Centre for Higher Education

Prof Ingrid Fiske (Extra-Mural Studies)
Dr Kevin Williams (to Senior Lecturer, Education Studies)
Leonard Smith (to Senior Lecturer, Economics)
Assoc Prof Jeff Jawitz (Adult Education Studies)
Assoc Prof Moragh Paxton (to Senior Lecturer, Management Programme)

STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY has named Johann Rupert as its new chancellor. Rupert replaces Frederick van Zyl Slabbert, who retired in September. The new chancellor earned his first degree – in company law and economics – at Stellenbosch, and later went on to found the Rand Merchant Bank and the Small Business Development Corporation, as well as leading several organisations.

Free State High Court judge Faan Hancke has been replaced as the chairperson of the **FREE STATE UNIVERSITY** council. Another

judge, Ian Van der Merwe, was appointed as the new chairperson.

HIGHER EDUCATION MINISTER BLADE NZIMANDE has asked the Council for Higher



Education to review the formula for state funding of universities, believing that "richer" universities were able to raise large amounts of money in their private capacity. But DA education spokesman Wilmot James has responded that any cutbacks in funding would profoundly damage higher education, and that Nzimande should be lobbying for more funding for research-intensive universities, not less.

While the **UNIVERSITY OF BENIN** in Nigeria has named dean of education Prof Osayuki Godwin



Oshodin as its new vice-chancellor – becoming the first Bini man to hold the position at the 39-year-old university – one of the other candidates, Professor Emmanuel Obaseki-Ebo,



EDUCATION NEWS
FROM AFRICA AND
THE WORLD

n promotions – a tough process

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The Centre for Higher Education Development group included (from left, back) DVC Prof Jo Beall, VC Dr Max Price, Leonard Smith, Dean Prof Nan Yeld, and DVC Prof Danie Visser. (From left, front) Assoc Prof Jeff Jawitz, Assoc Prof Moragh Paxton, Prof Ingrid Fiske, and Dr Kevin Williams.



The Faculty of Humanities group included (from left) Dr Tanja Bosch, Daniel Galloway, Assoc Prof Fritha Langerman, Assoc Prof Geoff Hyland, VC Dr Max Price, Dean Prof Paula Ensor, Prof Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, Assoc Prof Imraan Coovadia, Prof Hendrik Hofmeyr, and Assoc Prof Carrol-Ann Clarkson.



The Faculty of Science group included (from left) Assoc Prof Hussein Suleman, Dr Greg Smith, Faezah Davids, Assoc Prof James Gain, Dean Prof Kathy Driver, VC Dr Max Price, Dr David Braun, Dr Cornelia Klak, Dr Isabelle Ansonge, and Dr Brandon Weber.



The Faculty of Engineering & the Built Environment group included (from left) Assoc Prof Marianne Vanderschuren, Assoc Prof Jennifer Whittal, Prof Michael Claeys, Dean Prof Francis Petersen, VC Dr Max Price, Assoc Prof Brandon Collier-Reed, Assoc Prof Genevieve Langdon, and Prof Keith Cattell.



The Faculty of Commerce group included (from left) Dr Albert Touna Mama, Assoc Prof Edwin Muchapondwa, Acting Dean Emer Prof John Simpson, VC Dr Max Price, Prof Alexandra Watson, Assoc Prof Anton Schlechter, and David Priillaid.



The Faculty of Law group included (from left) Tracy Lee Gutuza, Assoc Prof Alfred Barnard, VC Dr Max Price, Prof Anton Fagan, and Julie Mary Berg.



The Faculty of Health Sciences group included (from left) Lucretia Petersen, Dr Theresa Burgess, Assoc Prof Marc Mendelson, Assoc Prof Helen Wainwright, Assoc Prof Dr Robert Dunn, Assoc Prof Sandrine Lecour, Assoc Prof Athol Kent, VC Dr Max Price, Prof Zephne van der Spuy, Prof Jake Krige, Prof Mohamed Jeebhay, Prof Michael Lambert, Assoc Prof John Hewitson, Assoc Prof Denver Hendricks, Assoc Prof Crick Lund, and Assoc Prof Muazzam Jacobs.

has urged the university's council to declare him the winner instead as due process had not been followed, he claims.
 Uganda's High Court has ordered the vice-chancellor of **KYAMBOGO UNIVERSITY**, Prof Isaiah Ndiege, and a security officer to vacate their offices until a case filed against the university is settled. Three university officials were among those recently interrogated by police over death threats directed at Ndiege, who hails from Kenya. The three officials are appealing the

investigations against them.
 Israel has released Palestinian law professor Ghassan Khaled after



Kyambogo University's Prof Isaiah Ndiege.

he had been held for 20 months without trial in administrative detention. Khaled, 40, a lecturer in commercial law at **AN-NAJAH UNIVERSITY** in the West Bank city of Nablus, was arrested in January 2008, held and interrogated using extreme methods that he says amounted to "torture" before being released, and then was rearrested in March 2008.
IN INDIA, the prime minister's office has referred a proposed law that will allow foreign universities into the country to a panel of

top government officials, worried that the bill wouldn't appeal to the world's best universities. This is but the latest in a series of delays for the bill, which was supposed to have been introduced in Parliament in 2007.
 A newspaper column that led to a best-selling book, *The Girls of Ames*, about the enduring friendship of a group of 11 women from **AMES IN THE US**, has inspired 10 women from the group to launch a US\$1 000 college scholarship, in memory of the eleventh girlfriend,

who died in 1986. The winner will be a girl from Ames who can not only show that she's a good student, but also get two buddies to attest that she's a good friend.
 The doctoral dissertation of Ann Dunham, anthropologist and Barack Obama's late mother, has been published by **DUKE UNIVERSITY PRESS** and was launched at the American Anthropological Association's annual conference last week. *Surviving Against the Odds: Village Industry in Indonesia* was published 15 years after Dunham's death.

Prevention is better than cure, says Van As

Society must prevent injuries to children, and UCT should not be shy to lead the way, Professor Sebastian van As said at his inaugural lecture. *Ex Africa Semper Aliquid Novum* (There is always something new out of Africa).

