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Africa's leading role on climate change stage

UCT is set to be a hotspot for global warming research

At all of our peril should the world discount the part that Africa has to play in the international climate-change arena. "I'd argue that climate change issues are as important, if not more so, in Africa than in the developed world," says Professor Mark New. Appointed just a few weeks ago as UCT's first pro vice-chancellor and director of the African Climate and Development Initiative (ACDI), New's comments echo exactly the sentiment and driving force behind the ACDI.

Identified as a strategic research interest of national and international concern by vice-chancellor Dr Max Price in his installation address, the ACDI sets out to build knowledge and research capacity in climate change at UCT.

New's job will be to provide leadership, bring together those who work across disciplines, faculties and departments in this field at the university, and rev up UCT's already impressive research record in climate change.

The initiative's bottom line is to address Africa's climate and development challenges from an African perspective. And, as New and others on the ACDI have pointed out, there's plenty to be concerned about.

For one thing, Africa is one of the regions most sensitive to climate change, explains New. That's not only because climate is more variable in the tropics and sub-tropics, but also because there's often less capacity to cope with the impacts of climate change.

And as economies speed up on the continent, as many predict they will, there are worries that these will not always follow what New calls "a low-carbon development pathway". Which is where Africa's scholars and scientists come in.

"While much of what needs to be done in Africa on the climate issue is political and economic, it is important that the research community works to provide the best evidence, appropriate to the African situation, for the political and economic decision-makers," he says. "So I think there are amazing



Full circle : Alumnus Prof Mark New returns to Cape Town and UCT to head up the university's African Climate and Development Initiative.

opportunities – and a responsibility – to focus on climate change."

He may have been based in the UK, at the Oxford University's School of Geography and the Environment, these past many years, but New is familiar with the African – and the broader developing world – situation. He's worked with international groups such as the International Water Management Institute, the International Livestock Research Institute and the

World Wide Fund for Nature and, in addition to working in Southern Africa, has conducted research in South Asia (with the UK Department for International Development) and South America.

A UCT graduate (born in the UK, but schooled in South Africa), New has also kept in touch with his alma mater, especially through the Climate Systems Analysis Group headed by Professor Bruce Hewitson, who holds

the national chair in climate change at UCT. In fact, over recent years the two have co-headlined a few papers on climate change trends and processes in Africa.

New isn't too bothered about swapping the Oxford brand for UCT – hey, it's the only African university listed among the world's top 200, he points out, and his family lives in and around Cape Town. And he will retain a visiting position at Oxford.

But he knows he has a stiff task ahead.

"Part of my job will be to make sure that UCT is the first port of call for anyone wishing to fund research on climate change and development in Africa," he says.

That will be one of his two main challenges, observes Hewitson. "There are a lot of different activities going on at UCT on climate change, and we are in a good position to be a leader on the continent, but it requires bringing some synergy to our efforts to be a voice on the continent," he says.

The second is to cross the divide between disciplines and departments and research groups. Something New was part of at Oxford, where his department's Environmental Change Institute fostered the kind of interdisciplinary collaboration that the ACDI attempts to bring about at UCT.

"He's good at working across domains, and he has broad interdisciplinary experience," comments Hewitson.

"I think the key is to create an enabling environment," says New. "True interdisciplinary research is not easy . . . but when it is successful, the results can be very exciting and novel."

Cape Town may not be novel to New, but there will be some transition. He leaves behind his partner and two children in Oxford – so the eldest, 16, can finish his A-levels there – and expects there'll be a bit of to-and-fro travelling for the next two years (not so environmentally friendly, he appreciates). But he will be accompanied by the family dog – who often goes to the office with him – and fears some in his Oxford department may miss the dog more than him.

And while not big on extramural activities – "I have a stellar record in propping up the foot of the university squash ladder, kicking people rather than the ball in five-a-side soccer, getting caught at long-on in the interdepartmental Twenty20 cricket competition" – he is looking forward to getting reacquainted with an old Cape Town flame: surfing. ■

Roof raised at Obz Square



Making room: One of the completed kitchens in the Obz Square residence, currently under construction.

