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Clark returns to old stomping grounds

UCT is taking an increasingly hands-on approach to solving the problems of South Africa's ailing schooling system.

Dr Jonathan Clark has been appointed the director of the university's new Schools Intervention Initiative (SII).

"This initiative," said vice-chancellor Dr Max Price, following the announcement of Clark's appointment, "will draw on our broader resources to assist the government in improving the quality of education in South Africa, and explore different models of university-school partnerships."

The SII builds on the already extensive work of the Schools Development Unit (SDU), of which Clark is also director, and is a spin-off of another UCT initiative – Edulab.

Edulab (the name inspired by the CityLab initiative of UCT's African Centre for Cities) is a consultative forum that, in 2010, brought together different role-players in the university – both staff and students with an interest and involvement in school education.

A decision coming out of Edulab was that the SII should focus its initial attentions on one single geographical area, namely Khayelitsha – although Clark is at pains to point out that this focus will not exclude involvement with other schools in other communities. Rather, Khayelitsha will serve as a useful starting point.

"Though schooling in the township certainly experiences a myriad challenges, the central issue is primarily not one of access, but of quality," Clark says.

In the primary schools, proficiency levels in numeracy and literacy are low; and the cumulative effect of years of underperformance results in poor secondary school matriculation pass rates, he explains. In 2010, the average pass rate for matriculants in Khayelitsha was 50.3%, well below the provincial average of 76.8%. That mark was even lower than that of the troubled Eastern Cape education system, where the pass rate last year stood at 58.3%.

"A direct consequence of the under achievement and failure



Back in the benches: Dr Jonathan Clark has been appointed director of UCT's new Schools Intervention Initiative, which will explore new ways to improve local and national schooling.

of schools in the township is that unacceptably small numbers of matriculants from this community gain entry to our university, and those that do are under prepared and consequently struggle to succeed."

One of the initial goals of the SII, says Clark, is to "engage practically, developmentally and critically" with the problems that beset schooling in communities such as Khayelitsha, drawing on university-wide resources and initiatives, including student organisations; while at the same time building local collaborations between UCT and other education-related groupings outside of the university.

At the beginning of this year, UCT launched the 100-UP programme in Khayelitsha. Five Grade-10 learners from each of the

"Elsewhere in the world there are a number of university-assisted community school programmes that provide powerful evidence of how institutions such as UCT can be partners for long-term, positive change in the community."

20 secondary schools in the township were selected to participate. Over the course of the next three years, staff and students from across the university will work with the SDU on a comprehensive programme that aims to better prepare these learners to compete for places at UCT at the end of 2013.

Not only will the SII look into the quality of educational provision – an area in which the SDU boasts

an established track record through its work with teachers – it will also explore different models of university-school partnerships.

"As we seek out ways of forging strong, responsive university-school partnerships, we can learn much from the experience of others. Elsewhere in the world there are a number of university-assisted community school programmes that provide powerful evidence of how institutions such as UCT can be partners for long-term, positive change in the community."

The SII's focus on Khayelitsha also marks Clark's return to familiar territory. He taught at Luhlaza Secondary School from 1987 to 1991, and served as a physical sciences curriculum advisor in the

area for a further four years. From 2000 to 2007 he was principal of COSAT (The Centre of Science and Technology), a special project school of the Western Cape Education Department, based in Khayelitsha.

"I feel honoured to have been chosen to head up an initiative that sends a clear signal that UCT intends to play a greater role in supporting the State's efforts to overcome the legacy of apartheid education," he says. "At times the challenges might seem overwhelming, but there are many positive interventions that we can offer."

Clark officially stepped into the SII position on 1 October. He will divide his time 60:40 between the SDU and the SII. ■

Cape transformation under fire

Consultant and director of HERS-SA, Dr Sabie Surtee, revisited her 2009 study, *African Professionals in the Western Cape*, at a recent UCT seminar. The study paints a bleak picture of transformation in the province, suggesting that it has “stalled and perhaps reversed”. And Surtee’s seminar, *Transformation Challenges for Organisations based in Cape Town*, hosted by the Faculty of Commerce’s Transformation Committee, posed more questions than it offered answers. The study, commissioned by UCT’s Development Policy Research Unit, examined 13 Western Cape organisations that together employed 60 000 people in management positions. It highlighted that the appointment of Africans in top management positions was “minute”, and that African women were severely under-represented at top and senior levels. ■



About turn: Dr Sabie Surtee's study suggests transformation in the province may have “stalled and perhaps reversed”.

Changes afoot for PPS

UCT’s Personal Performance System for PASS has undergone some changes for the 2011 performance cycle, in line with the 2011 substantive agreement with the UCT Employees Union (UCTEU) which made provision for such amendments.

Changes include splitting the Cost of Employment package into a guaranteed plus performance bonuses. The agreement also provides for the collapsing of the performance bands from seven to three, and for the introduction of two ‘Exceeds’ awards above the standard package.