Van As, head of the Trauma Unit at the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital, said trauma is the leading cause of the death of children between the ages of one and 18 in South Africa. Each year, approximately one million children die from the three big killers: motor vehicle accidents, drowning and burns.

Van As drew his argument from recommendations made by the Commission for Africa, instituted by former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, which suggested a shift of emphasis from humanitarian relief to prevention to solve Africa's problems.

Research at UCT represents a wealth of information that is internationally underutilised, Van As noted. This includes the numerous novel experimental liver and liver transplantation studies at the Liver Research Centre at Red Cross Hospital, and the fact that the uni-

versity's and hospital's work has made South Africa a world leader in trauma care.

According to the World Health Organisation, trauma will be the biggest killer by 2010, as other causes such as infectious diseases and cardiovascular diseases will decline in the next decade.

"It's therefore a concern that there is a tendency among certain administrators to think that dedicated trauma units can be dispensed with," he said.

The development of paediatric trauma care is another area in which surgeons have excelled and taken leadership. The Red Cross Children's Hospital Trauma Unit was established in 1984, and extended in 2004 when an additional new state-of-the-art trauma unit was built.

Approximately 10 000 children are treated annually in the unit, and the main causes of injuries are falls, transport-related injuries, burns and assaults.

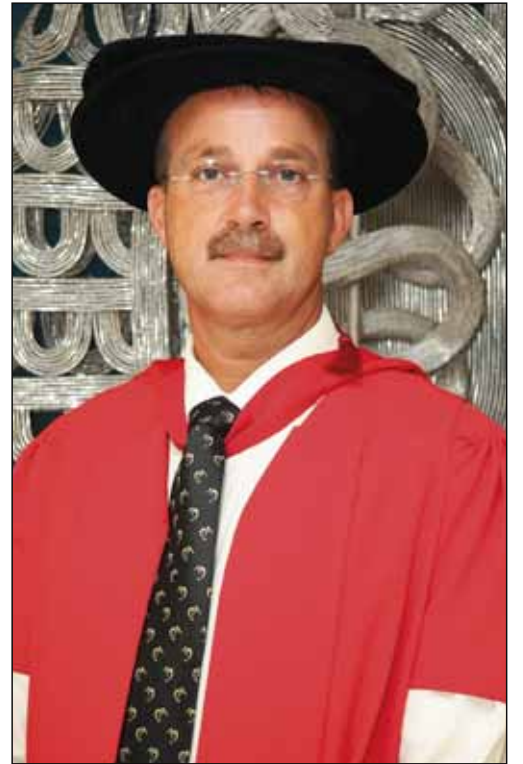
The prevention – rather than just treatment – of child injuries is not a new concept, as Red Cross established the Child Accident

Prevention Foundation of Southern Africa, popularly known as Childsafe, in 1978.

The vision of Childsafe is to create a safer world for children, with its activities focusing on research, education, environmental change and recommendations for legislation. Childsafe's most prominent initiative was their support for the new child-friendly Firearms Control Bill, which has reduced the number of cases of children treated for gunshot wounds at Red Cross by 70% since 2000. "It also had a drastic effect on national mortality as a result of gunshots, reducing it by 50%," Van As said.

"Though there are significant campaigns to increase vaccinations for infectious diseases, child-accident prevention is seriously neglected in the Third World. Too often, it is forgotten that child safety is a matter for adults."

Van As believes that the recently-established Global Health Institute at UCT will contribute significantly to global health, but it requires a strong trauma component. **MP**



Drug discovery award for Chin'ombe



On the move: Dr Nyasha Chin'ombe.

It is high time that African scientists find African solutions for Africa, says postdoctoral research fellow Dr Nyasha Chin'ombe.

Chin'ombe has been selected by the National Research Foundation to participate in the South Africa Drug Discovery programme in 2010.

The Drug Discovery programme is a collaboration between Emory University and South Africa and aims to build a high-calibre cadre of scientists who will play an important role in the development of vaccines

and other biopharmaceuticals against HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases.

"We know that vaccines can save millions of lives and we need to start making our own vaccines here in Africa" said the scholar from the Department of Clinical Laboratory Sciences.

Chin'ombe will spend the next 12 to 24 months in the US to learn cutting-edge research technologies in vaccine discovery. This stint will include a year at Emory University,

starting in February next year, to learn about the broader aspects of drug-discovery-driven research.

"When I return to South Africa, I plan to work on vaccines that are badly needed in Africa".

Chin'ombe graduated from UCT with a PhD in medical virology in 2007. He is currently a postdoctoral research fellow under Professor Anna-Lise Williamson's SARChI chair for Vaccinology.

"I looking forward to taking up a new challenge." **MP**

So what place for the Bill of Rights?

In the Faculty of Law, Professor Anton Fagan has a reputation for clear, ordered and incisive thinking. Those are qualities he displayed in spades as he delivered his inaugural lecture, titled – pointedly – *The secondary role of the spirit, purport and objects of the Bill of Rights in the Common Law's development*. The Constitutional Court has repeatedly – if not always expressly – endorsed the proposition that the spirit, purport and objects of the country's Bill of Rights may be reason enough for the development of the Common Law, said Fagan, who holds the WP Schreiner Chair

in the Department of Private Law. This means that every court is obliged to adapt the Common Law whenever it does not live up to the spirit, purport and objects of the Bill of Rights.

And, Fagan cited, as the Court put it in one of its leading judgments: "Where the Common Law deviates from the spirit, purport and objects of the Bill of Rights, courts have an obligation to develop it by removing that deviation."

But, said Fagan, this proposition is false. Rather, to the dismay of judges and legal folk everywhere, perhaps the role of the Bill of

Rights in the development of the Common Law is merely a secondary one, argued Fagan.

If this is the case, it could serve only as a "tiebreaker".

"The Constitution regards the spirit, purport and objects of the Bill of Rights only as reasons for choosing between ways of developing the Common Law that are already justified by reasons that have nothing to do with the spirit, purport and objects of the Bill of Rights."