The revellers didn't quite raise the roof, but with the main roof on the seven-storey, R485-million Obz Square completed in March, UCT officials, project consultants and contractors celebrated the occasion in some style at a roof-wetting on 12 May. There's still plenty of fine detail and finishing work to be done, but as Chris McMinn of NMC Construction reported at the bash, brickwork to the seventh floor was halfway done by the end of April, while 433 of the

final 887 rooms had been completed, toilets and all. Vice-chancellor Dr Max Price reminded the audience why UCT had embarked on the project – the university's largest capital investment yet, and set to become UCT's biggest student residence when it opens its doors in 2012 – notably the changing demographics of students, many of whom would struggle with their studies if they weren't able to live within reach of the university and its facilities. ■

Skotnes Collection on tour



UCT's Irma Stern Museum was the second stop for the national tour of the KWV-sponsored Cecil Skotnes art collection, titled *The Epic of Everlasting*. After launching in Stellenbosch on 7 April, the collection will travel from city to city, ending in Paarl in January 2012. "He believed that immortality could only be achieved through good works, one's children and the power of art," said Professor Pippa Skotnes of UCT's Michaelis School of Fine Art at the Irma Stern opening on 5 May. "His painting and art-making were his greatest pleasure." The exhibition left Irma Stern on 12 May, and opened in Pietermaritzburg on 20 May. ■

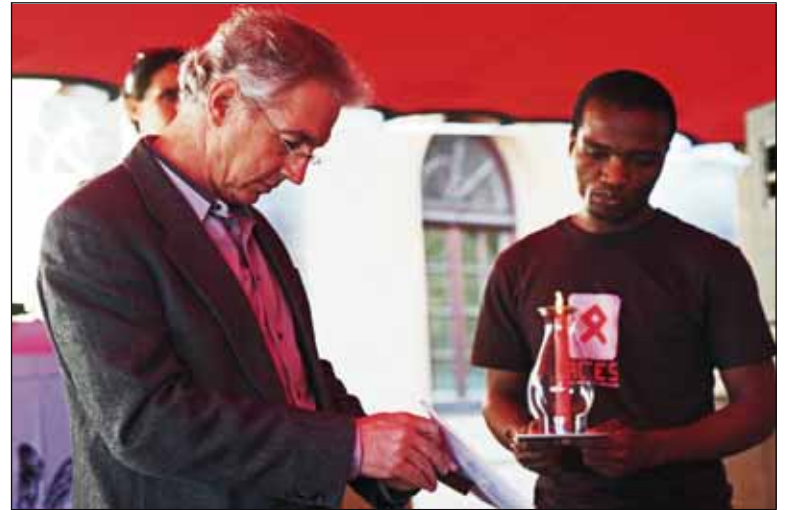
HIV/Aids stigma remains a challenge – Price

Stigma remains a concern, said vice-chancellor Dr Max Price at UCT's annual Candlelight Memorial Concert, organised by the HIV/AIDS Institutional Co-ordination Unit (HAICU) on 12 May. The event, which featured local band Goodluck, commemorated the lives of colleagues and friends who have died of AIDS, supported those living with the virus, and addressed the stigma still attached to the disease.

"Our main job is to address questions of stigmatisation, and I urge you to go out there and talk about it," Price told students.

He referred to UCT's campaigns for tackling the disease, particularly the discipline-specific HIV/AIDS curriculum course components that have been incorporated into the formal curriculum.

Price noted that although infec-



Lighting the way: VC Dr Max Price and student Luke Nkosi light a candle at UCT's annual Candlelight Memorial Concert.

tion rates have levelled out among young people, the university – and the country – cannot be complacent in responding to a disease that has

infected over 5.7 million South Africans. The big task, he added, is for individuals to take responsibility, and always to practise safe sex. ■

Full steam ahead for task team

The task team established by Minister of Higher Education and Training Dr Blade Nzimande to develop a charter for establishing the importance of scholarship in the humanities and social sciences, and led by UCT's Professor Ari Sitas, has completed its fact-finding visits.

Sitas (sociology department) and Dr Sarah Mosoetsa of the University of the Witwatersrand have visited 22 of the country's 23 higher education institutions, interacting with some 1 300 academics and students in the humanities and social sciences. They also ran focus groups with civil society organisations and social movements and recently held a key strategy workshop with 36 experts in the field. A working paper developed by the task team was circulated for comment after the strategic workshop.

UCT's Bianca Tame, also of the sociology department, and co-ordinator of the task team, said the facts gathered address six inter-related areas that affect the broader humanities, facts about the "wellness" and integrity of South African higher education institutions, students and their scholarship, excellence and relevance, the qualities of mind necessary for graduates in the field, and specific problems relating to the subjects taught.

"It has been hard separating fact from fiction and perception from conviction," Tame said.

Sitas is cautiously optimistic about the prospects of a new dispensation.

"The social ecology of what makes good research and teaching in the humanities and social science is very frail at the moment and needs serious enhancement. But we are also facing levels of toxicity that are regrettable... It takes years and years to create something good and it takes an idiot a few hours to destroy it. The task team does not want to be that idiot."

