

Winner of the 2008 Institute for Marketing, Advancement & Communication in Education (MACE) Excellence Award for Best Internal Publication

New HIV and TB research facility

The Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) in the United States has partnered with UKZN to build a R308 million state-of-the-art international research facility at the Nelson R Mandela School of Medicine.

The KwaZulu-Natal Research Institute for Tuberculosis and HIV (K-RITH) will engage in major scientific research towards fighting the deadly tuberculosis (TB) and HIV co-epidemic. The Institute will also launch a substantial training programme.

The six-story facility will include two floors of high-level biosafety laboratories equipped for TB research. The HHMI will provide R218 million towards the construction of the new building with UKZN and LIFE Lab also making a substantial commitment.

UKZN Vice-Chancellor, Professor Malegapuru Makgoba, and the Dean of the Medical School Professor Willem Sturm joined the President of the HHMI, Dr Thomas R Cech and the South African Ambassador to the US His Excellency Mr Welile Nhlapo in Washington DC for the official announcement of the partnership on 19 March. The Washington ceremony was streamed live to the University community. A parallel ceremony was held at the Medical School, where Dr Peter Bruns, Deputy President for Grants and Special Programs represented the HHMI.

Speaking in Washington, Professor Makgoba said: "The partnership signifies the commitment and dedication of the Trustees to embark on a scientific journey that will make a difference in the lives of infected people in South Africa and on the African continent. There is no better place to undertake HIV and TB research than in South Africa where 5.4 million people are infected with HIV. The country



(l-r) Vice-Chancellor Professor Malegapuru Makgoba; the South African Ambassador to the US His Excellency Mr Welile Nhlapo; and the President of the HHMI, Dr Thomas R Cech in Washington DC at the official announcement of K-RITH.



(l-r) Mr Jeremy Hathorn, Architect; Dr Peter Bruns, Vice President: Grants and Special Programs, HHMI; UKZN Chair of Council, Mr Mac Mia and Professor Dasarath Chetty, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Corporate Relations at the official K-RITH announcement in Durban.

has the 4th highest number of cases of TB in the world."

Dr Cech noted that "The initiative brings a new dimension to the treatment of HIV and TB ... K-RITH brings together researchers to focus on HIV and TB research

and that will bring significant discoveries that will alleviate the human suffering caused by these diseases."

The Minister of Education, Mrs Naledi Pandor conveyed her congratulations to UKZN for estab-

lishing this important strategic partnership.

In his address at the Medical School, UKZN Chair of Council Mr Mac Mia lauded this "ambitious and bold initiative to address the devastation and despair caused by the HIV and TB epidemic. It is a message of hope as our scientists in the US and SA have begun challenging the frontiers of medical science in the quest to find health solutions. It is also a message of empowerment as we create the infrastructure that will provide fertile training for young and bright scientists on the African continent," he said.

Mr Mia acknowledged the significant role played by Professors Sturm and Abdool Karim and Professor Malegapuru Makgoba for his commitment to the success and governance of the project. "The show of faith in the University

by HHMI reflects a commonality of purpose and vision of these two institutions which is driven by a deep social conscience to make a difference to the health status of especially the poor and voiceless in our society," he added.

Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Corporate Relations Professor Dasarath Chetty noted that the partnership with HHMI epitomises the concept of African Scholarship because it's about undertaking research that is responsive to social needs, is directly in line with the health security agenda and yields maximum benefits for people.

Two leading HHMI investigators with longstanding expertise in TB and HIV research will participate actively in the programme. They are Dr William R Jacobs, Jr., of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine and Dr Bruce D Walker of the Massachusetts General Hospital, who directs the HIV Pathogenesis Program in Durban, a joint initiative of Harvard University and UKZN. Dr Walker also directs the newly formed Ragon Institute, which will focus on the development of a vaccine against HIV. UKZN scientists helping to direct and plan K-RITH are Professor Sturm, a noted TB researcher who serves as K-RITH's Interim Director and Professor Salim S Abdool Karim, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) and Director of the Centre for the AIDS Programme of Research in South Africa (CAPRISA).

K-RITH builds on a strong foundation of cross-Atlantic collaborations that have linked scientists in KwaZulu-Natal with their colleagues around the world in clinical research in the province. These initiatives – supported by the government, universities in South Africa, the US and United Kingdom – have led to significant scientific and clinical discoveries that have advanced the treatment of HIV and TB.

- Thembeke Dlungwane

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Law Professions' Day

Twenty five leading law firms participated in this year's Law Professions' Day. The two-day event organised by the Faculty of Law was held on the Pietermaritzburg and Howard College campuses from 25-26 February.