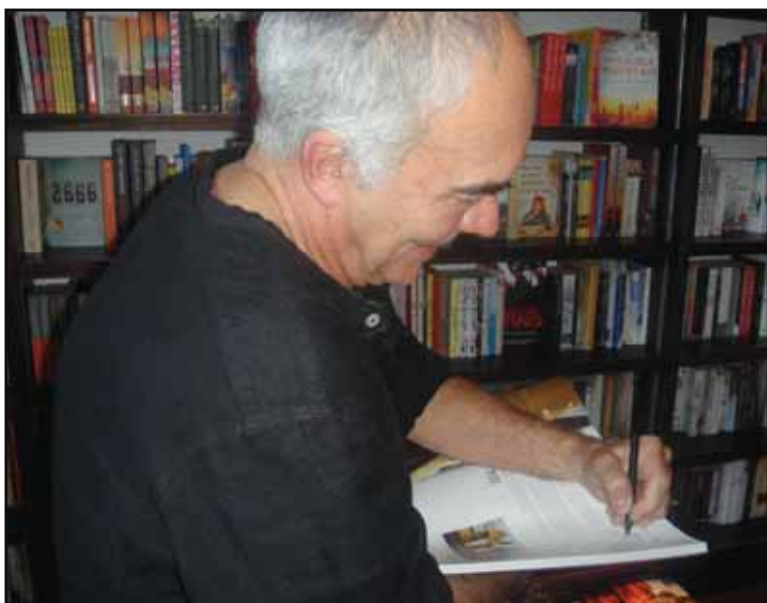
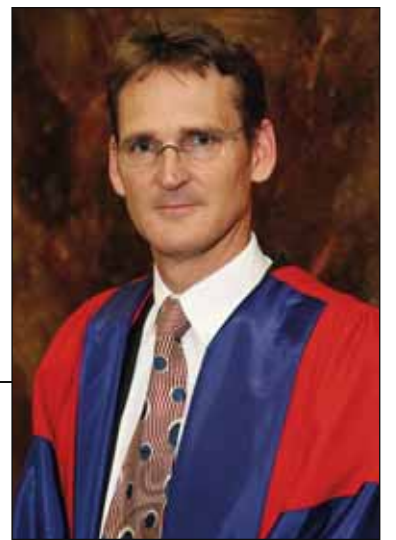
In the rest of his lecture, Fagan presented his argument meticulously. It was a lecture that would give

many pause for thought, and may demand a few readings, said former dean Professor Hugh Corder in his wrap-up.

"Your lecture leaves no-one in any doubt as to your views," said Corder. "So if you were to be, perish the thought, proven wrong, you'd be wrong clearly."

(M.Morris@uct.ac.za)

Pause for thought: In his inaugural lecture, Prof Anton Fagan refuted the argument that the Bill of Rights is reason enough for changes to the country's Common Law.



Three decades of architecture chronicled in Noero's book

The Everyday and the Extraordinary – Three Decades of Architecture charts the "extraordinary period of change" that South Africa has undergone, and illustrates the ways in which the everyday world shapes and gives form to architecture, says author Professor Jo Noero of the

Page turner: Prof Jo Noero, signing copies of his book at the launch.

School of Architecture, Planning and Geomatics.

The book, launched on 27 November, is drawn from Noero's exhibition, held at the Iziko South African National Gallery in 2009, and is structured around work done by Noero Architects and Noero Wolff Architects over the past 25 years.

The book consists of a number of selected projects, grouped into three decades: the 1980s, the 1990s

and the 2000s.

The material in the book is intended for the professional and the amateur alike.

"Each decade has an essay that highlights themes that run consistently through the conceptual development of the selected projects. A detailed timeline documents the extent of Jo Noero's impressive and varied body of work," said editor Jennifer Sorrell. **MP**

Pacemakers that can take a beating



UCT's Cardiovascular Research Unit was recently shortlisted for a major technology award for a project that could lead to the next generation of robust pacemakers.

Engineers have their work cut out for them in designing and building pacemakers. In addition to the growing demand for these life-saving machines – which control heartbeat through a series of electrical pulses – pacemakers also need to last longer these days and, as more may be implanted into children, they

Pacesetter: Dr Tom Franz and colleagues have measured the pressures that pacemakers are subjected to in a live subject.

should stand up to a few knocks.

It's just that up to now, no-one's measured the kinds of pressures and forces they're subjected to once they're actually implanted into live subjects. Which means that the implant in a particularly bouncy child could take a beating, and needs to be designed with this in mind. (Older children are usually advised to avoid contact sport, for example.)

"Technology now allows for pacemakers to get smaller and thinner," explains Dr Tom Franz of UCT's Cardiovascular Research Unit in the Chris Barnard Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery, who has been leading the project on the UCT side. "The problem is that the thinner they get, the more susceptible they

are to bending."

Recently, however, a team from the unit and their industry partner – including one of Franz's students, Hamman de Vaal – put numbers and details to the pressures and forces exerted on pacemakers.

The UCT surgeons, led by Dr Jacques Scherman, implanted a measuring device in a pacemaker shape – not much bigger than the original iPod Shuffle – just under the pectoral (chest) muscles of an animal, exactly where a pacemaker would be placed. After about eight weeks healing, during which the body builds a cocoon of fibrous connective tissue around the implant, they switched on the device via remote control, picking up essential

data – such as muscle-induced forces on the implant – via its six sensors.

"It's the first time that these in vivo [in the body] forces have been measured," says Franz.

That data, which may be extrapolated to humans, has now been passed on to the collaborating company, which will feed it into future design features.

In recognition of their work, the UCT project team was recently shortlisted for the Department of Trade and Industry's 2009 Technology Award in the advanced high-technology category. Alas, they didn't win, but they do have the satisfaction of knowing that their work could still save lives.

(M.Morris@uct.ac.za)

French help foundation in fight against HIV

The Desmond Tutu HIV Foundation – the umbrella organisation for the Desmond Tutu HIV Centre at UCT – received a R3.3-million boost from the French Development Agency (AFD) this week. After AFD CEO Jean-Michel Severino (right in picture) visited some of the Foundation's research sites in Cape Town, including the Hannan Crusaid Clinic in nearby Gugulethu, he joined Archbishop Desmond Tutu – and, also in picture, UCT's Dr Linda-Gail Bekker – for a special signing ceremony. The financial award follows on a state visit by the French president, Nicolas Sarkozy, early in 2008. The money will go towards a research project



that will promote HIV testing and investigate models to streamline treatment of HIV and tuberculosis in co-infected patients. **MP**

Mental health for mothers goes digital

The Perinatal Mental Health Project (PMHP) raised the bar in its work to address the "hidden pandemic" of pregnant women and mothers in psychological distress, when it launched a film on the subject this week.