Sitas also addressed a number of misconceptions that Aisha Lorgat, the task team's senior researcher, spent many hours trying to verify, such as funding for the university system – which, contrary to perception, has almost tripled since 1996, Sitas said.



More to come: Prof Ari Sitas, head of the national task team into developing a charter to establish the importance of scholarship in the human and social sciences. The task team will deliver its report to the Department of Higher Education and Training next month.

"But the universities have also developed some very expensive habits. Yes, the relevance of our education system is under scrutiny by economic and social actors, but no one denies the importance of deep literacy, critical analysis and cognitive complexity. What people out there worry about, call them the market if you wish, is the actual quality our graduates possess, as opposed to the rhetoric of many of us in the humanities. The thought of 900 students with one lecturer for one subject frightens them, but what frightens them more is that some students pass or fail under those conditions. There is a joke doing the rounds that academia is not the core business of universi-

ties any more, and that it should be outsourced."

There is a national and international encounter being planned for the beginning of June and then it will be report-drafting time. By the end of June a report must be handed over to the Department of Higher Education and Training.

While Sitas says he is keen to return to his favourite sociological century (the 17th) and to his "serious obsessions with the musical theory of the Baghdad, Cairo and Cordoba Schools of the 9th to 11th centuries", he foresees plenty of post-task-team work to ensure the recommendations of the charter are implemented. ■

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Africa Day celebrations endorse UCT's Afropolitan drive

Africa Day, held annually on 25 May, is a red-letter date for UCT in terms of cementing the institution's position as an Afropolitan university.

Already the university has made significant strides in this endeavour, says deputy vice-chancellor Professor Thandabantu Nhlapo.

"The Afropolitan vision is simple enough to describe: it is UCT's aspiration to play a role on the continent that is commensurate with our pre-eminent position as one of Africa's leading institutions, and to play this role more consistently and more visibly," he said. "We believe we are well-prepared for such a role."

UCT's annual intake of students, for example, is weighted heavily in favour of African students. In 2010, 62% of UCT's 4 671 international students came from 35 African countries, a total of 2 894 students. UCT is also involved in several hundred research collaborations in Africa and in many capacity-building programmes. (A special edition of *Monday Paper*, *Afropolitanism at UCT*, will be published in the week of 30 May to 5 June.)

Africa Day events at UCT on 25 May will include:

- A panel discussion on the study of Africa in the post-colonial African university, at 16h30 on Wednesday 25 May, in Lecture Theatre 1 in the Graduate School of Humanities. Panellists are: Professor Adebayo Olukoshi, director of the United Nations African Institute for Eco-

nomics Development and Planning; Associate Professor Pearl Sithole of the Department of Community Development and Social Work at the University of KwaZulu-Natal; Professor Lungisile Ntsebeza of UCT, who holds the National Research Foundation Research Chair in Land Reform and Democracy in South Africa; Associate Professor Harry Garuba, director of UCT's Centre for African Studies; and Associate Professor Leonhard Praeg of the Department of Political and International Studies at Rhodes University.

- An exhibition at the Robert Leslie Social Sciences Building from 23 to 25 May, from 08h30 to 16h00, showcasing UCT's partnerships and collaborations in Africa.
- The International Academic Programme Office (IAPO) will hold an Africa Day dress competition on 25 May. The winning photograph stands to bag R1 000, and the photographer R500. The photograph must have been taken between 08h00 and 20h00 on African Day. Please send all entries to Brenda Kok at Brenda.Kok@uct.ac.za by noon on Thursday 26 May. Finalists will be announced on 1 June and will be notified by email or phone. Please include this information: your name, department/unit, country or countries which the garments represent (if possible) and your contact details such as email and telephone number. ■



(From left) Rhoda Adonis and Ronelle Steenberg beat out a rhythm on Africa Day during the festivities in the commerce faculty last year.

Alumna picks up marquee sci-fi award



Mind-bending: Lauren Beukes has made her mark on the literary world by winning the Arthur C Clarke Award for her novel *Zoo City*.

Alumna Lauren Beukes made literary history when she became the first South African to win the Arthur C Clarke Award, considered the most coveted honour for science fiction writing published in the UK.

Beukes bagged the award and the £2 011 purse for her second novel, *Zoo City*, released in 2010. She was something of a dark horse, beating out hot favourite Ian McDonald, whose *The Dervish House* trumped *Zoo City* for the British Science Fiction Association (BSFA) best novel award only days before, and the likes of Richard Powers (winner of the US

National Book Award) and Patrick Ness (winner of the *Guardian* children's fiction prize).