This initiative exposes students to a range of leading law firms and other legal fraternities. It also serves to improve links between the academics in the Law Faculty and members of the profession. Students also get the opportunity to submit their CVs to the law firms.

Acting Dean of the Faculty of Law Professor Managay Reddi said that "(Law Professions' Day) allows our students, who may otherwise not have the opportunity, to interrogate the profession prior to

deciding on the route to follow upon completion of their studies."

Co-ordinator of the event Mrs Royne Louw said that Law Professions' Day has gained momentum in the three years that it has been organised.

Director of Venn Nemeth & Hart Attorneys, Mrs Hannah Szudrawski said that visiting the University provides a broader perspective on students' concerns. The firm offers vacation employment and opportunities for students to serve their articles.

Second-year Law students, Miss Mpumelelo Gwala and Miss Phumzile Mdluli said that the event encourages them to do well in their academic endeavours. "Interacting with people from the profession has been an eye opening experience. We now have a better perspective on the law profession ... it's not limited to the court room but can ... suit any field."

- Thembeke Dlungwane



Students had an opportunity to ask questions and get on the spot feedback at Law Professions' Day.

Picture: Thembeke Dlungwane

APSTAR Graduation

THIRTEEN civil servants graduated on 7 March after participating in the APSTAR (Applied Population Studies Training and Research) Programme.

APSTAR is a joint initiative of UKZN's School of Development Studies, the National Department of Social Development and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Head of the College of Humanities, Professor Fikile Mazibuko commended lecturers within the School of Development Studies for faci-

litating the courses and congratulating the civil servants for completing the programme. "The ceremony is a celebration and awarding of qualifications that are critical for national and regional development; skills to provide nations with accurate quantitative and qualitative estimates; and scenarios for planning, investing and utilising resources for social security, education, economic development and nurturing democracy," she said.

Chief Director: Population and Development in the Department of Social Development Mr Jacques

van Zuydam, said that the APSTAR graduates have now obtained further knowledge to address four of the Department's priority objectives. These are gender equality and equity, increasing the economic activity of the youth through capacity building, addressing HIV and AIDS and climate change.

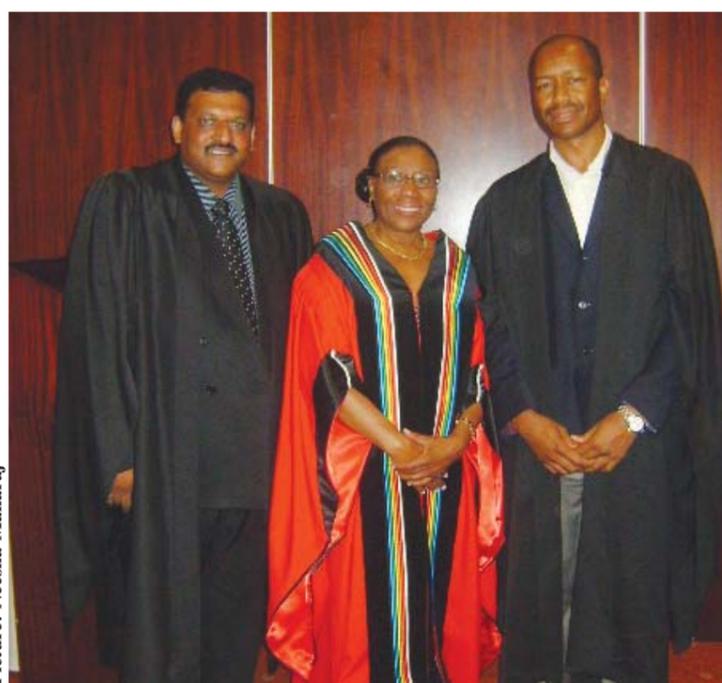
"As APSTAR graduates you need to determine where you fit in dealing with such challenges. You have obtained high quality knowledge after interacting with some of the best population scientists. You are a part of a cohort of people with the necessary skills to contribute to understanding the country's population challenges," he said.

Prizes were awarded to the top three graduates, Mr Jacob Twala, Mr Ravi Govender and Mr Hlengani Bhebhe.

An economic analyst for the Eastern Cape Provincial Treasury, Mr Twala said his participation in the APSTAR programme provided an understanding of the integration of population studies in economics.

Mr Govender said the 20-day programme, while challenging, had 'armed' him with the knowledge to work towards human development and transfer the skills he acquired to fellow colleagues.

- Neesha Maharaj



Professor Fikile Mazibuko, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Head of the College of Humanities (middle) with APSTAR graduates, Mr Ravi Govender (left) and Mr Jacob Twala.