Caring for Mothers, the 15-minute film, is set to help PMHP in its advocacy, fundraising and training functions. The Project is located within UCT's Mental Health and Poverty Project (MHaPP) in the Department of Psychiatry and Mental Health.

The film depicts the journey of young Xolelwa, a client of the Project, who becomes pregnant without planning to. Her unplanned pregnancy leads to total isolation and thoughts of committing suicide.

But after meeting a PMHP counsellor, her mood begins to shift, and she starts approaching life positively. At the end, Xolelwa gives birth to a son, and thanks the project's counsellor. "Without your help, I would be dead by now," she says.

Xolelwa is one of the lucky ones.

According to research, maternal mental illness has reached epidemic levels in low-income and informal areas, with one in three women in Khayelitsha (where Xolelwa lives) found to suffer from postnatal depression. This is nearly three times higher than the prevalence in developed countries.

The consequence of untreated maternal mental illness is a "vicious cycle", said Dr Simone Honikman, director of the Project. Psychological distress in mothers may impact on the foetus during pregnancy and on the child after the birth. "The effects may be physical, intellectual or emotional, and may be long-lasting," she explained. "Therefore maternal mental illness poses a significant obstacle to

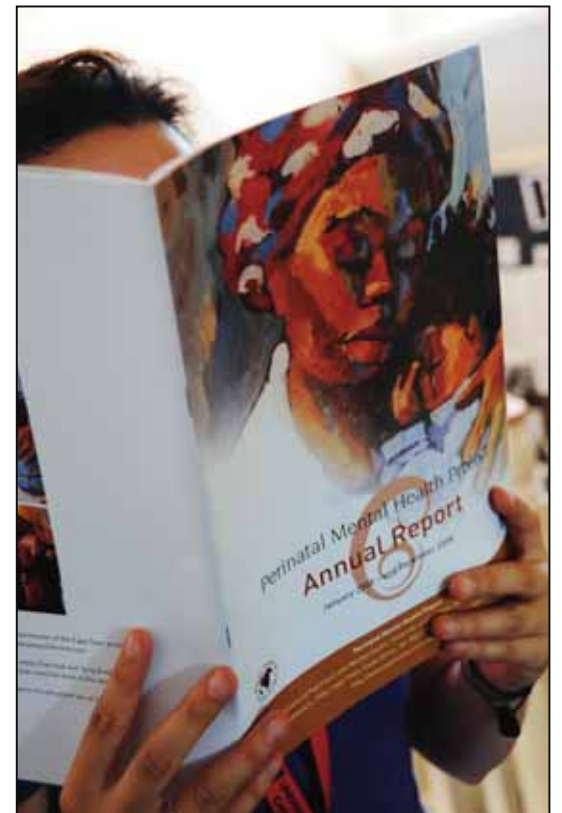
social and economic development."

The film gives a picture of the nature and potential outcomes of the Project's work. It is hoped that it will help to foster recognition of its value among policymakers, donors and society at large. "We would love it to generate a response from those in power so that we may reach our vision of integrated and effective mental healthcare for all mothers in South Africa."

Vice-chancellor Dr Max Price said the film aligns with the university's broader goals of training, research and social responsibility.

Professor Marian Jacobs, dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences, noted that despite the enormous global burden of disease posed by mental illness, those who live with these disorders have not received adequate attention – both in terms of the Millennium Development Goals and in terms of mortality data, which does not reflect the suffering of those that survive.

The PMHP also launched its website, featuring all the essential information on the project. This multimedia site may be explored at www.pmhpa.org. **MP**



UCT students shine at conferences



Three PhD students at UCT's Division of Medical Virology have scooped awards in a variety of international and continental conferences recently.

Lenine Liebenberg (right in picture) was judged the best student for her performance at the 3rd African Flow Cytometry Workshop in Johannesburg, winning an all-expenses-paid trip to Mykonos in Greece to attend the Measuring Antigen-Specific Immune Responses conference in June 2010.

Zizipho Mbulawa and Lindi Roberts (middle and left in picture) each won a bronze medal for their poster and oral presentations, respectively, at the International Union against Sexually Transmitted Infections conference

in Cape Town.

Dr Jo-Ann Passmore, senior lecturer in the division, said that the three students are doing "exceptionally well" in their studies, and these awards acknowledge this.

Liebenberg said the workshop was intense but stimulating, and the best part was to meet doctors Guido Ferrari, Mike Betts, Steve Perfetto and Clive Gray, "my mentors, who laid the foundation for my projects".

Before the workshop she attended the 2009 Symposium on Infectious Diseases in Africa, where she exhibited her flow cytometry-based work on the role of genital tract immunity in the prevention and control of HIV infection. Her work focuses on quantifying and comparing immune activation in

the blood and genital tracts of HIV-infected and HIV-uninfected women.

Mbulawa won the third award in her promising career when she came second in the poster category for her work, *HIV Infection in Women Influences the Low-Risk (LR) HPV Prevalence in their Male Partners but not the High-Risk (HR) HPV Prevalence*.

Roberts received her medal for her research on the impact of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and genital tract inflammation on the risk of HIV acquisition in high-risk HIV-uninfected women in South Africa. The study demonstrated that STIs are associated with inflammation in the genital tract, and that this inflammation is associated with greater risk of HIV infection. **MP**



Recruitment gets a makeover

It had been clear for some time that UCT's bureaucratic staff recruitment procedures needed reviewing. Appointments were often delayed (finding open spots in a DVC's diary was the stuff of nightmares), and as more and more posts opened up, costs were rising steeply, notably for advertising.

Now, after a lengthy consultation process, HR has unveiled a sleeker set of policies that they believe will streamline the entire appointment procedure and have the important added advantage of saving significantly on the costs incurred in the process.