The underlying principles of the PPS have not changed, however, noted deputy vice-chancellor Professor Thandabantu Nhlapo in a document to PASS staff recently. So the PPS is still applicable to staff members in payclasses 5-12; the system has two separate

but interconnected cycles – for performance development and pay-for-performance; objectives will be set annually by each staff member and agreed with the line manager; and the system encourages continuous performance feedback.

In addition to the changes to the performance bands and the Exceeds awards, further measures will be implemented to ensure the consistent application of PPS ratings across the university. Information on these changes has been sent to staff.

As agreed with the UCTEU, UCT management will implement further measures to ensure the

consistent application of PPS ratings across the university.

So, for example, the process will be amended to allow for submission of PPS documentation to human-resource administrators, for Human Resources to report to the DVC on compliance. There will be training, testing and reporting, together with support from Human Resources to cover process irregularities. A guideline document and clear processes will be sent to all line managers. And the UCTEU will report back to the appeals committee on any dissatisfaction with the process. ■



The planet in hot water

By their own admission, scientists and artists speak very different languages. But they sometimes have shared concerns – as with climate change – and really want to talk to each other. At *Hot Water: Art and climate change*, a programme hosted by UCT’s Gordon Institute for Performing and Creative Arts from 14 to 16 October, they had a chance to explore this common ground. Over a weekend of poetry, panel discussions, performance art, film screenings, talks and exhibitions, they sought to mix and match scientific detail with artistic expression. They also spoke about their respective attempts to communicate climate change to the general public, especially the country’s youth. ■

Clinical skills lab to boost confidence



Practice makes perfect: Students Olivia Catry and Curt Barnes, both in their third year of physiotherapy studies, demonstrate some of the equipment in the new clinical skills lab.

UCT’s School of Health & Rehabilitation Sciences has opened a new clinical skills lab, designed as a safe environment for health sciences students to sharpen their skills prior to attending to real patients.

The lab, in a refurbished and converted ward at Groote Schuur Hospital’s Old Main Building, is equipped with the latest diagnostic and treatment tools, as well as a computer lab, to allow both students and tutors to test their skills.

Dr George Draper, director of the Clinical Skills Programme in the faculty, noted that the lab was born out of the realisation that patients are fast becoming conscious of their rights to be attended to in a professional manner. Sometimes, though, students lack confidence when going to the clinics for the first time.

“This lab provides an opportunity for students to practise and for tutors to correct mistakes beforehand,” said Draper.

Professor Gonda Perez, deputy dean of the faculty, said there had been reports of students having a “terrible” time, with some being overwhelmed and distressed by their first encounters with patients.

“This kind of environment will boost the confidence and competence not only of students, but of academics too, as they can learn new skills and acquaint themselves with new equipment.” ■



Eloquent: Dr Dyllon Randall, runner-up in the Young Persons’ World Lecture Competition.

Randall nets young lecturer award

Clarity, enthusiasm and spontaneity are presentation essentials. Enter Dr Dyllon Randall of UCT’s Department of Chemical Engineering, runner-up in this year’s Young Persons’ World Lecture Competition, held in Brazil.

Hosted by the Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining since 2005, the competition attracts the world’s brainiest under-28s in materials engineering, testing them on the structure of their lecture, clarity of explanation and argument, and calmness and competence in handling judges’ questions.

Randall’s winning lecture, *Pass the Salt – Recovery of water and salts from mining brines using eutectic freeze*

crystallization, was based on the results of his PhD research on recovering salts and water from toxic mine water.

Randall attributes his slick skills to practice – and enthusiasm.

“I’m very excited that my PhD research is receiving so much favourable attention. I believe this research will have an important part to play in obtaining sustainable wastewater treatment solutions.”

Last year, Randall’s doctoral work on eutectic freeze crystallisation won him the Biennial Award of the Industrial Water Division of The Water Institute of South Africa/South African Industrial Water Association. ■



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Minister surveys science and technology at UCT



Pushing the envelope: Dr Olaf Conrad, head of the National Hydrogen Catalysis Competence Centre at UCT, in discussion with Minister of Science & Technology Naledi Pandor during her visit to UCT.

Through its agencies, the national Department of Science & Technology has been a generous supporter of UCT over the years.

"It is incumbent on UCT to demonstrate that this funding and show of confidence has been put to good use," explained vice-chancellor Dr Max Price. So on 17 October, Price and other university executives, deans and researchers offered Minister Naledi Pandor a thumbnail review of UCT's science and technology ambitions and infrastructure.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor for research, Professor Danie Visser,

spoke on UCT's research drives, and the support programmes the university runs for its senior and up-and-coming academics. Professor Francis Petersen, dean of the Faculty of Engineering & the Built Environment, spoke on innovation at UCT and how researchers are addressing developmental concerns through their work.

Professor Anton le Roex, dean of the Faculty of Science, highlighted the kinds of cutting-edge research in structural biology and nano-imaging that will be conducted in the new engineering building currently under construction on upper campus.

And Pandor toured the facilities of Dr Olaf Conrad's Hydrogen South Africa Catalysis Competence Centre, Professor Kelly Chibale's new Drug Discovery & Development Centre and the Institute of Infectious Diseases and Molecular Medicine.

