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Monday Paper

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Pg 3



Pg 5



Pg 8

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State Information Bill passed – for now

Outside, the protests were vocal and varied – UCT, for example, blacked out its home page – but inside Parliament the Protection of State Information Bill was passed without too many hiccups on 22 November.

Immediately after the announcement, UCT, other organisations and individuals voiced their disappointment that Members of Parliament had voted 229 to 107 in favour of the Bill.

“While we believe the Bill will not ultimately find its way into law, but will be amended or stopped as it goes through the process, it is nevertheless extremely disturbing that the legislation was able to cross the bridge it did today,” read a UCT statement released shortly after the news broke.

As the Bill stands, anyone possessing classified government documents may face stiff penalties and prison sentences, and there is no public-interest clause that can protect

whistleblowers.

But civic society has not thrown in the towel just yet. There’s talk of taking the Bill and the government to the Constitutional Court. It’s here that the more offending parts of the Bill can still be stalled, some commentators – such as UCT’s Professor Pierre de Vos – believe.

“The bill is much improved from previous versions,” De Vos told AFP. “However, I suspect some provisions may very well still be declared unconstitutional by the Constitutional Court.”

There’s one more hurdle for the Bill to clear – the National Council of Provinces (NCOP). But many feel that the NCOP will be unlikely to make any recommendations or changes of substance. Or that President Jacob Zuma, the Bill’s next stop after the NCOP, will pause before green-lighting it.

Protests continue. ■



Top inventor is UCT’s newest A-rated researcher

UCT’s top inventor, Professor Ed Rybicki of the Department of Molecular and Cell Biology, is UCT’s newest A-rated researcher, following the release of the latest National Research Foundation (NRF) ratings.

This brings UCT’s tally of A-rated researchers to 31.

In addition, Dr David Braun of the Department of Archaeology and Dr Amanda Weltman of the Department of Mathematics and Applied Mathematics were given P-ratings (President’s Awards). Both Professors George Ekama and Hans-Peter Kunzi have retained their A ratings. Ekama, of the Department of Civil Engineering, is an internationally renowned expert in waste-water treatment. Kunzi, of the Department of Mathematics and Applied Mathematics, is one of UCT’s most influential mathematicians and the leader of the university’s Topology and Category Theory Research Group since 2001.

A-ratings are awarded to “researchers who are unequivocally recognised by their peers as leading international scholars in their field”. P-rated researchers are young researchers (normally younger than age 35) “who, on the basis of exceptional potential demonstrated in their pub-



International leader: Prof Ed Rybicki, new recipient of a National Research Foundation A-rating.

lished doctoral work and/or their early post-doctoral careers, are considered likely to become future international leaders in their field”.

“I know that you will delight with me in how each of them is making a difference on a global scale in very

different fields, and in how they collectively symbolise the depth and rich variety of UCT’s research,” deputy vice-chancellor for research, Professor Danie Visser, wrote in a communiqué to the campus community.

Rybicki’s impressive credentials

include his 25-year career in plant virology and plant biotechnology and, since 1997, in vaccinology. His work on transgenic resistance to viruses in plants, begun by him and Professor Jennifer Thomson in the 1980s, culminated in 2007 in his lab engineering transgenic resistance to maize streak disease into maize – a development that is potentially of enormous economic benefit to small-scale farmers throughout Africa and the rest of the world.

However, Rybicki’s greatest advances in the past decade have been in the field of plant-made vaccines.

“He has made a huge contribution to research in the amazing notion of using plants as production systems for vaccine antigens, and he has established one of the best labs in the world for this purpose,” said Visser. “On top of this, he is a shining example of someone engaged in the full spectrum of the innovation chain. With 44 patents, he is also UCT’s top inventor.”

Braun focuses on human behaviour and biology over the last three million years, to gain an understanding of human adaptation during this period. His PhD research was on tool use and manufacture among early humans in East Africa. Since then he

has broadened his research to include the behavioural evolution of ancient humans. Thus he was part of the team that presented evidence of the first signs of humans, including the fish in their diets; and in the team that discovered a preserved set of human footprints from 1.5 million years ago, providing valuable insight into the development of bipedalism.

It was while studying string theory and cosmology as a student that Weltman realised the powerful insights that each field could bring to the other. Her research over the past seven years has borne this out: her proposal of a new kind of field – what she has called a chameleon field – is the first dark-energy theory that can be tested in non-cosmological ways. (Dark energy, which can explain the mysterious accelerated expansion of the Universe, is said to make up about 70% of the Universe, while dark matter makes up about 25%. Everything else that is visible or can otherwise be detected is less than 5%.) Since her theory can and will be tested, it has the potential to provide “a unique and controllable way to understand dark energy that may never be possible within the limits of observational cosmology”. ■

Klopper at the helm

Professor Sandra Klopper, of the University of Pretoria, will take office as the new deputy vice-chancellor on 1 January 2012, taking over the position currently held in an acting capacity by Associate Professor Nan Yeld.

Klopper's portfolio will include providing leadership in the areas of teaching and learning, and academic planning; and she will have executive oversight of UCT Libraries and Information & Communication Technology Services. She joins the vice-chancellor, Dr Max Price, and deputy vice-chancellors Professor Thandabantu Nhlapo, Professor Crain Soudien and Professor Danie Visser in making up the executive team.

Klopper will use the title of Professor in the Faculty of Humanities.

"I am excited about the diverse qualities and experience in the team and look forward to the possibilities in the years ahead," said Price.

Klopper brings strong academic, management and leadership experience to her new role. She has been dean of the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Pretoria (UP) since October 2008.

She received her honours degree in art history (cum laude) in 1978 from the University of the Witwatersrand, where she returned later to write her PhD thesis, tracing the socio-political histories of various traditionalist art forms from present-



Welcome: New DVC Prof Sandra Klopper.

day northern KwaZulu-Natal.