The revised recruitment policies officially kick in on 1 January 2010, while some streamlined administrative procedures have already commenced.

The new policies can be found on the HR website at <http://www.hr.uct.ac.za>.

HR will communicate extensively and host workshops to ensure proper implementation of the policies and procedures over the coming months, but here's a potted introduction to some – but not all – of the changes in the processes. Key changes include:

- Chairing of selection committees
- Final sign off on appointments
- Quorum requirements for selection committees
- HR advisor role changes
- Recruitment advert changes
- Printing of applications
- Questions of professional misconduct and crime

THEN: The VC or a DVC had to chair selection committee meetings for professorial level posts.

NOW: Respective deans (or nominees) may chair meetings for all academic posts. The VC or DVC may also chair these, but generally need only attend the final interviews for professorial posts.

THEN: Final signoff on appointments recommended by selection committees was the responsibility of the VC or DVC for academic posts, and of the ED HR for PASS posts.

NOW: The VC or DVC must still approve professorial appointments, but the dean or relevant executive director will be the delegated authority for other posts. (Or the head of department in the case where a PASS department has no executive director.) This will cut back on the post-interview appointment time, and successful candidates could well hear the good news within a day or two after being interviewed.

THEN: Two-thirds of voting selection committee members had to be present for a meeting to be quorate.

NOW: Quorum is now 50% of voting committee members. The chair, HoD and EE representative are 'key members', however, and must be present at all meetings. This should speed up the process of trying to get busy committee members in the same room on the same day at the same time.

THEN: HR were *ex officio* members of all PASS selection committees in payclasses 9 and above (with voting rights).

NOW: There may still be a need for HR advisors to serve on selection committees as assessor members, but they may not necessarily be voting members. The HR recruitment advisors are still there, of course.

THEN: It was not uncommon for a whole spate of large, pricey UCT recruitment ads to appear in one edition of a newspaper.

NOW: UCT will now run a weekly composite banner ad in the media with short write-ups on each post. (Six to eight ads can now fit into a space previously allocated to just one.) The ads will include weblinks to the full advert and relevant information, including a new standardised application form, on the UCT website. The detailed application form will replace the requirement of a one-page CV (which was often not very helpful to the selection committee). It will also provide relevant information required in the selection process, eg notice period, visa/work permit requirements, etc.

THEN: All applications were printed for selection committee members, who had to make a special trip to Bremner to do their grading/screening of the applications and relevant documentation.

NOW: There is no longer a need for bulky files crammed with printed applications. Committee members will have electronic access to all applications, and can review these in their own time (with the proper security and confidentiality measures in place, of course). Only the documentation of shortlisted candidates will be printed, cutting back on costs – and saving trees. (Some academic applications can be as long as 70 pages.)

THEN: Questions on professional misconduct or crime were seldom raised by selection committees, although HR did run verification of qualifications and credit/criminal checks on appointees.

NOW: The background checks done by HR remain, but issues of professional misconduct or crime will be tackled in the new application form. Selection committees will also have to raise these issues clearly in interviews, and appointment letters will also carry a declaration which must be signed by the appointee when accepting the offer. This should extensively reduce the risk to UCT.

Looking ahead to the 2010 budget

Perhaps the best way to start is to clear up a possible misconception about the university's operating surplus. UCT is currently budgeting at an operating surplus – profit, if you will – of around R14 million. That number is ironclad and will not be allowed to change, regardless of what else does.

But why do we protect a surplus if we are not a for-profit enterprise, and why do we not use the surplus for salary increases, as an example? The short answer is that it would be irresponsible for the university not to have a surplus that can act as a buffer when we may need it. More importantly, it creates the capacity to undertake capital expenditures.

CAPITAL PROJECTS

To explain a little further: We have R1 billion in capital projects facing us over the next few years, starting with a new residence at half a billion rand, and then a number of other projects, including new scientific equipment.

The state is giving us R340 million towards these projects. What about the shortfall? Fund-raising would not, realistically, make much of a dent in the R600 to R700 million balance that requires funding.

Instead, that money has to come from annual operating surpluses, which are accumulated over time to build up our free reserves, together with net investment income from our investments and cash earnings.

This year, for the first time, we topped R1 billion in cash holdings; at the peak, we held R1.2 billion. If that sounds like multiple riches, it's not – most of that cash is for designated activities and much is sitting in research funds. By the end of the year, we'll have about R600 to R800 million in cash. We estimate that we have a free cash balance – after money committed to designated activities – of around R200 million.

That's way below our target, as it leaves us no room for anything to go wrong: such as, for example, a cut or misestimate in the state subsidy. This alone won't break us, but it could cost us as much as R30 million, which has to be covered in some other way. If some of our students don't pitch up at the start of the year or something happens that keeps our semester-study abroad students away, we may be looking at another R20 or R30 million that has to be covered from within the existing budget while holding the R14.5-million bottom line.

FINANCIAL CUSHION

We do need a cushion. (Our high-level finance plan requires that our annual operating surplus should be 5% of our gross income – around R85 million – for our sustainability.)

Next year, 2010, is in fact the first time that we've budgeted for a small surplus.

We've realised a small surplus for a number of years, and for 2009 we're projecting an operating surplus of around R20 million, at this stage. That's against a budgeted deficit of R21 million, so we're talking about a R45 million swing on that. That's thanks to the university's various operating units – the faculties and PASS departments.

Some of the annual variables may be of interest. We're looking at a state subsidy of R827 million, which comes to about an 11% increase. (The subsidy has, of course, not been announced yet, and the increase could be anything between 7% and 15%. Our budgeted subsidy of an 11% increase is based on a considered assessment.)

Another big variable is fees, and no, we've not increased fees by 20%. Instead, it comes to around 10%. (A jump in student numbers or a change in the mix of students – for instance, more semester-abroad students – would increase that budgeted income.)

SHUTTLE EXPENSES

Jammie Shuttle is running efficiently. (We assumed, when drawing up the budget last year, that fuel prices would be a lot higher, but that's come down nicely, saving us some money.) But the Shuttle service is costing us a lot more than we originally thought it would, and demand for

it is expanding. If we decide to give more support to the Shuttle service, where do we find the money?