"I think the visit went very well," said Price. "I think the Minister left the campus with some excitement about the discoveries our researchers are making, and our research ambitions; and a new appreciation for what research at UCT has to offer to social and economic development in the country, the continent and the rest of the world." ■

Not quite a wrap for Rapp



Adieu: Joan Rapp with Emer Prof Martin West.

Joan Rapp has been credited with leading UCT Libraries into the 21st century. But it was no walk in the park, said both vice-chancellor Dr Max Price and Emeritus Prof Martin West (in picture with Rapp) – the former deputy vice-chancellor who appointed Rapp as the Libraries' executive director in 1998 – at Rapp's farewell do on 17 October. It was a job that involved remaking the system physically and structurally – bulking up on space, taking the service online, digitising its rare treasures, and assimilating the many

'fugitive' departmental libraries, among other tasks. With all that in place, the university understandably wants to make sure the transition from the 'Rapp era' to the 'post-Rapp era' (as West put it) runs smoothly. So while officially she retires at the end of October, Rapp will stay on until the end of August 2012 to assist with the handover to her successor, Gwenda Thomas, who takes office on 1 November this year. "It was the people and not the things that counted," Rapp says of her time at UCT. ■

GSB leads in Africa



UCT's Graduate School of Business (GSB) has once again been voted the top business school in Africa. This time the acclaim came at the 4th Eduniversal World Convention, held in Shanghai, China, from 13 to 15 October. A vote by university deans from the 153 countries that make up the Eduniversal System – 75% of them cast their ballots – named the GSB the continent's leading business school for the fourth year in a row. The Stellenbosch University business school came third, and the American University in Cairo second. Business school leaders from more than 50 countries attended the gathering, hosted by the city's Tongji University School of Economics and Management. ■

'Best gift would be to pursue her vision'



In honour: All Africa House hosted a tribute function in honour of the late Wangari Maathai, seen here delivering a VC's Open Lecture at UCT in 2005.

Academics and students paid touching tribute to the late Professor Wangari Maathai at a memorial function hosted by All Africa House on 20 October.

Maathai, who died on 25 September this year, was the first woman from East and Central Africa to earn a PhD. The Kenyan academic and political activist was remembered as an uncompromising fighter for justice. Her efforts won her widespread acclaim among the grassroots of African society and notoriety with the Kenyan authorities, with former president Daniel arap Moi having her arrested on several occasions.

Her status as a champion of peace and justice was chiselled into history when she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004. Maathai was praised for founding the Green Belt Movement, a grassroots environmentalist group that thus far has planted more than 45 million trees around the world (which she touched on when she delivered a Vice-Chancellor's Open Lecture at UCT in 2005).

Perhaps as importantly, acting deputy vice-chancellor Professor Nan Yeld noted at the tribute, the Green Belt Movement was revolutionary in that it demonstrated for



the first time that the green movement could be used to empower the poor, especially rural women, and was not the sole preserve of wealthy, developed nations. But, as one speaker observed, the best tribute to Maathai would be for those left behind to pursue her vision.

The tribute was organised by Professor Chuma Himonga, warden of All Africa House; Daniel Munene, warden of Leo Marquard Hall; and Patrick Rezandt, warden of Glendower Residence. Speakers included Yeld and fellow deputy vice-chancellor Professor Thandabantu Nhlapo, as well as students and staff.

Rezandt announced plans by All Africa House to install a plaque next to the tree planted at the residence in 2004 to mark Maathai's Nobel Prize. ■



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Gene expression key to morphological diversity - Illing

As her topic, *Evo-Devo: Clues to morphological and functional diversity in bats and resurrection plants* indicates, Professor Nicola Illing had some educating to do in her inaugural lecture on 19 October.



Evo diva: Prof Nicola Illing.

Evo-Devo, noted Illing from her ongoing work with a team of UCT students and collaborators from abroad, is a term coined in the 1990s to explain the evolution of morphology in living organisms through the eyes of developmental genetics.

It is known that a common toolkit of genes regulates development in animals, and a different common toolkit of genes does likewise in plants.

But if you are using the same toolkit, where does morphological variation stem from? Illing asked.

Bat wings, with their extra-long fingers linked by a membrane, are a good example of such variation, highlighted by Darwin 150 years ago when pondering the question of the evolution of limb diversity in vertebrates. Unlike in human hands, in which webbing between fingers regresses during embryonic development to free fingers, bat wings retain the inter-digital webbing between the digits.

Illing and her research group have shown that expression of Sonic hedgehog, a gene known to be important for patterning hands and feet of all vertebrates, is uniquely

reactivated for a second time during bat wing development.

In the 1970s, she said, the accepted model was that gene duplication was a prerequisite for a change in gene function. But more recently, it has been revealed that changes in regulatory elements that turn the genes on or off during development may also play an important role in generating functional diversity.

"We've shown that the reactivation of the Sonic hedgehog signalling loop is important in extending the outgrowth of bones and retention of the inter-digital membrane in the bat wing," Illing said.