She also has an MA in art and social reform from the University of East Anglia, UK. She lectured in art history at Wits from 1981 to 1988.

In 1989 she joined UCT as a lecturer specialising in African art, and was promoted first to senior lecturer, then to associate professor, before accepting an appointment at Stellenbosch University (SU) as head of visual arts in June 2001. She became vice dean of arts (drama, fine arts and music) at Stellenbosch in Janu-

ary 2006, and accepted an additional appointment as acting head of the music department in mid-2006.

Klopper helped spearhead curriculum development at UCT, SU and UP. She currently chairs the teaching and learning committee at the humanities faculty at UP. She has served on the Senate Library Committees of both UP and SU. At SU she developed strategies for securing senior academic appointments from the so-called designated groups, and oversaw a major refurbishment of the

visual arts department's building and facilities.

Klopper has played an active role in various community projects and initiatives. For many years she was the treasurer of the Visual Arts Group (a subsidiary of the now defunct Cultural Workers Congress of the Western Cape). From 2004 to 2006 she chaired the committee formed by the Western Cape Government to commission the Peace Laureate sculpture project at the Victoria & Alfred Waterfront in Cape Town.

Along with this strong performance in management and leadership roles, Klopper is an accomplished academic. She has written extensively on: the traditionalist art of southern African communities, including the expressive culture of migrant labourers and their families; African fashion, textiles and beadwork; various aspects of contemporary South African youth culture; and the work of several contemporary South African artists. She has published three books in collaboration with photographer Peter Magubane, and has served on the editorial boards of *African Arts* (UCLA) and *NKA: Journal of Contemporary African Art* (Cornell).

The National Research Foundation has awarded her a B2 rating, valid from 1 January 2012.

"Klopper's international ties are also strong – an important quality at UCT, where internationalisation and diversity form part of our strategic goals," said Price.

She has longstanding links with colleagues at various universities and museums in the US and the UK. She also has close ties with colleagues at Makerere University in Uganda and at the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, where she supervised a PhD thesis funded through UCT's USHEPiA initiative. She continues to collaborate with her former Tanzanian student, Rehema Nchimbi, on various projects. ■

Graduate returns to steer UCT Libraries

It's full circle for alumna Gwenda Thomas, who returned to the university on 1 November to take the reins as executive director of UCT Libraries from Joan Rapp.

Up until her UCT appointment, Thomas had been director of Library Services at Rhodes University.

Prior to that, she held the position of general manager and director in a higher education and library consortium, the Foundation of Tertiary Institutions of the Northern Metropolis (FOTIM) and its library project, the Gauteng and Environs Library Consortium, made up of eleven institutional and library members across three provinces in South Africa.

For the greater part of her professional career, she held senior



Full circle: Gwenda Thomas is the new ED of UCT Libraries.

management positions in the Department of Library Services at the University of South Africa (UNI-

SA), in different capacities between 1990 and 2000.

Asked about her new chal-

lenge, Thomas said: "It is the start of a new chapter in my career and I consider it to be a privilege and a wonderful opportunity. Having completed my undergraduate studies and my librarianship training at UCT, it feels familiar. While the university has changed, the integrity and feel of the institution are the same."

It's been an eventful start to her UCT career. Thomas attended a retreat with the university's Senior Leadership Group – "a wonderful opportunity to hear their vision and strategy" – as well as the recent lecture in Jameson Hall by Prince Charles, ahead of COP17.

"With the UCT choir performing so magnificently and the walk out onto the Jameson steps afterwards, looking out on the campus and the

mountain, I realised what a privilege it is to be back."

Thomas looks forward to taking the "excellent work" of her predecessor further and to making a significant difference over the next decade.

Apart from their shared interests as librarians, Rapp and Thomas share a passion for dogs – Thomas has a Toy Pomeranian and a miniature French poodle.

A keen road runner, she also can't wait to join a running club and is determined to complete the one marathon that "eludes" her, the Two Oceans Ultra Marathon.

As a passionate gardener, she looks forward to getting a garden going in her new home in Cape Town. ■

Bread tags for wheelchairs

YUSUF OMAR

The catering section of UCT Student Housing joined official catering service provider Fedics in handing over five enormous bottles, brimful with plastic bread tags, to the Bread Tags for Wheelchairs charity organisation.

These thousands of tags had been collected from the university's residences.

And on 14 November, Mary Honeybun, founder and co-ordinator of the

aid organisation, gratefully received the tags from representatives of UCT and Fedics.

Bread Tags for Wheelchairs collects the tags and sells them to packaging producer Groplast, which transforms them into seedling trays and photo frames. The proceeds are used to buy wheelchairs that the charity donates to disabled children and adults recommended by the Disabled Persons Associations.

Approximately 200kg of plastic tags are required to finance one wheel-

chair. Since its launch five years ago, Honeybun and co have been able to distribute 167 wheelchairs.

Cecilia de Villiers, senior co-ordinator of catering services at UCT, Tracy van Zyl, project manager at Fedics, and Maureen Stringer, also of Fedics, were the masterminds of the project at UCT.

The group is determined to collect more tags next year.

"We're starting immediately with the next drive," said De Villiers. "Next time we're going to have 12 bottles." ■



Tagged: Grant Willis (right), director of Student Housing and Residence Life, hands over the bread tags to Mary Honeybun.

If you don't understand the language they will be talking at COP17 in Durban (*glossary*)

Thousands are swarming to Durban from across the globe for the 17th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, or COP17, which starts on 28 November and runs until 9 December. These delegates will have plenty to talk about. Here, from UCT's Energy Research Centre blog, we borrow bits and pieces of an unofficial glossary that might come in handy for the uninitiated. (We've even pinched the title.) To see the full glossary, visit www.erc.uct.ac.za/E2C2blog.htm.