Published by Angry Robot Books, *Zoo City* is set in a dystopian and alternate Johannesburg where human sensibilities or guilt can take on real animal form – animals who tag along with their human mates, à la (but not quite) Philip Pullman of *His Dark Materials* fame. The lead character, for example, is saddled with a sloth on her back.

Borrowing from classic SF, urban fantasy, magic realism and cyberpunk, among other science

fiction sub-genres, as well as African mythology and popular culture, the book has received rave reviews since its release.

While she doesn't want to be pigeonholed as only a science fiction writer, Beukes is an avowed fan of the genre in all its forms. And, as the groundbreaking movie *District 9* has shown, it offers new ways to look at South Africa, she points out.

"I think science fiction is at its most interesting when it's used to distort reality in such a way as to get a fresh perspective on reality."

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International fellowship for EBE scholar

Alphose Zingoni, professor of structural engineering and mechanics in the Department of Civil Engineering, has been elected a fellow of the International Association for Bridge and Structural Engineering (IABSE).

The IABSE boasts about 4 000 members in 100 countries. Zingoni joins an elite group of only 150 IABSE members worldwide who have been named fellows.

The fellowship recognises his significant contributions to the field of structural engineering on the world stage, through his own research and scholarship – which enjoys consider-

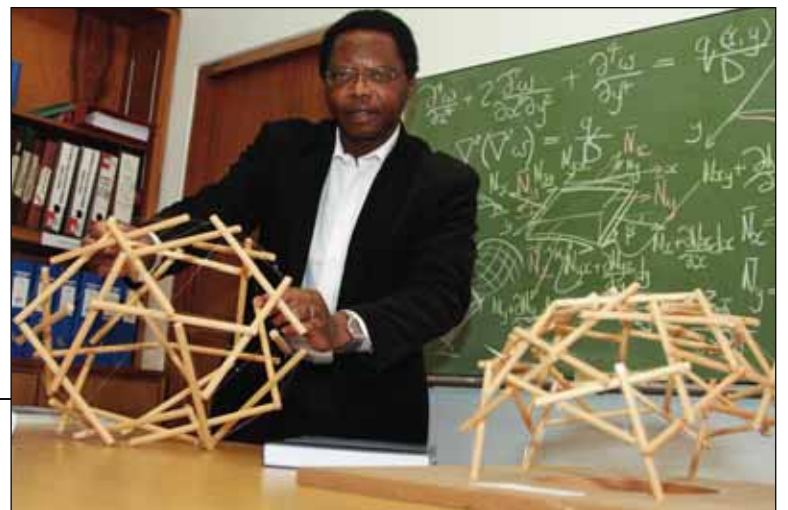
able international recognition from his peers – and the prominent role he has played in promoting the exchange of the latest findings among researchers. Over the past 15 years Zingoni has been investigating the behaviour of shell structures, and his 1997 text, *Shell Structures in Civil and Mechanical Engineering*, is now used in more than 60 countries. He has also pioneered work on the use of group theory in the study of problems in structural mechanics.

Zingoni is modest about this latest recognition, and acknowledges UCT for providing an atmosphere that is conducive to research and scholar-

ship. He's hoping to do the same for the next generation of engineers.

"One of the responsibilities of fellows of the IABSE is to act as role models to the younger generation, and encourage them to excel, and I hope that this award will give my students added inspiration," he says. ■

Building blocks: Prof Alphose Zingoni has been elected a fellow of the International Association for Bridge and Structural Engineering.



Vaccine development the answer to TB - Hanekom

There are few better placed than Professor Willem Hanekom to present new and unpublished data on the work of the South African Tuberculosis Vaccine Initiative (SATVI).

Described as an “entrepreneurial clinician” and “an outstanding role model for SATVI and UCT”, Hanekom, an internationally-recognised immunology expert, gave up a promising career in the US to work in South Africa, which has the second-highest number of TB cases in the world.

Now a co-director at SATVI, he is playing a leading role in developing TB vaccines, the basis for his inaugural lecture, *Vaccines to Prevent TB*, delivered on 4 May.

For Hanekom, TB deaths can well be compared to the recent earthquakes and tsunami in Japan that killed about 10 000 people.

Every year 1.7 million people around the world die of TB.

“I don’t think TB deaths are any less devastating or have any less impact on the economy of a community or households,” Hanekom said. “So really, we should do something.”

Vaccines, he believes, have the best chance of making an impact on the disease.

To this end, SATVI is in the process of clinical development of new vaccines, and is conducting numerous



Advocate: Prof Willem Hanekom believes that vaccines will have a huge impact in the fight against TB. (Listen to the podcast of his inaugural lecture at <http://www.uct.ac.za/news/multimedia/sound/2011/>)

studies to address critical questions in TB vaccine development.