Turning to plants, she noted that the "cool" Evo-Devo question was whether the desiccation tolerance in the leaves and roots of a specialist group of plants known as resurrection plants evolved from the activation of seed desiccation genes. Desiccation tolerance refers to the ability of an organism to withstand or endure extreme dryness, or drought-like conditions. In plants, it could mean species that revive after seeming to be dead.

After studying *Xerophyta humilis*, a plant whose family members are widespread

in southern Africa, Illing and her research group have highlighted the importance of the central regulators of germinating seed in the desiccation response of leaves in resurrection plants.

"What we have seen is the reaction of existing genes' regulatory pathways, that play an important role in generating diversity."

But why are these findings important to humans?

Much of our current insight into how genes are regulated during development has been obtained from researchers working on human diseases. Illing noted that the study of the genetic basis of morphological diversity in bats and plants provides alternative, invaluable insights on how this occurs.

"Our lessons on the genetic basis of diversity of morphology have taught us about development in the limb and the importance of Sonic hedgehog in stimulating bone growth and preventing regression of inter-digital membranes by cell death. This is important, because cancer arises when the processes of growth and cell death go wrong. We need to follow up these leads in future research." ■

Kidney transplant paper earns students honours

Two final-year UCT medical students won a prestigious award for best original presentation at the South African Transplant Society's recent annual national conference – this for their investigation of the relationship between kidney function in the first few days after transplantation and the long-term outcome of transplanted kidneys.

Daniel Nel and Jonathan Vogel claimed top honours from among a host of established medical researchers and surgeons, an unusual feat for final-year medical students. And this research was done, Nel explained, in their "free time", as it forms no part of their curriculum.

Conference organizer Dr Elma Steyn said that to her knowledge it was the first time that students had ever won this award.

"Just to get a paper accepted is an honour, but to win best presentation is quite a big deal for us," said Nel. "We chose to do it in our free time as we're passionate about surgery and research. It was a lot of extra work, but worth it."

Their research will be submitted to an international journal for publication.

The duo looked at all the adult patients who had received renal transplants at Groote Schuur Hospital (GSH) over a five-year period.

They found that an increased 'cold ischemic time', the time taken between removing the kidney from the donor and implanting it into the recipient, was a significant risk factor for poor early kidney function. Their recommendation is that transplant surgeons reduce this time as far as possible.

"Our most important finding, however, is that slow/average kidney function is almost as bad as poor early function, and these two should be grouped together," said Nel.

They found that patients with poor early kidney function stay in hospital longer and also have a poorer long-term outcome; in other words, their kidneys don't work as well one year after the transplant.

Right: Prize students: Final-year medical students Jonathan Vogel (left) and Daniel Nel (second from right) with kidney transplant surgeon Dr Elmi Muller, and Professor of Surgery Del Kahn. Vogel and Nel won a prestigious award for best original presentation at the South African Transplant Society's recent annual national conference.

Reducing the cold ischemic time requires closer follow-up of kidney transplant patients and a more aggressive approach to diagnosing and treating acute rejection, as the combination of poor early function and acute rejection has a "significantly" poorer long-term outcome, said Nel.

Kidney transplantation has been much in the news, with UCT's Dr Elmi Muller pioneering the transplantation of kidneys from HIV-positive to HIV-positive patients at Groote Schuur Hospital, for which she won a health care-givers category prize in the Shoprite Checkers Women of the Year 2011 awards.


"We are privileged to have been able to do our research at the GSH renal transplant unit, which is a leading transplant centre in South Africa and the African continent," Nel added.

Both Nel and Vogel plan to specialise in surgery. Nel is interested in general surgery, transplantation and cardiothoracic surgery; and Vogel in orthopaedics and urology.

Medicine is in Nel's blood; his grandfather emigrated from the Netherlands and worked in the rural Transkei as a mission doctor for almost 40 years. He also has an uncle working in Malawi as a mission doctor and another is an orthopaedic surgeon. He's "very involved" in the UCT Surgical Society (in 2010 he founded the society's research portfolio, and this year he's president). Next year he starts a two-year internship in East London.


Vogel, who also found time to complete his first Absa Cape Epic mountain bike stage race this year, hails from a small town in the Eastern Cape and will also do his internship in East London. ■





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Four new UCT Fellows honoured

Vice-chancellor Dr Max Price honoured four new UCT Fellows on 18 October, two of them from the Department of Mathematics and Applied Mathematics. Professors George Janelidze and Hans-Peter Kunzi (the maths professors), Vanessa Watson of the City and Regional Planning Programme in the School of Architecture, Planning and Geomatics, and Ed Rybicki of the Department of Molecular and Cell Biology were welcomed as new Fellows. The UCT College of Fellows also named three recipients of its annual Young Researcher Awards for 2011. They are Drs Rob Ingle, Deena Pillay and Thomas Scriba. Young Researcher Awards are offered annually in recognition of outstanding scholarly work by young academics.



Prof George Janelidze.