CDM – Clean Development Mechanism. A project-based emissions trading system under the Kyoto Protocol that allows industrialised countries to use emission reduction credits from projects in developing countries that both reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote sustainable development.

COP – Conference of the Parties to the Climate Convention. The supreme body of the Convention. Currently it meets once a year to review the Convention's progress. The word 'conference' is not used here in the sense of 'meeting' but rather of 'association', which explains the seemingly redundant expression "fourth session of the Conference of the Parties".

DC – Developing country.

EIT – Economy in transition. EITs typically include the countries of Central and Eastern

Europe (eg Poland), the former Soviet Union (eg Russia), and Central Asian Republics (eg Kazakhstan).

G77 – Group of 77. Founded in 1967 under the auspices of the United Nations Conference for Trade and Development (UNCTAD); seeks to harmonise the negotiating positions of its 133 developing-country members.

GWP – Global Warming Potential. An index that allows for comparison of the various greenhouse gases. It is the radiative forcing that results from the addition of one kilogram of a gas to the atmosphere compared to an equal mass of carbon dioxide. Over 100 years, methane has a GWP of 21 and nitrous oxide of 310.

KP – Kyoto Protocol. An international agreement adopted by all Parties to the Climate Convention in Kyoto, Japan, in December 1997. Not ratified by the US.

PAMs – Policies and measures. The promotion of renewable energy, energy efficiency, forest conservation, or other actions for the reduction or limitation of greenhouse gases or for sustainable development (to be implemented by Annex I Parties under Article 2.1 of the Protocol).

REDD – Reducing emissions from deforestation and degradation in developing countries.

QEERTs – Quantified economy-wide emission reduction targets, for developed countries in the Cancun decision 1/CP.16. ■



Prof Mark New.

UCT joins cast of thousands at COP17

"The 17th Conference of the Parties (COP17) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the 7th Session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties (CMP7) to the Kyoto Protocol, will be held in the sunny city of Durban, South Africa." That, per the COP17 site, sums up what's going to happen in Durban from 28 November to 9 December. More or less. It doesn't perhaps capture the layer upon layer of meetings, talks, negotiations, side events, fringe events and the like that will transform the city over the two weeks. (Some meetings start even

earlier than the 28th.) As usual, UCT will have its own contingent there. Some in official capacities, others to observe and chronicle. UCT will have an exhibition stand of its own as well, showcasing its African Climate and Development Initiative and affiliated units, departments and individuals.

Professor Mark New, UCT's pro vice-chancellor for climate change and director of the university's African Climate and Development Initiative, or ACDI, is clear about his expectations:

"The Kyoto Protocol second commitment period needs to be rescued, as this is the only working ex-

ample of an international emissions agreement, albeit limited to a subset of developed countries. This requires developed countries such as Japan to give ground and agree to a second commitment period, but it would really be 'lubricated' if big emerging-economy emitters such as China and India agree to a reasonable timetable for them becoming part of a formal emissions reduction treaty.

"For Africa, and South Africa, agreement on the Green Climate Fund is critical, as without this, low-carbon development will be very difficult, and Africa could follow the business-as-usual fossil fuel energy pathway." ■

Wind generator blows competition away

SUE SEGAR

The design for a sustainable wind generator using redundant materials has earned Hartmut Jagau, a master's student in electrical engineering at UCT, the 2011 Student Poster Presentation award at the prestigious 2011 Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers' Energy Conversion Congress & Exposition (IEEE ECCE).

Jagau's design reuses the permanent magnets from discarded hard drives to create a sustainable generator. His work was supervised by Dr Azeem Khan and Dr Paul Barendse of the Department of Electrical Engi-



Round and round: Hartmut Jagau with the generator that he designed using magnets from discarded hard drives.

neering.

"I felt honoured," says Jagau, "since the IEEE ECCE conference is one of the best electrical machines conferences in North America. It

was encouraging to bring the prize to South Africa and to see that our universities are indeed world class."

Jagau would like to see the concept evolve into a fully working wind turbine.

"My hope is that it will develop into a fully functional wind energy conversion system which actually changes lives, rather than just proves a concept."

More than 1 100 people attended and over 600 papers were presented at the IEEE ECCE, this year themed *Energy Conversion Innovation for a Clean Energy Future* and held in Phoenix, Arizona. ■

UCT student group takes initiative

The Green Campus Initiative (GCI) has proven itself to be an industrious and committed group of environmentally concerned students; and not just during campus times, mind you. Three GCI members will attend – as official UCT delegates – the 17th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, or COP17, starting in Durban at the end of November. Six more will attend the Conference of the Youth, or COY, that runs the weekend ahead of COP17, and other events during the summit. The students will take part in events, workshops and parades, and use the opportunity to network, all while wearing their distinctive green overalls. "From a GCI perspective," said the Initiative's Kate Pallett, who is part of the team organising the COY event, "we have a lot to learn from other students and similar organisations around the world, and similarly we think that students in similar projects can learn from our experiences and what we have achieved at UCT." ■



The Centre for Conflict Resolution, Cape Town, invites you and members of your organisation to a public dialogue on

PEACE VS JUSTICE? THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT, THE UN, AND SOUTH AFRICA

CHAIR

Ms Yasmin Sooka

Executive Director, Foundation for Human Rights, Johannesburg

SPEAKER

Professor Vincent Nmezielle

Head, Programme in Law, Justice and Development in Africa, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

SPEAKER

Ms Nicole Fritz

Executive Director, Southern Africa Litigation Centre, Johannesburg

Date: Wednesday, 30 November 2011 • Time: 17h30 – 19h00

Venue: Centre for the Book • 62 Queen Victoria Street • Gardens • Cape Town

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All are welcome and entry is free. Kindly RSVP for seating.