Hanekom and his team are working on everything from new ways to test potential vaccines and how safe they are, to assessing whether the vaccines will work and how our genetic make-up will determine vaccine success.

The four vaccines SATVI has developed over the years have shown incredible results, he reported. “All vaccines tested so far are very safe.” But will they protect people against *Mycobacterium Tuberculosis*, the bacterium that causes TB?

One problem, Hanekom said, is that we still do not know what

to measure in people’s blood (after they have received a vaccine) to tell whether they will be protected against TB. This is a major focus of his research group’s effort.

“In studies of vaccinated babies, we were surprised to see that the currently-used tests may not measure the right things to show whether they

are protected or not,” he said.

The SATVI group has already discovered new markers that are likely to show whether a vaccine will work. This information is also exploited to better understand how people protect themselves against TB; which, in turn, should lead to the development of even better vaccines. ■

Sports scientists put heads together to explore the brain

Until someone finally markets a portable, helmet-sized MRI scanner – and, yes, there are people trying to do just that – picking the brain of a sports person *in situ* is not going to be easy.

The main hiccup is that in most sports activities, even the non-contact ones, the head bobs and sways around too much. Unfortunately, an MRI scan of the brain requires that the subject’s head remains near-motionless.

The technological hurdle seems insurmountable, then. Or so you would think.

Recently, Eduardo Fontes, a doctoral student from the University of Campinas (UNICAMP) in São Paulo, Brazil, spent some weeks at the Medical Research Council/UCT Research Unit for Exercise Science and Sports Medicine (ESSM) overcoming this snag. After first hearing of the work of Professor Tim Noakes, ESSM director, on the relationship between the brain and sports performance, and on how (and which) cerebral areas control exercise, Fontes was keen to travel to Cape Town to work with Noakes.

And he came prepared.

In the hopes of taking a brain scan of a cyclist performing at peak, Fontes and his father, a mechanical engineer in Brazil, had put their heads together. They designed and built a makeshift contraption that allowed a cyclist to lie flat on his back, head kept stock-still in a helmet fixed to the bed of the scanner, while still being able to pump furiously at a set of pedals connected to a cycling



Along for the ride: Cyclist Ian McClarty is strapped into the MRI simulator, while Dr Fabien Basset of the Memorial University of Newfoundland (left, in blue) and Eduardo Torres (at back) set up the rest of the equipment, all part of a study to explore brain activity during exercise.

ergometer. (Watch a video of the gadget at www.youtube.com/user/UCTSouthAfrica.)

The machine would allow the researchers to take an MRI scan of the cyclist completing a standard – if punishing – VO_2 max (aka maximal oxygen consumption) test. This test measures the maximum amount of oxygen that a person’s body can transport and use during a bout of exercise in which intensity is gradually increased over time.

To get cyclists used to the head restraints and the sensation of cycling while supine, all this within the claustrophobic confines of an MRI scanner, Fontes called on the help of Charles Harris, chief technical officer in UCT’s Department of Human Biology. In his workshop Harris constructed a mock-up of the MRI bed and scanner, and made sure the final cycling apparatus was scanner-friendly (no metal bits, for example).

Fontes ran the full tests and

scans with seven well-trained, competitive cyclists. It took the cyclists a session or two to get used to the unusual set-up of the simulator, Fontes admits.

“The first impression when they see it is, oh man, I won’t make this. But after we improved their comfort – their head and their positioning – they’re fine.”

The prep work with the cyclists on the simulator – including full VO_2 max tests – took place at the ESSM

facilities at the Sports Science Institute of South Africa in Newlands, while the MRI scans were done at the Cape Universities Brain Imaging Centre on Stellenbosch University’s Tygerberg campus.

The project is breaking ground for the study of the brain during physical activity, and sets the tone for a string of possible new intervention studies to follow up on this pilot work, explains ESSM collaborator and postdoctoral fellow Dr Elske Schabort.

“Because of the difficulty of the project, technique, equipment and methodology, limited information is available in this area of exercise science research,” says Schabort, “and therefore the opportunity to be among the first to initiate such novel investigations will allow great progress in our work to try to understand and describe the involvement of brain and central nervous system during exercise and performance regulation.”

Now back in Brazil, Fontes is making a start on the analysis of the data. Firstly he and a team of international collaborators at ESSM and UNICAMP will calculate the specific demands of the atypical cycling position, and then cross-check those with what they find on the scans. The first results should be out early next year, says Fontes.