Professor George Janelidze obtained his PhD in Mathematics from the Tbilisi State University in Georgia in 1978, and his DSc from the St Petersburg State University in Russia in 1992. His was, in fact, the first DSc in category theory in the former USSR. During the years thereafter, he was a visiting professor at a number of institutions in Europe, North America, and Australia, where he collaborated with several distinguished mathematicians. He was appointed as professor at UCT in 2004, and became an honorary member of the A Razmadze Mathematical Institute of the Georgian Academy of Science, where he had previously held a permanent position as leading research scientist. Janelidze has about 80 publications in international mathematical journals, and he is the editor of four such journals. He has been a National Research Foundation (NRF) A-rated researcher since 2005. Janelidze's current research is devoted to various topics of categorical algebra, including abstract Galois theory, with applications in classical algebra, geometry and topology. "Being a Fellow of a university is always an honour, but to be a Fellow of UCT is a very special honour," he told Monday Paper.



Prof Vanessa Watson.

Professor Vanessa Watson joined the Urban Problems Research Unit at UCT in 1980, and was a researcher – and, ultimately, director – there until 1996. She has held a teaching position since 1989, at full professorial level since 2002. She has a PhD from Wits and holds a B-rating from the NRF. She was the winner of the Department of Science & Technology Distinguished Women in Science award in 2003, the Venter/Alton Literary Award in 2005, and the South African Planning Institute national book prize in 2010. She was elected to the South African Academy of Science in 2006. Watson's research over the past couple of decades has aimed to change the way in which planners and other urban professionals think about the future of cities in the global South, and in Africa more specifically. "It has involved an interrogation and critique of mainstream planning approaches, almost entirely transplanted from Euro-American origins, and a consideration (in theory) of how the realities of rapid urban growth, informality, inequality and environmental threat demand changed perspectives and conceptual resources," she told Monday Paper.



Prof Hans-Peter Kunzi.

Professor Hans-Peter Kunzi received his master's, PhD and habilitation degrees from the University of Berne in Switzerland. After postdoctoral years at Virginia Tech, US, and UCT, he worked for several years as a lecturer and researcher in Switzerland, at the Universities of Berne and Fribourg. In July 2000 he was appointed full professor at UCT. He has held an NRF A-rating since 2006. The research of his Topology Research Group at UCT lies mainly in the field of analytic and categorical topology, focusing on frame theory and asymmetric topology. For the past 30 years Kunzi has travelled a great deal for scientific purposes, leading to numerous collaborations and publications with colleagues all over the world. In particular he regularly visited Spanish universities, and has spent many months in the region of Valencia in the past years. "I am very happy to receive this award from UCT in recognition of my work in the last 30 years as a scientist and teacher. I hope that I shall be able to continue this work at UCT for many years still."



Prof Ed Rybicki.

Professor Ed Rybicki has been at UCT, as a student and staff member, continuously since 1974 – and in the same office since his appointment as a lecturer in virology in 1981. He became a senior lecturer in 1987, an associate professor in 1992, and was promoted to professor in microbiology in 2002. He started out as a classical plant virologist, but retrained in molecular biology techniques in 1985 during an academic leave in Belgium. His research interests are in the area of 'biopharming', or the use of plants and cell cultures to make pharmaceutically-important proteins and other molecules, and in elucidating the virus-host interactions of grass- and cereal-infecting geminiviruses with a view to engineering resistance against them. He is a fellow of the Royal Society of South Africa and an elected member of the Academy of Science of South Africa. "I regard my election as a Fellow of UCT as a very welcome vindication of my professional and private service to this university, and I am honoured that the Fellowship has seen fit to include me." ■

Young Researcher Awards

Dr Rob Ingle of the Department of Molecular and Cell Biology (MCB) graduated with a first-class BA honours in biological sciences and a PhD from the University of Oxford. He then moved to South Africa, and was a Claude Leon Postdoctoral Fellow in the MCB from 2004 to 2006. He now holds a Y1 rating from the NRF. Ingle is interested in



Dr Rob Ingle.

the interactions between plants and their environment, particularly in the molecular mechanisms that help them cope with stresses imposed either by other organisms or by chemical/physical factors. "I am very honoured to receive this award from the UCT College of Fellows. It comes at a time when NRF funding is difficult to secure, and will help maintain the research momentum in my group at UCT by allowing me to take on new postgraduate students," he said.



Dr Deena Pillay.

Dr Deena Pillay is a marine ecologist who joined the Department of Zoology in March 2008 after completing his PhD at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in 2006. He has broad research interests in intertidal and estuarine ecology, with a strong focus on understanding the role of biological interactions in structuring marine ecosystems. This area offers great opportunities to explore theoretical concepts in ecology while still contributing significantly to applied areas. He is interested in understanding the effects of human pressure and changing environments on the biological interactions that ripple through marine ecosystems – and their consequences. "I am proud and honoured to receive the College of Fellows Young Researcher award. Not only is it a recognition of my scholarly work – it also serves as motivation to continue shaping young minds and pushing the boundaries of science," he said.