Picture: Neesha Maharaj

DISA celebrates 10th anniversary



DISA's dedicated team: Mr Simon Shezi, Mrs Nasreen Khan, Mr Buller Sello, Mr Jai Naidoo, Mrs Bongzi Mngadi, Mrs Desre Stead, Mrs Leanne Munsami and Mrs Patricia Liebetrau (seated).

Picture: Sabelo Nyuswa

DIGITAL Innovation South Africa (DISA) at the Howard College Main Library is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year.

DISA specialises in using digital technology to facilitate the development of new knowledge.

With access to an exciting collection of South African historical materials the project is dedicated to developing knowledge and expertise in digital imaging technology in libraries, archives and museums.

DISA's vision includes making use of digital technologies to promote the efficient and economical delivery of information resources within selected subject areas to students, scholars, researchers and the wider community, locally and internationally. It also aims to play a pivotal role in the development of a digital learning environment that will meet the needs of an increasingly mature student profile, assist in distance education, and promote lifelong learning.

"Generally we assist in making sure that physical resources are available online. Today we are living in a world of technology so it is important to make sure that we remain relevant to the needs of students and researchers ... academic research is increasingly being facilitated online," said Mrs Patricia Liebetrau, DISA Project Manager.

One of DISA's current projects is developing an accessible repository of materials of all kinds related to the struggle for freedom in Southern Africa.

"The reason why we are developing this kind of a resource is to be able to provide a ... picture of the political and social turbulence of the apartheid period and the struggle for democracy and justice. Institutions, scholars and archivists around the country are contributing to its development on an ongoing basis through the selection, provision and processing of items that will add to the intellectual content of the DISA archive," said Mrs Liebetrau.

DISA also plays a leading role in ensuring that internationally acceptable standards are used for scanning, metadata, indexing and retrieval, and in skills development through the ongoing training of librarians and archivists. Its involvement with partner institutions enables the transfer of digital imaging skills to several remote capture sites in South Africa. DISA has also drawn up a comprehensive set of guidelines and standards that assist in the process of building an online resource and which also serve as a complementary medium of instruction. These are updated on an ongoing basis.

DISA is working towards a measure of sustainability by providing technological expertise, training and hosting of content for several projects in South Africa and the wider region.

- Sabelo Nyuswa

SIFE protégé strikes gold

UKZN's Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) protégé Ms Philisiwe Mthethwa has achieved success beyond her wildest dreams. From humble beginnings in 2006, the sole proprietor of construction company Abangani Projects achieved a R6 million turnover in 2008. This year, she won a R12 million contract to lay water pipes in KwaMashu north of Durban over the next three years.

Reaching where she is today has been an uphill battle for Ms Mthethwa. After setting up business with a friend, it soon became apparent that the partnership was not going to work. Ms Mthethwa decided to go solo, but still faced numerous challenges.

SIFE members were visiting Kwa-Mashu in 2006 when they heard about Abangani. They offered to help Ms Mthethwa identify business problems, and find solutions to these. The students organised training in computer literacy, basic accounting and payroll management skills. Expert advice and mentorship were also made available to Ms Mthethwa through SIFE's business partner, Africa Vukani.

"SIFE has done a lot for me ... without them I don't think I would



Ms Philisiwe Mthethwa with workers and UKZN SIFE members at one of her business sites.

be where I am today ... Our relationship is getting stronger each and every day and they continue to give me support whenever I need them," said Ms Mthethwa.

Their work with Ms Mthethwa has won a number of accolades for the students. In 2008 the Abangani project contributed towards SIFE UKZN being a semi-finalist at the SIFE World Cup.

Ms Mthethwa is not alone in benefiting from Abangani's success. She is committed to employing workers from needy families and works closely with local councillors to ensure that workers from the area where a job is being carried out are given employment.

Foreman Mr Edward Sehlalo praises her caring attitude: "She is

very understanding, doesn't undermine us and treat us with respect. She is also very supportive of our problems ... we are free to talk to her about anything. Her business is very professional; unlike other businesses where you are paid cash, here we get paid through the bank and on time," he said.

Ms Mthethwa is also not fazed by being a women working on con-

struction in a township: "I grew up here so why should I be fearful? I know some won't be comfortable because of the issues of crime and societal ills but for me it's okay. I understand my community, they understand me as well. This project is not only benefiting me but the families are also benefiting which is very important," she says.

In February she was visited by former Mozambiquan president Joaquim Chisano in his capacity as a board member of the Harmony Gold Foundation.