But the very early findings, at least, suggest that the results from the simulator and MRI scans were very evenly matched – confirmation that the simulator did its job. Now comes the brain-teasing stuff. ■

Gradual catastrophe in shifting sands

Baden Powell Drive is a hazard to motorists - and a lesson to environmental and geographical science students



Sample this: Dr Frank Eckardt (right) briefs students on data collection on the False Bay dunes. (Inset) Unusable: The sand has reclaimed this beach-side picnic spot.

Nature's way of changing is not always apparent to us. A recent geomorphology field excursion by Dr Frank Eckardt of UCT's Department of Environmental and Geographical Science examined the road alignment of Baden Powell Drive, the scenic route that hugs the False Bay coast a little too tightly for comfort.

It's so close to the waves that sometimes it literally becomes a beach road. Eckardt explains that because of the naturally shifting sand, dunes can form in the middle of the tar in a matter of hours. The road is narrow and unlit, so it can pose a serious hazard to traffic. In some sections it veers so close to a cliff that it might slip into the ocean in a few years.

"Baden Powell Drive was built between a belt of shifting dunes and a shoreline," says Eckardt. "You have to question the wisdom of that decision. "The road serves as a lesson for Eckardt's third-year students. In a field trip following its path from Muizenberg to the Wolfgat nature reserve, students collected sand samples from several areas and examined historic air photos. This is the first step in a research project documenting contemporary environmental controls and processes as well as determining

historic changes to the coastal landscape over the last 60 years.

The shifting sand has made its mark on residences, seaside recreational structures and the road itself.

Soil samples were collected for examination of organic content, as an indicator of stability, and grain size and shape, which give a sense of sediment mobility. Vegetation cover and calcium cement content were also noted. A GPS device was used to place sample locations into the wider context.

"Student group work will generate a fair amount of data to be shared and analysed by the class," says Eckardt, "so this also serves as an important exercise in managing environmental data."

"In some areas, naturally shifting landscapes are held frozen in time by vegetation," he explains. "Alien vegetation is especially effective in preventing dunes from encroaching on development, but this can prevent beaches from being replenished. An example of this is Llandudno, where the beach sands can be starved out of existence."

It's an ongoing battle. Misplaced infrastructure demands constant maintenance – a cost at the expense

of people as well as the environment – that could easily be avoided.

"Coastal developers who insist on building on the dunes are simply not taking reality into account," says Eckardt. "Environmental problems can be associated with climate change, but sometimes it simply amounts to too many people doing stupid things in the wrong places."

But if developers know the long-term consequences, why build in these areas?

"Profit," answers Eckardt.

"Developers make their money and leave. And soon people are wondering why they have boulders on their front stoep." This is the case with some properties in Betty's Bay, where coastal mass movement is not uncommon.

Eckardt argues that the world's focus on "low-frequency, high-magnitude" events, such as floods and tsunamis, comes at the expense of less media-friendly phenomena, such as soil erosion, disingenuous development and dying sandy beaches.

"Even slow, creeping change can be hazardous," he notes. "We need to be more thoughtful with zoning, and give nature the respect and space it demands." ■

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Graduate quality a growing concern

Improving the quality of university graduates was the focus of a symposium at UCT in March, hosted by the joint task team of the Western Cape Provincial Government (PGWC), the National Business Initiative and the Cape Higher Education Consortium (CHEC) universities.

The call to explore the critical development challenges in improving graduate quality is fuelled by employers' concerns, the legacy of varying standards of graduates with the same qualifications from different higher education institutions, and growing international developments with regard to using the notion of graduate attributes to strengthen the curriculum and the overall student experience.

Judy Favish, director of UCT's Institutional Planning Department and chair of the planning group that organised the two-day symposium, explains that the subject is under-

researched in South Africa.

"There are no national instruments for tracking and monitoring graduates or for obtaining feedback on the quality of their learning experiences at universities," says Favish.

And while university mission statements make claims about the quality of graduates they wish to nurture, these are not necessarily meaningful to academics.

"So one of the key purposes of the symposium was to learn from international experience about how research on graduate attributes is conducted and how other universities have used graduate attributes to enrich the formal and co-curricula. Another aim was shape a research agenda for the region and, possibly later, the broader national system," explains Favish.

International academics invited to give their perspectives were Professor Geoff Scott, pro-vice-chancellor of the University of Western

Sydney in Australia; Associate Professor Simon Barrie, director of the Institute for Teaching and Learning at the University of Sydney in Australia; and Dr Caryn Musil, senior vice-president of the Association of American Colleges and Universities in the US.

The symposium was attended by about 100 people from government, business and universities. According to Favish, the symposium was extremely successful.