Dr Thomas Scriba of the South African TB Vaccine Initiative (SATVI) and the School of Child and Adolescent Health received his BSc, BSc Honours and MSc degrees from Stellenbosch University, and a DPhil from Oxford University. He joined SATVI as a postdoc in 2006, and took up a senior research officer post in 2009. His research focuses on understanding how the human immune system fights the TB bug, *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, to prevent disease in children and adults, as well as in HIV-infected persons. He has led the immunology analysis approaches for five clinical trials of new TB vaccines. Scriba is centrally involved in postgraduate training, and in local capacity development and immunology training. "I am thrilled to receive this award, but want to emphasise that it recognises work done not by an individual, but by a whole team of people," he said. ■



Dr Thomas Scriba.

African archaeological research strengthened

UCT's Afropolitan strategy received another boost when the African Archaeological Materials Research Group, an international but 'African-oriented' group, was established recently to promote the study of archaeological materials. The group was formed at a meeting at UCT in September, when experts from Africa, Canada, the UK, and the US gathered to talk about collaboration. The meeting was funded by the Vice-Chancellor's

Strategic Fund. Organiser Dr Shadreck Chirikure of the Department of Archaeology explains that the plan is to develop an exchange of ideas, staff and students within "the framework of sound and solid research agendas". "We identified critical issues in African archaeology, such as the need for effective dating methods to assign ages in order to understand the beginning of African metallurgy," says Chirikure. ■



Materials gain: Dr Shadreck Chirikure.

Marketing awards for UCT

UCT won four awards for outstanding performance at the Marketing, Advancement & Communications in Education (MACE) Excellence Awards, presented at a gala dinner in Johannesburg in October. The awards ceremony was the highlight of the two-day MACE conference, attended by marketers and communicators from the country's higher and further education institutions. UCT's awards were made in the following categories: Social Media: Content Sharing Sites (YouTube), Audiovisual:



The CMD team who attended the conference included (from left) Dineo Noganta, Murray Steyn, Linda Rulashe and Helen Théron.

Video productions (*Why UCT* recruitment DVD), Audiovisual: Video productions (UCT's "tour DVD"), and Advertising: Broadcast (Research output project – Radio advertising). The last three awards were received by Murray Steyn, CMD's Marketing Manager. ■



An eyeful: A group's eye-catching design for an ophthalmotrope won them top prize at the Faculty of Health Sciences' Undergraduate Research Day.

Future of medical research in rude health

Some impressive research projects were on display when the UCT Faculty of Health Sciences hosted its annual Undergraduate Research Day in October.

Jason Master scooped top prize in the oral presentation section for his review of patients with confirmed 22q Deletion Syndrome (a chromosomal disorder characterised by heart defects, growth delays and a range of other conditions) at Red Cross Children's Hospital.

A three-person team came second for their investigation of mutations in a gene in the Kaposi's sarcoma-associated herpes virus (KSHV), which is a known human cancer virus.

The final podium spot went to a group's study of the differences in recovery patterns between male and female runners after an ultra-marathon race.

Braam Beyer, Nathan English, Liesl Fourie and Vanessa Konje clinched first prize in the poster presentation section with their plans for building an ophthalmotrope, a mechanical model that displays how the six extrinsic muscles of the eye (along with various anatomical support structures) enable eye movement.

Cassandra Bruce-Brand was second for her review of endoscopic medial maxillectomy for inverting papilloma, which concluded that traditional methods of nailing together fractured bones in the leg could lead to complications such as infection, infarction and non-union of the affected bones.

Third place went to a trio who conducted a 12-month follow-up study of a cohort of general in-patients at Groote Schuur Hospital. They researched mortality and readmission rates, functional outcome and employment status among the patients. ■

Programmer merrily codes his way to runner-up spot

UCT postdoctoral research fellow Dr Bruce Merry claimed the runner-up spot at the TopCoder Open finals in Florida, US, in September.

Narrowly missing out on the top prize to Japanese programmer Makoto Soejima, known in TopCoder circles only as rng_58, Merry beat thousands of other contestants to snatch the \$5 000 (just under R40 000) purse for second place.

The TopCoder Open pits computer programmers from around the world against each other in a race to solve various problems by writing the best code in the quickest time.

In the algorithm section in which Merry participated, contestants were faced with three abstract puzzles, each demanding a swiftly-written program to crack them.

Among other brain-teasers Merry was asked to solve, he was tasked with creating a program that would lay down parameters for the probability that contestants in a game of darts would hit the target.

Merry, based in the Department of Computer Science, is currently researching the potential of graphic processing units (GPUs) for general-purpose computing, and is also collaborating with the Department of Geomatics on African heritage projects. ■



Getting with the program: Dr Bruce Merry finished second in an international competition that pitted the world's best programmers against each other.

News in brief

Finnish visit

Possible collaborations between UCT and Finnish researchers received another boost when representatives from the Academy of Finland visited UCT in October. Fresh from signing a Memorandum of Understanding with its South Africa counterpart, the National Research Foundation, on 4 October, the four-member delegation from the academy, a leading source of competitive research funding in Finland, made a brief stop at UCT. The Finnish delegation was particularly interested in areas of existing Finnish research connections, such as learning and education, law, computing and biomedicine.