UCT toasts its retirees

Around 80 UCT staff members are expected to retire this year. In November, many of them gathered together for perhaps the last time at an official UCT function, as they were fêted at the annual Retirees' Dinner.

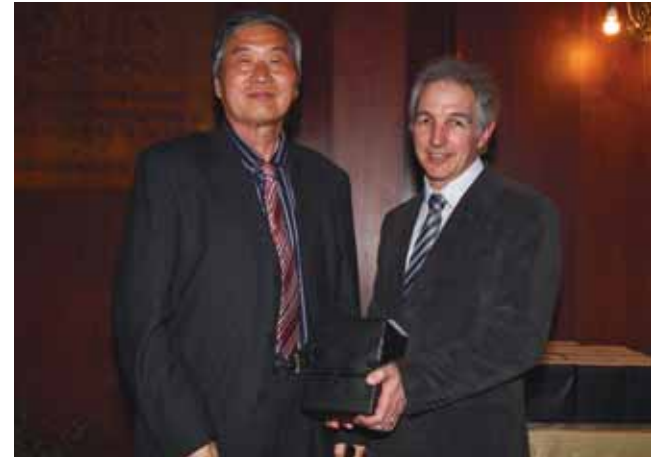
Collectively these staff members have committed over 1 000 years to UCT, observed Mary Simons of the Department of Political Studies in her remarks as she addressed the gathering on behalf of the retirees. (One has been here for only two years, some nearly or over 40 years.)

Much has changed in the world over the past 1 000 years, explained Simons, moving as it did from the Dark Ages to what is now the information age. So, too, UCT has changed over the four decades she has been here; in many ways for the better, in others – consider the ballooning marking demands on academics such as herself, she said – perhaps not so.

Also at the event, the chairperson of the UCT Council, Archbishop Njongonkulu Ndungane, toasted the retirees, while the vice-chancellor, Dr Max Price, thanked them for their years of dedication. ■



Retiree Adelaide Rooks is congratulated by vice-chancellor Dr Max Price. (The full set of photos will be available at http://uct.ac.za/news/multimedia/photo_albums/local/)



Retiree Prof Renkuan Guo with Dr Max Price.

How to qualify for an 'exceed' rating

Monday Paper spoke to DVC Professor Thandabantu Nhlapo about how the new 'exceeds' category of the performance ratings will work

MP: What was the motivation behind the Exceeds ratings?

TN: When the performance bands were collapsed from seven to three, the need was identified to cater for staff whose exceptional performance in any given year went beyond the expectations reflected in the top band.

MP: The common phrase doing the rounds is that staff who wish to earn such ratings should be of the walking-on-water type – is that, more or less, what's expected?

TN: "Walking on water" is a popular phrase at UCT and, to the extent that it describes, in a rather exaggerated metaphor, exceptional achievement in the workplace, it is appropriate. The substantive agreement with the Union in 2010 introduced a shift of the benchmark from the 50th percentile of the national all-jobs market for all staff in payclasses 5-12 to the 60th, which is now the 'A' category, and which has raised the bar in terms of performance expectations. Someone rated A is expected to meet all job requirements and occasionally to exceed them. Our best workers are in the A category. Clearly then, an 'Exceeds' award marks out somebody who has had a truly exceptional and outstanding year. It is understandable that such a performance is sometimes described as walking on water. It should be remembered that the mischief of the old system was that it was always an impossible sell to convince line managers that your best people were in the '4' category. Being symbolically bang in the middle of a

seven-tier structure, '4' was always going to come across as 'average' or 'mediocre', and line managers felt the pressure to give higher and higher ratings for ordinary performance. The current system solves this problem by making it clear that our best performers are to be found in the A category. Anything above that needs to be exceptional.

MP: Let's see if we can put this in relatively concrete terms – let's assume we have three PAs who answer their phones professionally, run their managers' diaries, take minutes from meetings, and generally do a stand-out job on all their tasks. What kind of thing would they have to do to be walking on water?

TN: Good question. Three excellent PAs, all with solid A-ratings as described above. What may distinguish one of them (let us call him or her X) from the others is if one of two things happens: (i) during the performance cycle there was an incident, event or other opportunity to shine which X grabbed with both hands and went on to score the try. An example would be where X's principal gets involved in hosting a big international conference at UCT and, beyond his or her ordinary duties, X is drawn into the process over a period of time and acquits himself or herself excellently, to the benefit of the department or faculty or its reputation; or (ii) in the absence of some defining incident, X puts in an incredible year even beyond his or her own high standards, frequently exceeding most of his

or her objectives or excelling at extra tasks, such as those that might result (for instance) from unfilled vacancies elsewhere in the department. The point that needs to be emphasised is that there should be no expectation that the special circumstances leading to an award in one year will be repeated in future years. Except for the few instances where exceptional talent leads to exceptional performance year on year, the majority of good people at UCT should expect an A-rated career, punctuated by those occasions where their response to truly exceptional circumstances draws applause and appropriate recognition.

MP: What matters most for such Exceeds ratings – how much you do, or how you do it?

TN: It could be both. 'How much' may recognise the volume of what was done over and above ordinary job expectations, whether this was in the form of consistent performance over the year, or a once-off response to exceptional circumstances. 'How' would be judged against the same yardstick.

MP: Among the numbers that come up in the PPS documents are that about 10% of staff would fit the Exceeds 1 bill, while another 5% would meet the criteria for Exceeds 2. Of PASS staff of, say, around 2 600, that's close on 400 people who would receive such ratings. Is the university comfortable with that number – is that a Goldilocks number, ie not too big, not too small but just right?