"Several recommendations for possible future activities were generated, including research on pedagogies that enable the development of intended graduate attributes, collaborative research with the provincial government and business on tracking graduates, and the development of a conceptual paper on graduate attributes."

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Campus tour for fire department

The Health and Safety Department hosted a campus tour for members of the City of Cape Town's Fire and Rescue Services, part of the university's efforts to strengthen relationships with the service, and to familiarise the group with UCT layout. Ultimately, the orientation on upper campus will help fire fighters navigate their way around the university more easily when called on for assistance. ■



News highlights in brief

- Emer Prof Solomon Benatar of UCT's Centre for Bioethics is the lead editor of *Global Health and Global Health Ethics*, launched at UCT in March. Comprising numerous essays from scholars around the world, the book sets out to address essential questions on global health from medical, philosophical and social-scientific perspectives.
- A recent series of seminars, workshops and conferences drew the who's who of world human genome studies to Cape Town. Among them were Sir Walter Bodmer and Professor Sydney Brenner, two of the most respected scientists in the field. The two also visited UCT as guests of Prof Raj Ramesar.
- UCT medical graduate Michael Hayden, now professor of human genetics and molecular medicine at the University of British Columbia in Canada, has been named the winner of the Canada Gairdner Wightman Award. The award is given to Canadians who have demonstrated outstanding leadership in medicine and medical science throughout their careers.
- Dr Manya Mooya of the Department of Construction Economics and Management has landed a prestigious contract with Springer, one of the world's largest publishing houses, to release his first book. His work, *Real Estate Valuation Theory: A critical appraisal*, could be an answer to

some of the challenges in real estate valuation.

- Assoc Prof Rashida Manjoo of the Department of Public Law, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, will receive an honorary degree from Northeastern University in the US at the end of May, recognising her work in human rights.
- UCT engineering students were among those presented with City of Cape Town Corporation Medals by Cape Town mayor Dan Plato. The medals are awarded to the top second- and third-year students and to the top students in their final year of study in each of the engineering departments.
- Former Constitutional Court Justice Kate O'Regan believes that the appointment of Constitutional Court judges is a matter of great importance, given the powerful role of the court. O'Regan, a UCT alumna who now serves as an acting judge of appeal on Namibia's Supreme Court, was a guest speaker at a talk hosted by the UCT History and Current Affairs Society in April.
- Advocate Menzi Simelane, director of the National Prosecution Authority, UCT's Prof Wouter de Vos and advocate Aifheli Tshivhase were panellists leading a discussion on the disbandment of the Scorpions and the establishment of the Hawks, a specialist investigative unit within the

South African Police Service. The event, titled *Catching the Scorpions' Tail*, was organised by the UCT Black Law Student's Forum.

- Social media played a pivotal role in the recent Egyptian revolution, and will be key in future mobilisation and pro-democracy activities, according to Prof Steven Youngblood of Park University in Missouri, US. Youngblood was delivering a public lecture, *The Role of Social Networking in Democratic Movements*, hosted by IAPO and the Centre for Film & Media Studies at UCT in May.
- Human rights in South Africa were the focus of the Faculty of Law's second Rabinowitz Visitor Lecture, presented by Lord (Leonard) Hoffmann, a retired senior British judge, on 5 May. The combination of racialism and legalism which had distinguished the country's previous regime, followed by its sudden and peaceful abandonment, had no precedent, Hoffmann said.
- *Forerunners*, a UCT Unilever Institute-produced film that charts the lives of four young black South African professionals, received a special jury award at the recent Cannes International Pan African Film Festival. Two years in the making, the full-length feature documentary follows the day-to-day lives of four South Africans in an attempt to understand what it means to be black and middle class in South Africa today. ■



Organic veggies on order through CHED

Harvest of Hope, a sustainable livelihoods project that works with micro-farmers on the Cape Flats. Small- and medium-sized

boxes (at R65 and R95 respectively) of a variety of vegetables picked that morning will be available for pre-order and pick-up from 13h00 to 16h00 on Tuesdays. For further information email harvestofhope@abalimi.org.za. Seen above at the first delivery on 10 May were (from left) Gideon Baum of Harvest of Hope, Mzi Mnyatheli and Cheryl Brown of CHED and Siyanda Mangcunyane of Harvest of Hope. ■