UCT and Japan in sea algae project

Prof John Bolton of UCT's Department of Botany is co-leading a South Africa/Japan project that links scientists from the two countries for a study of the evolution of marine algae. Titled *Biodiversity and Evolution of Algae in the Indo-Pacific: A Japan/South Africa comparison*, the project is funded by South Africa's National Research Foundation and the Japan Science and Technology Agency, and will study both microscopic algae (phytoplankton) and large algae (seaweeds). The project will involve a series of collecting trips, workshops and conferences in the two countries over the next three

years. The first workshop and field trip was held in KwaZulu-Natal recently.

Crystal clear

Prof Leonard Barbour, a graduate from UCT's Faculty of Science, delivered the faculty's Distinguished Alumni Lecture in

September, taking alumni, staff and students on a whirlwind tour of crystals and crystallography. His talk, titled *The Secret Life of Crystals*, ran the gamut of crystallography, from the ancient Romans' take on crystals ("it's ice"), to the discovery of the hexagonal symmetry of snowflakes. ■

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EVENTS

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Topic: Grape Genetics & Human Migration over the last 10,000 years

Venue: New Learning Centre, Health Sciences Campus, University of Cape Town, Anzio Road Observatory

When: Thursday November 10, 2011 @ 5:30pm for 6pm

RSVP: fran@hippocommunications.com or 0215570246

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Certificate courses offered by CPD programme in EBE Faculty:

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VACANT POSTS

EXECUTIVE AND ACADEMIC POSTS:

Specialist Clinical Pharmacologist & Lecturer, Department of Medicine, Faculty of Health Sciences, Closing date: 31 October 2011

Senior Lecturer/Associate Professor, Department of Statistical Sciences, Faculty of Science, Closing date: 2 November 2011

Curator and Fellowship in Photography (x2), Centre for Curating the Archive, Michaelis School of Fine Art, Closing date: 6 November 2011

Small Group Facilitators, School of Public Health & Family Medicine, Faculty of Health Sciences, Closing date: 7 November 2011

Professor/Associate Professor/Senior Lecturer/Lecturer, Department of English Language & Literature, Closing date: 7 November 2011

Part-time Lecturer: Sesotho Language, School of Languages & Literatures, Faculty of Humanities, Closing date: 30 November 2011

RESEARCH AND PROFESSIONAL, ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPPORT POSTS (PASS) POSTS:

Artisan Plumber, Student Housing & Residence Life, Department of Student Affairs, Closing date: 31 October 2011

Key Technology Specialist: Fuel Processor Engineering, Department of Chemical Engineering, Faculty of Engineering & The Built Environment, Closing date: 1 November 2011

Primary Health Care Nurse, Department of Student Affairs, Closing date: 1 November 2011

Part-time School Liaison

Assistants, Department of Psychiatry & Mental Health, Faculty of Health Sciences, Closing date: 3 November 2011

Residence Facilities Assistants, Student Housing & Residence Life, Department of Student Affairs, Closing date: 4 November 2011

Assistant Management Accountant, ICTS, Closing date: 7 November 2011

INTERNAL PASS POSTS:

Operations Assistant, Dean's Office, Faculty of Humanities, Closing date: 31 October 2011

Research Assistant: Microbiology, Department of Clinical Laboratory Sciences, Closing date: 1 November 2011

Web Content Developer, African Gender Institute, Faculty of Humanities, Closing date: 4 November 2011

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UCT sports stars glitter at awards

South Africa's top-ranked men's foil fencer, Jacques Viljoen, is UCT's 2011 Sportsperson of the Year, winning the coveted Jamison Cup for the second time.

The final-year fine arts student won the same award in 2009, a trajectory that's seen him bag the national tournament title for the past three years, an unprecedented feat.

Viljoen was one of many UCT students who were fêted at the annual Sports Awards dinner on Friday 21 October, at the Cape Sun.

The fencing Men's First Team also won the Butterworth Cup for Team of the Year.

The Landstem Trophy for Performance of the Year was shared between the rowing men's First VIII and the Mountain & Ski Expedition. Both have had stand-out seasons.

The men's first crew won the eights race at the University Sport South Africa (USSA) Sprints and was top university team at all sprint regattas throughout the year. The Mountain & Ski Club led an expedition to Chandra-Bagah 13A in the Indian Himalayas, to learn valuable snow and ice mountaineering skills they could



Above left: Fine fettle: Fencer Jacques Viljoen (left) is UCT's Sportsperson of the Year, winning the Jamison Cup at the Sports Awards dinner on 21 October. Viljoen won the same award in 2009. Guest speaker Ryan Sandes presented the award. Above right: Race ace: Ryan Sandes presents the Turpin Cup for Service to UCT sport to the Students' Representative Council's Kim Senogles.



pass on to their members for future expeditions.

Guest speaker at the awards dinner was alumnus and adventure racing 'poster boy' Ryan Sandes, whose résumé includes wins in all the 4 Deserts events – he is the only person to have achieved this feat. Sandes has built his success (he started running when he was

a student, after the 2006 Knysna Marathon proved to be his only ticket to the Oyster Festival) on the central philosophy of "one grain of sand at a time".