TN: This is the first time we are using this system and the guidelines were set using the historical data on general distribution curves in respect of performance. This year's process should tell us whether this number was the right one to use.

MP: One of the initiatives of the new PPS to address the concerns about managerial favouritism is that colleagues can nominate a particular staff member – how much does that colleague nomination or motivation count for, because don't managers make the final decisions anyway?

TN: This is a difficult one. While acknowledging the Union's argument to widen the nomination process for 'Exceeds' awards, we are also mindful of the immense practical problems of this approach. My answers to your questions above all indicate that an 'Exceeds' award should be seen as something special, a principle that may not always be adhered to where people are able to nominate colleagues or themselves. The safety valve of letting unsupported nominations go forward to the central consistency check has its own problems: what justification would there be for a remote body sitting in Bremner to overrule structures closer to the nominees and their work? For this year, the nominations not supported by the line managers or by localised consistency checks will be reviewed by the central consistency check. I expect discussion around the wisdom of this approach to continue into 2012.

MP: Apparently the Employees' Union did ask whether the names of the Exceeds staff would be made public, whether in Monday Paper or just in respective departments? (Not the size of the rewards, obviously, just their names.) Wouldn't that take away some of the secrecy that seems to surround PPS ratings, and perhaps stop the rumour mill in its tracks, at least partly? And wouldn't it also, perhaps, point out to colleagues exactly where the bar is set?

TN: This is sometimes a complex issue. A commitment to transparency is always a good thing but sometimes it bumps up against the requirements of confidentiality (you refer to it as 'secrecy'). On balance I think as we try to embed this new system we should err on the side of more, rather than less, transparency.

MP: What, to your mind, would suggest to you that the system is effective, fair and that it works?

TN: We have reached agreement with the Union that we all have to work hard to ensure consistency of application and to monitor and review all stages of the process. To support this, we have also agreed on training and testing of staff applying the system, the production of a resource guide to all line managers, and the strengthening of the appeals process and of reporting on non-compliance by both HRAs and the Union. ■

Partnerships spawned in West Africa



Travels abroad: While in Nigeria, the UCT group paused for a picture with colleagues and friends. In picture (from left) are Dr Aubrey Mainza (UCT); Assoc Prof Harry Garuba (UCT); Mwenya Kabwe (UCT); Dr Jemima Asabea Anderson and Assoc Prof Nana Aba Appiah Amfo of the University of Ibadan; DVC Prof Thandabantu Nhlapo; and an unknown guest of the Ibadan hosts.

UCT's Afropolitan aspirations took a fresh, young, new turn over a recent trip to Ghana and Nigeria.

Deputy vice-chancellor Professor Thandabantu Nhlapo, Associate Professor Harry Garuba of the Centre for African Studies, Mwenya Kabwe of the Department of Drama and Dr Aubrey Mainza of the Department of Chemical Engineering made up the delegation to the Universities of Ghana and Ibadan, respectively. The aim of the trip, explained Nhlapo, was to start up and, in a couple of cases, cement existing collaborations.

The inclusion of relatively younger academic staff – lecturers and senior

lecturers – was deliberate, he added.

"It stems from a wish to begin the implementation of an important component of the Afropolitan vision – namely, supporting new collaborative relationships across the continent and deepening existing ones, while assisting younger scholars to acquire the capital that comes with academic networking across borders."

The travellers had a packed itinerary. Garuba discussed shared curricula offerings, and joint conferences and other meetings. (His conference on *Thinking Africa and the African Diaspora Differently*, planned for December,

piqued interest.) Kabwe conferred on similar collaborations with counterparts from the School of Performing Arts at the University of Ghana to build on an already existing relationship. Mainza talked geological data and minerals processing models with delegates from the Ghana and Ibadan universities, a collaboration that could soon include even more institutions and disciplines. And Nhlapo explored opportunities for joint research on malaria and other diseases of poverty.

The trip has spurred countless new partnerships and networks, reports Nhlapo. ■

Full steam ahead for Obz Square

Boasting over 880 rooms, UCT's new Obz Square residence on Main Road in Observatory is a sizeable chunk of building, so understandably the neighbours have some questions and concerns.

On 21 November, the university addressed some of those questions at a Community Information Day at the residence, where Observatory residents were shown around the building and given an opportunity to raise their concerns. (The week before, the university had also unveiled the residence – completed a full month ahead of schedule – to the media.)

Vice-chancellor Dr Max Price and his team of senior managers explained the need for building the residence – demand from students for on- or near-campus accommodation has swelled – and then detailed some of the building's state-of-the-art features (see sidebar).

Among the community's concerns were the availability of parking space for visitors (no parking is allowed outside the residence), policies to address doubling-up or squatting (ie students allowing others to live in their rooms), and measures for dealing with misbehaving students, like those returning to the residence late at night. The residence's business space for retailers, the need for a gym where students can "vent their frustrations", the stops for the Jammie Shuttle, and how students would maintain the culture of the suburb also came up. (These issues are being looked into, promised Grant Willis, director of Student Housing & Residence Life, and John Critien, executive director of UCT Properties and Services.)

Deputy vice-chancellor Professor Crain Soudien explained that UCT intends to create a "living learning environment" in Obz Square, and called on Observatory residents both to hold the university accountable for this, and to be partners in the project.