"To be visited by the former head of state meant a lot. He gave me encouragement and tips to grow my business. It was really a fascinating experience for me to see him here," she says.

Among her ambitions is to grow her business and to be a specialist in pipe water drainage.

"I am passionate about water, naturally. It will be a good feeling if I can become a specialist in anything that deals with water," she says.

- Sabelo Nyuswa

Picture: Sabelo Nyuswa

Time of the Writer

THE 12th Time of the Writer Festival organised by UKZN's Centre for Creative Arts (CCA) was voted a resounding success.

The six-day programme from 9-14 March provided a platform for new and established writers, intellectual thinkers, and South Africa's great cartoonists to interact, launch their books, visit schools, conduct workshops and seminars, and engage in critical debate.

The audience enjoyed a feast of words from 20 African writers. Several South African writers have produced new books that focus on crime. Margie Orford's best seller *Like Clockwork*, Angela Makholwa's first novel *Red Ink*, and Deon Meyer's *Devil's Peak* were favourites with the audience.

Participating writers included Sade Adeniran (Nigeria) Mia Couto (Mozambique), Fatou Diome (Senegal) Moses Isegawa (Uganda) Billy Kahora (Kenya) Dinaw Mengestu (Ethiopia) and Valerie Tagwira (Zimbabwe).

The highlight of the festival was the announcement that South African writer, Mandla Langa had been awarded the Commonwealth Writers' Prize for Best Book, Africa Region, for his fifth book, *The Lost Colours of the Chameleon*.

The Festival has a strong outreach programme. This year, writers interacted with around 4 000 learners from 30 schools. The school visits are an opportunity to install a strong literary culture in schools.

Learners showcased their writing skills through a short story competition. This year's winners were Slindile Dlamini from Dassenhoek High for *Isihe*, Thomas Leyland Torr from Maritzburg College for *In the Zone*, Sandile Ndlela from Sibonokuhle High School for *In the Shadow of Darkness* and Sandra Parmee from Westville Girls High School for *Holding on, letting go*. The four learners read their pieces at the Elizabeth Sneddon Theatre during the Festival.



Gcina Mhlophe and Margie Orford with learners who attended the Funda: Children's Literature Special at the Elizabeth Sneddon Theatre.

The last session, facilitated by Andy Mason featured a straight-talking debate between cartoonist Zapiro and respected journalist Max du Preez. The session was entitled 'I write and draw what I

like' inspired by Steve Biko's *I Write What I Like*.

Mr du Preez said that "... the media keep debates flowing and that is our job as writers." He expressed

concern that freedom of speech is under threat, noting "Free speech is being redefined by those who do not want to be criticised."

- Thembeke Dlungwane

Picture: Thembeke Dlungwane

Agreement with Roosevelt University

UKZN signed a Student Exchange Agreement with Roosevelt University (RU) Chicago, Illinois, USA on 16 March.

The programme provides for one undergraduate student per semester to complete a recognised term of academic study at the partner institution over the next five years and will serve to complement existing linkages with RU.

Currently the exchange programme is open to all disciplines that are available at both institutions, except the Faculty of Health Sciences at UKZN and the Chicago College of Performance Arts at RU. The participants will receive full credits and transcripts upon completion of their semester with the respective institution.

Roosevelt University was represented by its President, Dr Charles Middleton who signed the Student Exchange Agreement on behalf of the Institution. Dr Middleton's itinerary also included interacting with key academics and the Deans from the College of Humanities,



Professor Fikile Mazibuko, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Head of the College of Humanities; Dr Heather Dalmage, Fulbright Scholar at UKZN; Pro-Vice-Chancellor Professor Dasarath Chetty; and Dr Charles Middleton, President of Roosevelt University.

Development & Social Sciences on the Howard College campus.

"Student exchange is an education advantage as we work together to develop students and academic capacity. Faculties and administrators will develop intellectual partnerships and collaborate on impactful research which will strengthen the quality of education

for both institutions," said Dr Middleton.

Pro-Vice-Chancellor Professor Dasarath Chetty said: "Active agreements, even on a small scale, help UKZN meet its goal of African-led globalisation. Knowledge produced on the basis of a thorough understanding of local conditions allows us to enter the

global scientific community on equal terms with the best researchers in the world."

The Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, Professor Donal McCracken, said that few young South African scholars experience international exposure. "To be really fruitful there has to be a two-way interaction with the global

community. The Faculty has the largest number of international students in the University. What we would like with this partnership is to build up an exchange network by which we offer exposure to overseas institutions to develop our staff and in particular senior students."