The awards ceremony was also an opportunity to bid farewell to John Donald, manager of Sport & Recreation, after more than two decades of service to sport at the

university. Donald was unable to attend the awards, but chairperson of the UCT Sports Council Professor Mike Meadows said: "John, you look way too young to be retiring: no doubt this is so because of your lifetime of active and healthy involvement in sport. Good luck, and be sure to stay in touch with UCT sport as it goes

from strength to strength in the years to come."

Other awards made on the night:

- Club of the Year: Rowing
- Transformation Trophy: Hockey
- Turpin Cup (Service to UCT Sport): Kim Senogles, Students' Representative Council
- Best First-Year: Ricky Schroeder (rugby) ■

UCT salutes top student leaders



Top: Busy bee: The vice-chancellor, Dr Max Price, presents his student leadership award to the many-talented Simon Mendelsohn. Above: Quality leadership: Amanda Ngwenya receives her award from Moonira Khan, executive director of the DSA.

They may be young, but the student leaders singled out at the annual UCT Student Leadership Awards Ceremony on 20 October have made their marks early. Their résumés made for impressive reading at the event, hosted by the Department: Student Affairs (DSA).

The winners were:

- The Vice Chancellor's Student Leader Award – Simon Mendelsohn, 2011 president of the Students' Health and

Welfare Centres Organisation (SHAWCO). In addition to a superior academic record, invitations to and awards from a clutch of conferences, and his work with SHAWCO, Mendelsohn is also a member of the organising committee for the 2012 People's Health Movement's People's Health Assembly, and started the Faculty of Health Sciences' Inter-societies Forum. And somehow he's made time for the Mountain and Ski Club, the UCT Surgical Society, the Faculty of Health Sciences Student Mentoring Programme, and the UCT Ballroom Dancing Society.

- Deputy Vice-Chancellor's Student Leader Award – Kumbirai Gundani, 2011 chairperson of the Student Assembly. Among his many achievements over the year, Gundani took part in the World Economic Forum for Africa as a youth delegate and speaker, ran seven marathons to raise awareness for SHAWCO, chaired the Smuts Hall Alumni Association and served on the Commerce Students' Council.
- The Award for Most Outstanding Student Leader in Community Service – Jacqui Watson, chairperson of Ubunye, a community development project targeted at high-school learners. She was also involved in a string of other projects, including TeachOut, Axiom Education and the Media School. Watson was also awarded an Allan Gray Fellowship, and attended the Talloires Network Leaders Conference in Spain.
- The Award for Most Outstanding Student Leader in Media – Nyasha Kadandara, editor of UCT's Varsity student newspaper. Kadandara was hailed for her roles as mentor, tutor, orientation leader and delegate at the Young Women in Finance national conference. She was also honoured for organising the first National Student Media Conference, where delegates discussed the role of student media in South Africa.
- The Award for Most Outstanding Student Leader in a Postgraduate Faculty Council – Tapiwa Tevera, chairperson of the Engineering & the Built Environment Postgraduate Students' Council. Tevera has served in a number of leadership roles for residents and societies, and is a two-time winner of the Ackerman Family Foundation Leadership Award.

- The Award for Most Outstanding Student Leader in a Society or Student Organisation – Ali Kiyaei, multi-award and -scholarship winner and organiser of the Model United Nations conference for schools in Cape Town in 2011; and Ann-Maree Tippoo, student director of the ABSA Capital Pioneering Young Women Conference and project manager for the Young Women Engaging World Markets.
- The Award for Most Outstanding Student Leader in an Undergraduate Faculty Council – Vuyane Mhlomi, chairperson of the Health Sciences' Faculty Council. Mhlomi has been involved in his faculty for three years as a mentor, was a member of various societies, and served on the faculty council, in addition to a range of residence roles.
- The Executive Director: Student Affairs' Student Leader Awards – Kathleen Taylor, vice-president: internal of the 2010/2011 Students' Representative Council (SRC), who organised an array of SRC programmes and projects; and Amanda Ngwenya, president of the 2010/2011 SRC, who served on a number of student groups in addition to her SRC duties.
- Team of the Year – Ikey Tigers, who won the Varsity Cup and the Western Province Super League A, and beat Stellenbosch University in the annual rugby Intervarsity, for the first time in seven years. Off the field they have been equally "inspirational", renovating the Sisters home for abused women and children, running a coaching clinic and drumming up support for Green Week.
- In addition, the Abe Bailey Travel Bursary was made to Ann-Maree Tippoo; Erik De Ridder, Dinika Govender, Pumeza Losi, Wandile Mamba, Mangaka Meso, Sizwe Mpofo-Walsh and Tess Peacock were named for the South Africa Washington Internship Programme; Jessica Price and Vuyane Mhlomi shared the Kerry Capstick-Dale Memorial Scholarship; and Mhlomi also received the Ackerman Family Foundation Award, his third award for the evening.
- And finally, the DSA made a Special Recognition Award to long-serving staffer Bonita 'Bonnie' Malone, for her 25 years service to the SRC and student leadership at UCT. ■