"We would like to be good neighbours," he noted. ■



THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT OBZ SQUARE

- 15.5km of piping, 1 200 tons of steel, 13 000m³ of concrete, 58 000m² of paint and 1.78 million man-hours went into the construction of Obz Square;
- The building took four years from conception to completion;
- The residence has a social area with soft seating and three pool tables;
- The first room was completed in January 2011;
- The last room was completed on 17 October 2011;
- The final handover to UCT took place on 15 November;
- The residence came in on budget at R415 million;
- The management structure will include two wardens, two assistant wardens, a resident manager, three facilities officers, a maintenance co-ordinator and two artisans;
- The building will feature 24-hour, on-site security, 58 security cameras and seven dedicated campus protection officers;
- Further security monitoring in the area will be the joint responsibility of the Observatory Community Improvement District and the Groote Schuur Community Improvement District;
- Students can use the laundry – 30 large-load washing machines and 30 tumble driers – free of charge; (They'll have to provide their own washing powder, of course.)
- The residence has all of 92 kitchens, each equipped with a fridge, freezer, stove and microwave oven;
- There are two well-equipped study rooms that can also be used for meetings;
- There's a state-of-the-art computer lab on the ground floor;
- All of the 880 single bedrooms have internet connections;
- Each student will have a single room with en-suite bathroom;
- The bathrooms were built as individual pods. After the option to have them produced in Johannesburg proved a logistical headache, over two years UCT invested R32 million in a dying company in the economically hard-hit Atlantis community. Just over 100 artisans from the community were employed to build the pods.
- The building has been designed to allow in as much natural light as possible;
- Rooms have motion-controlled lighting monitors to save energy;
- The water-heating system uses up to 70% less energy than traditional systems;
- Acoustical treatment was applied to the windows on the Main Road side of the building, so no traffic sounds to interfere with studies or sleep. ■



New building, new era for economics school



Open sesame: The vice-chancellor, Dr Max Price, and Prof Don Ross cut the ribbon on the new School of Economics building.

YUSUF OMAR

Dozens of top business executives and prominent academics were present on 9 November at the official opening of the new School of Economics building on UCT's Middle Campus.

Of course, the building has been in operation since earlier this year.

Dean of Commerce Professor Don Ross said that the new building would allow the school to be re-united with its many research units, which were previously scattered around the university's campuses.

Ross acknowledged that few academic departments at UCT enjoy a dedicated building. But, he said, the new building was an important milestone for both the School of Economics and South Africa as a whole.

Identifying UCT (and the Faculty of Commerce, in particular) as a

"crucial contributor to the dynamism and competitiveness of the economy", Ross expressed gratitude to the many donors whose philanthropy had underpinned the building of the new school.

"Generating new knowledge is the theme of the fundraising programme that's also being launched tonight," said Ross.

Unashamedly pitching the school to potential sponsors, Ross encouraged further donations, saying that running a world-class university was expensive but necessary.

Guests at the event also witnessed the unveiling of the Silver Tree donor recognition wall, which bears the names of all major benefactors to the school in 2011.

Keynote speaker Neville Isdell, a UCT alumnus and former CEO of Coca-Cola, said the business world faced an impending crisis. Support for the neo-liberal economic system was

dropping globally, he said, so much so that the very proposition of the market system was under threat.

"Politicians can grab onto that and use that to undermine what has been the greatest driver in poverty alleviation," he says.

Despite popular reservations about the market system, the fact remained that governments are unable to perform the "policeman" role they are meant to play in economies, he argued.

Isdell's proposed solution – what he calls 'connected capitalism' – pools power bases from business, civil society and government to deliberate on solutions to problems facing economies. Collaboration is the key to sustainable growth, he said.

He hopes, he added, that the new home for the economics school will give rise to a generation of economic leaders who have the power to be collaborative. ■

Improved teaching key to improved throughputs of students

UCT's reputation may be built on its research muscle, but those attending the Conference on Teaching and Learning @ UCT on 11 November were making a strong case for beefing up the university's teaching credentials as well.

And they pitched a convincing argument at the event – the university's first teaching and learning conference – hosted by the Centre for Higher Education Development (CHED) and the Institutional Planning Department. Over the day, delegates presented the work that they were doing to boost the effectiveness of teaching, speaking on the use of video-taping to teach communication, teaching and learning in large classes, facilitating small-group learning and multiple-choice testing in maths, among other topics.

As vice-chancellor Dr Max Price emphasised in his speech, improved teaching may be the key to turning around the poor throughput rates of some programmes – such as the Bachelor of Science degree, which currently manages a cohort completion rate of under 50%.

"We have a problem," Price said.

But already the university is beginning to put its money and resources where its ambitions are, he reported. This includes strengthening

the emphasis on teaching in academics' performance reviews, and the appointment of teaching-only academics to permanent posts – with promotion opportunities.

There's also a change in climate and a greater appreciation of teaching around campus, remarked Associate Professor Nan Yeld, dean of CHED and, for now, acting deputy vice-chancellor. For example, faculties are beginning to accept that strong faculty-specific structures are essential to bolster teaching and learning, she said. In addition, many are warming to the argument that perhaps the standard three-year degree is no longer a fit with the needs of the country and its less-prepared students.

"Faculties are realising that, given our schooling system, you can't actually produce a quality outcome without addressing some fundamental learning needs, and that you really can't do that in the current envelope of a three-year degree," she said.

Teaching and learning could also play a part in UCT's size and shape aspirations. Price and Yeld outlined how the university would be able to increase its graduate output and grow its undergraduate student numbers without simply hiking its first-year intake.



The road ahead: There's plenty of work to be done to improve throughput rates, said VC Dr Max Price.

Rather, they explained, UCT could increase the number graduating by up to 20% by improving its throughput rates, ie by keeping more students in the system. A steady increase in postgraduates was also envisaged.

Professor Ian Scott, director of the

Academic Development Programme in CHED, also had a word of caution for those who argue that throughput rates can be improved by simply pushing up admissions criteria. UCT is working with the cream of the country's school leavers, both black and white, he pointed out.