Fellowship for trauma research

Trauma research at UCT has received a boost, with the National Institutes of Health (NIH) granting a further five years of fellowship funding to the Phodiso training and research programme. Phodiso – the Northern Sotho word for healing – is a collaboration between UCT and the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) in the US that recruits one candidate annually for a two-year post-doctoral scholarship. The successful candidate will receive full-time salary support to attend UCLA for three months, conduct their own research in South Africa, and publish their work. Phodiso's mission is to

increase the number of well-trained South African trauma researchers, use research findings to build trauma and injury prevention and treatment programmes, and benefit South African communities. "I have learned a great deal by doing science in different parts of the globe, and my hope is that a good young researcher will use this opportunity to visit the US and grow," says Katherine Sorsdahl, project manager of UCT's Brain Behavioural Institute. There is so much interesting and important work that remains to be done in the area of trauma". The deadline for applications is 1 June. For more information email Jilin@mednet.ucla.edu. ■

Competition forges friendship and understanding

The South African round of the 10th Chinese Bridge Chinese Proficiency Competition for Foreign College Students, an annual event for students taking Chinese at South African universities, was hosted by UCT at the Belmont Conference Centre, Rondebosch, on 8 May.

The competition, presented by the Hanban, the organisation that promotes the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language, offers an opportunity for students to demonstrate their proficiency in the language and share their experiences, and also sets out to promote friendship and understanding, explains Professor Wu Qianlong, deputy director of the Confucius Institute at UCT. Reflecting the growing numbers of South African universities offering Chinese studies, the number of contestants this year hit 27 – the highest yet.

Ten students from UCT (which



Building bridges: Participants and guests at the South African round of the 10th Chinese Bridge Chinese Proficiency Competition for Foreign College Students.

only started to offer Chinese studies from this semester) took part. They went up against rivals from Rhodes University, Stellenbosch University and UNISA.

The participants all spoke in Chinese for three minutes, then demonstrated their understanding of Chinese culture through performances such as singing or dancing.

The top two students were selected for the semi-final and final rounds, which will be held in China in July. None of the UCT students qualified for that event, but two – Rachel Anderson and Gafsa Steenkamp – were presented with third prizes, which makes them eligible for scholarships to study Chinese at a university in China for one year. ■

Ikeys pip Maties in intervarsity

For the moment it would appear that the Ikey Tigers have the wood on the Maties, as the sporting saying goes. Not only did the UCT team usurp the Varsity Cup from their Stellenbosch University rivals, but now the Tigers have rubbed salt into the Maties' wounds with a thrilling 28-19 win in their annual intervarsity clash in Stellenbosch on 14 May.

Understandably the Tigers are overjoyed. These intervarsity wins are as rare as, well, intervarsity wins; it's only UCT's third in 30 years, according to the unofficial record-keepers, and the first since a 2004 triumph (that one's official).

But this one is especially satisfying. The Tigers had to claw their way back from a 9-19 half-time deficit,



Salt in the wounds: The Ikey Tigers celebrate their thrilling – and rare – intervarsity win over Stellenbosch.

after wasting – as they've done so often over the years – their dominance of possession and territory. UCT now lies third on the Western Province Super League, behind Maties and Victorians (the other Stellenbosch outfit).

There's still some work to be done, however, if they want to qualify for the National Club Championships. All three university teams have played at least one game more (three

or even four in some cases) than other contenders; in an attempt to clear students' diaries for the upcoming exams, the sides have crammed midweek games into their fixture lists as well.

So the likes of Durbanville-Bellville, Hamiltons and even the unpredictable SK Walmers, all sitting in the bottom half of the log, may well still catch up. ■



Stand up: Among the SRC members who attended the protest were Ross Hare and Inshaaf Isaacs (first and second from left) and Kathleen Taylor and Amanda Ngwenya (first and second from right).

Rights snuffed out by police brutality

Following the violent death of UCT alumnus Andries Tatane during a protest action in Ficksburg in April, UCT staff and students gathered at Jameson Plaza on 5 May to protest against police brutality.

Students' Representative Council (SRC) president Amanda Ngwenya said that although the incident has been well covered by the media, the UCT community needed to recognise what had happened.

"However, we must be careful not to get caught up in the hysterics and display of outrage," Ngwenya told protestors. "Only those who knew him, his community and family, are truly in mourning."

Video footage of Tatane's death has heightened public awareness of police brutality, noted Ngwenya, but this was not an isolated incident and Tatane is by no means the first to lose

his life in this manner.

Also speaking at the event was deputy vice-chancellor Professor Crain Soudien, who said UCT should be especially outraged, because the tragedy touches on questions which are at the heart of the university.

"Our primary function is to prepare all of us to come to uphold and to exemplify the values of a democracy," said Soudien. "Central to this is unconditional respect for others, the unconditional right of people to associate with whom they want, their unconditional right to dignity, and critically, their unconditional right to express themselves freely."

Soudien called for the UCT community to redouble its efforts to promote human rights and to publically reject the idea of reacting violently to those with different views.

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