The single biggest variable remains staffing costs. It is true that the university is successful because of the quality of its staff. The reality is that the cost to pay all our staff is a large one – close to R1 billion. We may wish to reward our staff with large increases, but the financial reality is that even a 'small' one percent increase in staffing costs amounts to R10 million additional funding needed. The reality is also, of course, that if we make a decision to increase our spending in one area then we must decrease our spending in another area. By example, if we spend more on buildings then we cut our spending on research, or increase our income. Or, in another example, if we increase salaries we might make that up by spending less on maintenance, or increasing our fees, etc. It ultimately is a balancing act, and a difficult one at that!

BALANCING ACT

To illustrate further just how difficult the balancing act is: Council and the Finance Committee have made a provision for 2010 salary increases, which the Remuneration Committee regards as reasonable, given what we know of the market and given projections. If the settlement with unions is within that provision we are okay,



Prof Enrico Uliana

but if it is above what we had planned by say 1%, we will be asked by Council to make up for that 'extra' by cutting 1% from some other planned budget.

These are the issues we're faced with daily.

We've also committed R37 million to research. This amount has tripled over the past few years. We are really putting a lot into research, but we're showing dividends in our research output. And while research does cost us quite a bit, we're making progress in our research cost-recovery.

Finally, let's talk about what is to us the defining variable – our cash balances, money in the bank, which varies hugely over the course of a year. (Profit or surplus could be said to be an opinion, total turnover ego, but cash is reality.)

SWINGS AND ROUNDABOUTS

As mentioned earlier, we estimate free cash of about R200 million at year end. Council and the Finance Committee have instructed that our free cash not drop below this value at any time. There are a couple of dips foreseen in 2010 – coinciding with expenditure on major projects – but we know that with the number of projects we have on the go, they will not all happen as scheduled. (The R500 million residence project is already delayed by a year.) So we're sure that because of timing and other variables, we will not violate this instruction at any stage.

But you can see that we're vulnerable to sudden swings, and that is something that we will have to manage.

This piece is based on Prof Enrico Uliana's presentation to the PASS Forum on 12 November.

EVENTS

PERC Workshop: Topic: NRF Rating: Self-assessment and Crafting the Research Narrative. Presented by: Professor Brenda Cooper. Date: 25-27 January 2010. Please note that early booking is essential. For more details and to book your attendance, contact: Roshan Sondag in the Research Office on 0216504153. Email: roshan.sondag@uct.ac.za.

VACANT POSTS

EXECUTIVE AND ACADEMIC POSTS:

Lecturer: Archaeology; closing date: 11 December 2009; Tel: 021 650 2220; Roslyn.Daniels@uct.ac.za

Lecturer: Physics; closing date: 11 December 2009; Tel: 021 650 3003; Zulile.Ncayiyana@uct.ac.za

Chair: Immunology; closing date: 8 January 2010; Tel: 021 650 3003; Zulile.Ncayiyana@uct.ac.za

Clinical Educator: Education Development Unit, FHS; closing date: 10 January 2010; Tel: 021 406 6646; Nondumiso.Mginywa@uct.ac.za

Deputy Vice Chancellor; closing date: 15 January 2010; Tel: 021 650 2216; Yvonne.Macdonald@uct.ac.za

Associate Professor/Senior Lecturer/Lecturer: School of Economics; closing date: 15 January 2010; Tel: 021 650 2192; Charlotte.Snyders@uct.ac.za

RESEARCH, PROFESSIONAL, ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPPORT POSTS (PASS)

Office Manager: Student Housing & Residence Life; closing date: 11 December 2009; Tel: 021 650 3002; Zulile.Ncayiyana@uct.ac.za

Database Developer: Children's Institute (Healthy Faculty); Should be highly experienced in MS ACCESS for troubleshooting and further development of existing databases. Contact: Charmaine.Smith@uct.ac.za

POSTS FOR UCT STAFF ONLY:

Transport Administration Clerk: Properties & Services; closing date: 11 December 2009; Tel: 021 650 3640; June.Reeler@uct.ac.za

All UCT vacancies can be viewed at: <http://www.uct.ac.za>. Click on "Vacancies".

PROPERTY

Mowbray (Upper): Lovely Victoria Cottage, mt views, fully furn 4 bedrms (sleeps 5) secure parking R600 for cottage/night for 4 people additional charge for 5th person. Min. 5 nights. Available Dec/Jan only. Rates excl. electricity. Contact: 0217123818.

Fish Hoek: Fully furnished 2- bedroom, 2-bathroom close to beach and railway/bus station. Suitable for visiting academic or vacation stay. Rent R1400/week. Contact Greg: 0832474850 or greg@barefoot.co.za

Claremont: 6 bedrooms, very large kitchen and lounge, secure off-street parking for 6 cars, electric gate, alarm, pool partly furnished. R2200pppm. Contact: 0826625561

Mowbray: Easy walking distance of UCT, secure, furnished, 3 bedroom, 2 bathroom house for short and medium lets. R11000 per month. Contact Pauline Alexander 0784199482

Rondebosch Silvermile: 1/2 Bedroom house for sale. Big grounds, close to UCT shuttle route. Contact: Amanda 0736261666

Rondebosch: Graduation/Holiday accommodation available close to UCT, secure parking. Fully furnished, able to accommodate individual or groups. Daily/weekly/monthly rates. Contact Kirsten on 0827407418.

Rosebank: 1 Bedroom (en-suite) fully furnished flat. Walking distance to UCT, Rosebank Station, Tugwell and Damlin Mowbray Campus. Rental R4000pm. Email: cynthiamkhize@gmail.com to view.

Observatory: Upstairs bedroom + bathroom. Downstairs open plan kitchen / lounge, carport, pool. Security Block. Penzance Rd. Avail. 10 December, R4000pm. Contact: Colin 0825655705

St James: House for long-let: Furnished 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, lounge, study, dining-room, kitchen, rear courtyard, front stoep, tiny garden. On cul-de-sac, no garage. Avail from mid Jan 2010 R9000pm. Contact: Roselyn 0117267010; 0828553144, email ros@playonart.co.za.