"To me, for us to think that we can't deal with the top two percentiles of our majority population group is outrageous. So let us not think that the variable that will solve our problem is the selection criteria. The variable has to be the way we deal with the students and their potential." ■



Caring hands: Madri Engelbrecht has started a programme to help people with disabilities find employment.

Work programme supports those with disabilities

"Rewarding, inspiring, energising."

These are the three words that Madri Engelbrecht, a clinical educator in the occupational therapy division of the Department of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, uses to describe the work she does running a supported employment programme from the Vanguard Community Health Centre.

Supported employment is an approach that assists unemployed people with disabilities to enter or return to the open labour market. The

supported employment programme, which Engelbrecht kicked off last year, serves work seekers with disabilities living in the Bonteheuwel and Langa communities.

"The difficult circumstances that exist in these communities mean that many people are seeking work opportunities. People with disabilities face even bigger difficulties in obtaining employment, even though they are able and motivated to work," Engelbrecht says.

The programme, she explains, came about after a needs assessment

her team did in the Bonteheuwel/Langa area.

"Because of the of high unemployment rate, specifically among people with disabilities – most of whom said they really wanted to work – supported employment seemed like an appropriate strategy at community level. We wanted to get people back into work quickly."

Plans for the programme include making it sustainable, creating a post for a dedicated occupational therapist, and possibly registering the programme as an NGO. ■

HUMA names first four doctoral researchers

In a milestone step, UCT's Institute for Humanities in Africa (HUMA) has recruited its first doctoral researchers.

Justin Brown, Bianca Camminga, Sarai Chisala and Safiyya Goga have now joined HUMA, which was launched last year with the aim of "fostering interdisciplinary academic research, promoting the next generation of scholars and driving critical public debate".

In his research, Justin Brown, a Capetonian who studied literature, history and linguistics at UCT and holds a postgraduate certificate in education, will explore mother tongue/native language issues in South Africa, and the various complexities attached to these issues. His research forms part of HUMA's theme On Being Human, which explores how language and communication are

fundamental aspects of what it means to be human.

Camminga completed her undergraduate and honours degrees at Rhodes University, before undertaking a master's at the Centre for Interdisciplinary Gender Studies (CIGS), at the University of Leeds, on a Chevening Scholarship. Her PhD research will focus on how transgender identity functions in South Africa, and how people from the continent access the country in order to find a perceived safety in their identity within its borders.

Chisala is a Malawian lawyer who holds a master's degree in human rights and democratisation from the Centre for Human Rights, and a graduate certificate in women's and gender studies from the University of Memphis. Having worked as a researcher, concentrating on sexual



Into the fold: (From left) Sarai Chisala, Safiyya Goga, Bianca Camminga and Justin Brown are HUMA's first doctoral researchers.

offences and HIV/AIDS and the challenges they pose for magistrates, her research fascination is the intersection between HIV/AIDS and the law, and her current research focuses on the re-

cent attempt to legislate the pandemic in Malawi.

Goga, from Durban, completed her master's in the political and international studies department at

Rhodes University. Her doctoral research will centre around Muslim subjectivities in South Africa, with a focus on wealth accumulation and the ways in which the display of wealth and meanings around wealth relate to religiosity and moral goodness. Her research falls into HUMA's broader theme of Circuits of Consumption.

Professor Deborah Posel, HUMA's founding director, has welcomed the researchers into the institute's fold.

"Our doctoral programme occupies a central place at HUMA – it's at the heart of our efforts to contribute to the next academic generation," she says. "I am thrilled to be working with four talented, lively and intellectually curious doc fellows who have also committed themselves to playing an active part in shaping HUMA's future." ■

EVENTS

UCT Soft Funded Academic and Research Staff (SFARS) Information Meeting Date: Monday, 28 November 2011. Time: 12h30 - 14h00. Venue: The Gallery, Centre for African Studies (Upper Campus).

A Colloquium on Eco/Green Burials is to be held on 3 December from 9.30 - 4.30 at Kagyu Centre, 6 Morgenrood Road, Kenilworth. Speakers include Environmentalists, City of Cape Town officials, and representatives from a broad spectrum of religious traditions.

VACANT POSTS

EXECUTIVE AND ACADEMIC POSTS:

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

Senior Lecturer/Lecturer: Clinical Epidemiology, School of Public Health & Family Medicine, Faculty of Health Sciences, Closing date: 5 December 2011

Lecturers (x2), Department of Health & Rehabilitation Sciences, Faculty of Health Sciences, Closing date: 13 January 2011

RESEARCH, PROFESSIONAL, ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPPORT POSTS (PASS)

Thembakazi Trust Senior Research Officer, Department of Human Biology, Faculty of Health Sciences, Closing date: 30 November 2011

Co-ordinator: Societies & Dayhouse, Department of Student Affairs, Closing date: 30 November 2011

Technical Assistant: Painting, Michaelis School of Fine Art, Faculty of Humanities, Closing date: 1 December 2011

Part-time Administrative Assistant, Department of Psychiatry & Mental Health, Faculty of Health Sciences, Closing date: 2 December 2011

Research Officer: Chronic Disease, Department of Medicine, Faculty of Health Sciences, Closing date: 15 December 2011

POSTS FOR UCT STAFF ONLY:

Bookkeeper/Administrative Assistant, Finance Department, Closing date: 28 November 2011

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Student awash with awards for bath-substituting lotion

A novel lotion, DryBath, has won its inventor (and UCT student) Ludwick Marishane top honours in the Global Student Entrepreneurship Award, contested by students from more than 42 countries.

Entrepreneurship comes naturally to Marishane. His long list of achievements on the business front, achieved in a short space of time, speaks for itself.

In fact, the Limpopo-born, third-year commerce student came to UCT through an Allan Gray Orbis Scholarship after his business acumen was identified while still at high school. It was a sign of things to come.

