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NRF singles out UCT for top honours

The National Research Foundation (NRF) has recognised the superlative work of three researchers at the University of Cape Town, by naming them for Special Category Awards at a ceremony in Cape Town on Thursday, 13 September 2012.

Professor Tim Noakes received the NRF lifetime achievement award for his pioneering work in sports science research.

Professor Anusuya Chinsamy-Turan received the Transformation of the Science Cohort Award for her achievements as a palaeobiologist.

Professor Kelly Chibale was named the NRF's Champion of Research and Capacity Development at Higher Education Institutions in South Africa. Professor Chibale made headlines around the world last month with the announcement that the Drug Discovery & Development Centre (H3-D) he founded at UCT had identified a chemical compound that has the potential to provide a single-dose cure for malaria.

Vice-Chancellor Dr Max Price said: "These awards celebrate three remarkable academics whose work has helped position UCT as an African hub of intellectual activity and research: exploring the continent's prehistory, the science behind excellence in sports and the potential of different chemical compounds to cure Africa's diseases. They are part of UCT's platform for nurturing the next generation of academics for many other universities in the country and the continent."

The NRF has also recognised the future strength of UCT through its ratings this year. Three out of the four new P-ratings for 2012 are for researchers from UCT: archaeologists Dr David Braun and Dr Shadreck Chirikure, and Dr Amanda Weltman of the Mathematics Department. P-rating is given to young researchers, usually younger than 35 years, who have the potential to become leaders in their field.

The NRF has awarded two new A-ratings at UCT: microbiology Professor Ed Rybicki and paediatric specialist Professor Heather Zar, the head of the Department of Paediatrics and Child Health at Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital. In addition, the foundation has reconfirmed the A-ratings of UCT mathematics Professor Hans-Pieter Kunzi and environmental engineering Professor George Ekama. An A-rating is given to researchers who are unequivocally recognised by their peers as leading international scholars in their field for the high quality and impact of their recent research.

UCT currently has 380 NRF-rated researchers, including 30 A-ratings and five P-ratings.

ENDS

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