Kalk Bay: Holiday accommodation avail. 16 Dec - 6 Feb (or part thereof). Fully equipped home with garden and patio overlooking harbour. Maximum 2 adults. Rental R6000pm. Contact: Rochelle

0217888165.

Kalk Bay: Fully equipped studio flat with stunning view over the bay. Available from 16 December Maximum 2 adults. Rental R4000pm. Contact: Rochelle 0217888165.

Claremont: Student furnished bachelor pad in garden, in pristine condition. Water and electricity incl. Excellent security, off street parking. Rental R2400pm. Contact: Elizabeth 0832706034, to view.

Rondebosch: 2 Bedrooms, furn, fitted kitchen flat to rent. In secure block near UCT. Suitable for 2 persons sharing. Avail 1 Feb - 30 Nov 2010. R6000pm incl elect. Contact : malcgust@iafrica.com with full contact details.

Goodwood: 3 Bedrooms, garage and undercover parking, secure. Long lease R6500pm. Avail immediately. Contact: Samson 0844036108 or samson.chimphango@uct.ac.za.

Rondebosch: 2 Bedrm flat to rent, Feb 2010. Lounge, dining room, kitchen (incl stove) bathrm with sep toilet. Parking bay behind automated gates, R5500pm. Walking distance to UCT, Dean Str Arcade, rugby and cricket. Contact: Helen 0741126346 email Helen@webafrica.org.za

Kenilworth: Self-catering studio. Separate kitchen/bathroom. Fully equipped, serviced. Secure parking, alarm, near station. Visiting academics, postgraduates. Non-smoker R4200pm. Contact: 0721489760 or 0216505312

Kenilworth: Self-catering 1 bedroom apartment. Fully equipped, serviced weekly. Secure parking, alarm, internet access. Visiting Academics, postgraduates. Non-smoker, R6500pm. Contact: 0721489760 or 0216505312

Highlands Estate: Furn. 1 bedrm, lounge, open-plan kitchenette, bathrm, granny flat. Sec parking, garden, pool, at the foot of table mountain. 10min to town or UCT. Short or mid term. Avail 1 Jan 2010. R1000pw. Contact: Susanne 0827310387 or susannen@mweb.co.za

FOR SALE

Kiln: 6,4cubic feet with IPCO300 controller, front loader 5yrs old, very good condition, inside dimensions h690xw510xd520mm with kiln furniture, R12000ono. Contact: Marinella 0216835199 or 0834460496.

Solid Brass Bed: Queen size with hardwood base (mattress

not included). R3500. Contact: John 0825666898

Chest Freezer: 220 litre. Excellent condition. R800. Contact: John 0825666898

Camping Freezer: 42 litre/240 volt. Excellent condition. R600. Contact: John 0825666898

Occasional Tables: Nest of 3 Beechwood, glass topped Weylandts tables. R700. Contact: John 0825666898

Dishwasher: Indesit. In working order. R500. Contact: John 0825666898.

Wheelchair and Recliner Chair: 2nd Hand and in good condition R950 for both. Contact: Linda 0214066239.

Kitchen Cupboards: Freestanding, 2 tower units and 2 cupboards. Beige and cream, R400. Contact: 0824148539

Ladder: Small wooden R50. Contact: Chris 0215312563

TV Antenna: Samsat R100. Contact Chris 0215312563

Toshiba Satellite Laptop: Windows Vista Home Premium, Office 2007, Processor: Intel® Celeron® M CPU 520@ 1.60Hz. Memory (RAM) 1015 MB, System type 31-bit Operating System, Hard Drive: 120GB, have DVD drive. R4000neg. Contact: Vakele 0796919853

GENERAL

Eagle Transcription & Translation Services: Transcription of mp3, .wav, AVI voice files, cassettes – research, focus groups, theses, etc. Work guaranteed. Contact: 0217611866 or 0848129386. Email: eagle@iburst.co.za or lorrhein@gmail.com

Clinical Psychologist: Close to UCT (Main Rd entrance opposite Baxter Theatre). Adults, adolescents, children, couples, families. Contact: Clint Steenveld 0833333327 or 0216852612 or clintsteenveld@absamail.co.za or website: <http://clintsteenveldpsychologist.yolasite.com/>

Accommodation: University Professor seeks home to rent near UCT or in town for June and July 2010. Possible swap for NYC apartment. Contact: jflavin@fordham.edu or jeanneflavin@uct.ac.za

Wanted: A laptop or /and computer, LCD. Contact: Brian 0747426832 or 0214471025.

Char: My hardworking, honest and trustworthy char is available one day per week. Contact: Lauren 0216504607 or Lauren.Wild@uct.ac.za

The Lady Bus: Corporate and

Leisure Transport. Contact: Vanessa 0829255828 or Felicity 0845115992 or email: feva@telkomsa.net.

Accommodation: UCT postgraduate student seeks 2 bedroomed flat or townhouse in Rondebosch, Newlands, Claremont, Kenilworth or Wynberg for January 2010. Contact: Grace 0713521745, email: grace.chitima@uct.ac.za.

The Lady Bus provides a safe, reliable shuttle service in the Southern Suburbs. Connecting the Business and Leisure World. Contact: Vanessa 0829255828.

Accommodation: Professional Int PhD student couple looking for secure 2-3 bed flat/house close to UCT. Rondebosch-Claremont area from 1 Feb - Dec 2010. Can pay up to R5500pm. Contact: 0216851747 or yolisaduley@hotmail.com or Lucille at ivydene@mweb.com

Gardener: Papama Ngombane is looking for additional days work as a gardener. An excellent gardener and general house worker. Contact: 0785993376. For ref contact heather.zar@uct.ac.za.

Transport: From Summer Greens, Phoenix/Joe Slovo, Milnerton, Rugby/Brooklyn to UCT 06h30 and from UCT 16h00. R100 per week, to and fro. Contact: Dorothy 0216502107

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A day in a life of the Public Relations Unit

The unit, based at Welgelegen on middle campus, is part of the Communication and Marketing Department (CMD). It is staffed by Campbell Lyons, head of public relations; Aloysious Gowne, public relations and protocol officer; and Zukiswa Dleembe, a receptionist/administrative assistant.

What do you do on a day-to-day basis?