Just recently, Marishane shared third place in the South African Breweries Foundation's inaugural Innovation Awards, pocketing a whopping R150 000 in prize money.

This after he scooped no fewer than six local and international accolades, thanks to his lotion, DryBath, described as a "bath-substituting product", invented and marketed by his company, Headboy Industries. DryBath is said to kill germs, moisturise the skin, and leave a sweet scent after it has been applied.

DryBath won Marishane the Audience's Choice award and the Most Promising Young Entrepreneur Award in the Singapore Management University's Lee Kuan Yew Global Busi-

ness Plan Competition in August; he was chosen as one of the 12 Brightest Young Minds in Google's Zeitgeist Young Minds Competition in May; he was named a runner-up in the start-up category of the Cape Town Entrepreneurship Competition in March; and he finished third in the UCT leg of the National Innovation Competition.

He has also been selected to represent South Africa at the Global Student Entrepreneurship Award event, for two consecutive years. This month, on his second try, he took top honours at the competition. In an event that began with nearly 2 000 students from 42 countries, Marishane will share in the half million-dollar prize pool of cash and in-kind business services, including a year of mentorship.

These triumphs fit in well with Marishane's goals. But it's been a long haul for him and DryBath.

After initial approval for DryBath, Marishane sought funding from 80 local and international investors – all in vain.

"They would tell me I was too young, or the idea wouldn't work, or the product would be too expensive for poor people," he explains.

That did not deter him, though, and he decided to enter a whole bunch of competitions to see if he could fund the business with prize money.



Cleaning up: Student entrepreneur Ludwick Marishane has never given up on the plan to get his cleaning lotion onto the market. His DryBath product has now scooped a global award, one of many accolades.

But more than just winning him cash, the competitions have helped Marishane expand his networks, and that is beginning to pay off.

He reports that the Accor Hotel Group has agreed to pilot DryBath

at their hotels in December, to see how consumers respond. That may well land him his first big client.

And if everything goes according to plan, DryBath could go on public sale next year.

His tips for fellow students with a head for business? Read, research, network – and accept failure.

"As long as you're failing, it means you're trying." ■

Student ambassadors gear up to peddle Google on campus

YUSUF OMAR

It's more than a website. Its name has become a verb. For global internet users, search engine Google has become an institution – and an invaluable research tool for students.

As part of its expansion plans, the company has steadily launched its Google Student Ambassador programme around the world. Tertiary students selected for the programme, says Google, would have an opportunity to act as liaison between the university and Google.

UCT currently boasts five of the 17 student ambassadors at South African universities.

They are finance and accounting students Linda Mahloko and Ludwick Marishane, electrical engineering



Reaching out: (From left) Linda Mahloko, Joyce Mwangama, Justin Alvey and Kirsten Eddy are four of UCT's five Google Student Ambassadors. (Absent – Ludwick Marishane.)

students Justin Alvey and Joyce Mwangama and marketing student Kirsten Eddy.

Tasked with growing the profile of Google on campus and alerting students and staff to new developments in the

Silicon Valley company, the ambassadors have been hard at work.

They've guest-lectured a fourth-year business strategy class on how to use Google sites and other Google applications. The ambassadors also

held an online information session on 17 November for students interested in learning more about opportunities available from Google.

But responses from students and staff have been less enthusiastic than they had hoped.

"Since this is the first year the programme has been run, we have not seen a fast reaction to the ambassadorship programme from the other students or staff," says Mwangama. "At the beginning of next year we will run a Google Awareness campaign during 'O' week – then we will get to see how the university feels about the ambassador programme on a broader scale."

Besides gaining valuable experience in working as a team, ambassadors are also able (often exclusively) to apply for Google scholarships and

internships.

The ambassadors say that raising awareness of Google's range of products can do much to assist students in their daily ventures.

Does being an ambassador increase one's chances of long-term employment in Silicon Valley?

"They've told us that it gives us a foot in the door," confirms Eddy.

With Google being ranked first in Fortune magazine's top 100 firms to work for in 2007 and 2008, this can only be a good thing.

While the students do not receive a stipend, Eddy says they are well looked after. The UCT ambassadors have each received a top-of-the-range Android phone, and were also invited to the annual Google South Africa conference, held in Johannesburg recently. ■

Medal for retiree runner Rosalie

Some retirees never lose their UCT ties. Or, in the case of Rosalie Richfield, their UCT running vests. And a good thing, too. It was while donning UCT colours that Richfield, of the Graduate School of Humanities until her retirement earlier this year, took first place in the 60-64 age category at the Western Province Cross Country Championships. That led to a spot in the Western Province side that travelled to the South African Cross Country Championships in Bloemfontein in September, where she ran in the master's race, which also featured one Zola Budd. This time, Richfield won silver in the 60-64 category. "I told my colleagues, very tongue in cheek, mind you, that I was retiring in order to have more time to run," jokes Richfield. "And see, it paid off." ■



Williamses squash their rivals

It's well known in sporting circles that UCT staffers are enthusiastic squash players. But apparently those players surnamed Williams who are also affiliated to UCT Libraries rule the roost. Take the recent staff squash tournament hosted by Karl Buckton of Sport and Recreation. At the end of the three-week competition, it was Johnathan and Russel Williams – no relation, as far as we could determine, but both of the Chancellor Oppenheimer Library – who walked off with the silverware. Johnathan took on Sean Sivertsen of Academic Administration in the gold section final, winning 2-0. In the bronze section, Russel got the better – by 2-0 as well – of Carl Herman, director of the Admissions Office and a late replacement for Student System and Support's Jeffrey Thurtell, who had to pull out of the competition. In picture (from left), Johnathan Williams, Buckton and Russel Williams celebrate the moment. ■