The unit supports the Office of the Vice-Chancellor on internal and external relationship-development initiatives; on protocol matters relating to visiting heads of state, senior government officials and members of the diplomatic corps; the managing and co-ordinating of high-level visits and events that involve the vice-chancellor; and in organising his open lectures. The section also implements all the arrangements for the recipients of honorary degrees at UCT. In addition, they advise and assist faculties and support departments on protocol matters, deal with high-level visitors, conduct tours for visitors, provide support to internal and external communication campaigns run by

CMD, and respond to queries from members of the public.

What are the challenges facing the unit?

One of the key challenges is that invitations are sometimes sent from within UCT to high-level visitors without informing the Office of the Vice-Chancellor prior to the event. This can be a problem, particularly if it involves national or foreign government officials. Often it means immediate suspension of the activities that we're currently working on, so we can redirect our attention to ensure that the 'unexpected visit' happens in such a manner that it puts UCT in the most favourable light possible. This places a considerable strain on other support units that we work closely with, such as the risk-management team. A high-level visit to UCT that involves the application of protocol will affect the Office of the Vice-Chancellor, the Public Relations Unit, the Events Unit, UCT media, UCT traffic services, Campus Protection Services, and the Risk Management Team. And that is just the start of it...



Campbell Lyons (in foreground) and Aloy Gowne (far left) escort the Norwegian royal couple into Smuts Hall.

What are the highs and the lows?

The highs of the work lie in delivering on projects and visits in a professional manner and which position UCT in the best light possible, because then we all succeed. The work is extremely varied and is never the same from day to day. It also presents wonderful opportunities to meet people from all walks of life, and also some real characters. Work-

ing with the honorary graduates is a high as it is a special time in their lives and always a very happy occasion for all involved. The lows of the work are when high-level visits threaten to resemble something close to a "moveable feast" in the sense that things change by the minute and do not proceed according to script. Then you really need a calm disposition and the ability to think on your feet and adapt quickly,

to anticipate and sometimes make something happen out of seemingly nothing. It's very stressful and at the time that it happens you would rather be a million miles away. Fortunately, this is rare. We do our best to prevent things from ever getting to this point in the first place by thorough planning and anticipating the unexpected.

What is the weirdest thing you have encountered?

We tend to encounter more humorous and quirky situations than the absurd. Recently we had to show an advance party that was preparing for a high-level visit a number of venues at UCT that would be appropriate for the occasion. We showed them the Smuts Residence dining hall as one of the options. They were immediately smitten with the venue. One of the advance party members trilled: "Ooooh, this looks just like something out of a Harry Potter movie!" Later, after viewing all the possible options, the senior leader of the advance party emphatically stated, "We want the Harry Potter Hall!" It tickled us no end... **MP**

New staff



Mavo Solomon has joined the Energy Research Centre as a senior research officer. Solomons graduated from UCT with a BSc (Mech Eng) and an MSc (Eng), and has also obtained a BSc in maths and physics from Vista University. He worked for Eskom for six years, at the energy utility's Koeberg nuclear power plant outside Cape Town and at their head offices in Megawatt Park in Johannesburg. He also had a short stint at the Development Bank of Southern Africa. In 2008, Solomons took time off to focus on his music career and he released his debut contemporary African folk album, iSiGiDiMi, which means "an important message".

Dr Brett Cohen has also joined the energy systems analysis and planning group in the Energy Research Centre as a senior research officer. Cohen graduated



from UCT in 1992 with a BSc in chemical engineering and in 1998 with a PhD. He then worked in consultancy and the IT sector for a while before spending five years as a research fellow at the University of Sydney in Australia. Cohen worked in the area of multi-criteria decision analysis and strategic planning as applied to the sustainability of energy, minerals and water supply systems. Thereafter he joined the Department of Chemical Engineering at UCT as a senior researcher, continuing with his research and lecturing.

Dr Abimbola Windapo has joined



the Department of Construction Economics and Management as a senior lecturer. Her career spans 22 years after graduating from the University of Ife in Nigeria with a BSc (Hons) degree in building. She obtained her master's degree with distinction in construction management in 1990, and in 2005 received her PhD, both from the University of Lagos. She was a senior lecturer at that university before being elected sub-dean of the Faculty of Environmental Sciences. **MP**



Homecoming: GSB graduate Segran Nair reflects on his six months back at the school.

Two hats for alumnus Nair

In May this year, Segran Nair joined the Graduate School of Business (GSB) as the director of its entry-level and middle management core academic programmes, the Associate in Management (AIM) certificate programme and the Postgraduate Diploma in Business Administration (PDBA). The appointment signalled a homecoming for Nair in two ways. For one, he is an alumnus of the GSB, having completed his MBA there in 2005. In addition, it marked his return to South Africa after a two-year stint in the US. "This is an exciting opportunity to help make a difference in the lives of South Africans, and I am looking forward to working with adult learners and the excellent faculty here at the UCT GSB," Nair said at the time. We caught up with him briefly to hear what he's learned over his first six months back at UCT.

MP: How familiar were you with the programmes, as a GSB graduate, before you stepped into office?

Nair: I was fortunate that when I did my MBA here, I interacted regularly with AIM students. I did so, not realising, of course, that it would have some significance in my life down the road. But even back then, I could see what AIM meant for students.

MP: What was expected of you when you took over the reins of the two programmes – give them a makeover, or keep the ship sailing true and steady?

Nair: I was in the lucky position of not having to overhaul anything, because there were really good folks that managed the programmes before. There's a rich history of well-established programmes that met students' needs. So for me, it's just carrying on with that tradition. And trying to be innovative in what I perceive are

areas that we can improve on.

MP: Such as?

Nair: I think it's about tapping into the student support that the upper campus offers. So I've met with folks from the academic development unit in the Faculty of Commerce. Our programmes are geared towards adults, and as adults we have our own set of unique problems that we need help with. So I'm trying to look at student support services, and how to tailor a programme that is unique, for adult learning and adult learners.

MP: How have the first six months been in office?

Nair: It's been very interesting. Thankfully I'm quite used to the university environment and culture, and just the rigour of different aspects of university life. The fulfilling thing for me, I think, was just the interaction with students on both programmes, and listening to their experiences. **MP**