UKZN is currently hosting Dr Heather Dalmage, Director in the Department of Sociology at RU. She came to UKZN through the Fulbright Scholarship Programme offered by the US government. She is contributing to research and scholarship at the Centre for Critical Research on Race and Identity where she is working on a research project entitled "Race and Ethnicity; Post Apartheid First Generation Black-White Multi-racial family members".

Roosevelt University is a comprehensive University offering 126 degree programmes in the arts, sciences, business, and education. The institution has a student population of 7 200. It has campuses in Chicago, and Schaumburg, Illinois.

- Thembeke Dlungwane

Picture: Thembeke Dlungwane

UKZN student promotes food security in Sudan

A MASTERS student at UKZN's African Centre for Food Security (ACFS), who is also the Director-General of Planning and Programming in the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) of the Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS), has put into practice what he was taught in the lecture room.

Mr Michael Roberto Kenyi, who had enrolled for a short course in Food Security in 2008 and soon thereafter decided to enrol for his Masters Degree, used the knowledge and the skills he was taught to contribute to the development of a Food Security Action Plan for Southern Sudan.

Mr Kenyi believes that the best approach to tackling food security involves a two way movement of policies and their implementation. He added that policies should move from the top to the bottom, while implementation should start at the grassroots and make its way to the top. Most importantly, the people most affected by food security have to be involved in policy making.

In June 2008, Mr Kenyi organised and made a presentation on the Southern Sudan National Food Security Action Plan at a stakeholders work-

shop which was attended by various Sudanese Ministers and representatives from UN agencies, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and the private sector. He then spearheaded the establishment of a Food Security Council in Sudan that is comprised of various government ministers, NGOs and multilateral organisations.

The mission of the Food Security Council is to transform the typical subsistence farming system of Southern Sudan to a market-orientated and scientific system for regional and international markets. The specific goals of the Southern Sudan Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry are to by 2011; achieve food self-sufficiency; reduce poverty by 30%; increase the contribution of agriculture to the Gross Domestic Product by 25% and to increase the government's budgetary expenditure on agriculture.

He said: "The knowledge, skills and attitude I gained from the School of Agricultural Sciences and Agribusiness, helped in appreciating that food security is a transdisciplinary concept that requires multi-stakeholders to achieve it.

"African countries that are in the same position as Sudan need to lay down what they want to do

in agriculture before they do anything. If what is done is laid down, it should be implemented in a consistent, systematic and continuous way. This can be done through a two-way approach in policy formulation and implementation. Agricultural policies should come from the top to the bottom, while execution of policies and programming should start from the bottom up," he said.

Mr Kenyi added that while the soaring global food prices are not new and many have been living with the situation for decades, particularly in rural Africa, in the immediate and short term, traditional coping mechanisms of African people could be explored and strengthened.

He said: "In the medium to long-term, to improve food security in Africa without money will require investment in agriculture in terms of physical engagement in cultivation in the farm by all able-bodied rural and urban unemployed youth. Change of mindset in Africa could also help when competent, committed and contented leaders and people work hard together for food production."

Mr Kenyi added that he believes his greatest achievement to date is his personal contribution to

the development of the Southern Sudan National Food Security Action Plan, Food and Agriculture Policy Framework, saving lives and restoring the hope and dignity of the people of Southern Sudan.

He believes that the best way to tackle issues of food security, not only in Sudan, but throughout the rest of Africa, should involve the harmonisation of policies, integrated programmes, effective leadership and management linked to the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme and implemented by Regional Economic Committees under the auspices of the African Union New Partnership for African Development.

He said: "One cannot afford to build walls around oneself when it comes to issues regarding food. Everyone should be involved in food security because everyone is affected by it in one way or another."

Professor Sheryl Hendriks, Head of the School of Agricultural Sciences and Agribusiness, said: "Listening to Roberto reporting to our new cohort of ACFS students regarding what he did on his return to Southern Sudan last year gave me goose bumps. We always strive to ensure that we



Mr Michael Roberto Kenyi.

build confidence in our students to apply the knowledge learnt in our modules to finding practical solutions to food insecurity and hunger in Africa."

She added: "Many of my past and current students are involved in very influential positions across the continent. Their actions impact positively on the lives of millions of Africa's people but Roberto's story is a real encouragement. If each of us takes our responsibility to apply our knowledge in our own sphere of influence, we can make significant differences to the lives of many."

Mr Kenyi plans to pursue a PhD Degree in Food Security after completing his Masters if he is able to secure a scholarship.

- Xoliswa Zulu

Picture: Supplied

Election debate

An electrifying and friendly mood prevailed during an SABC live television debate on Political Intolerance at the Westville campus on 9 March.

In a packed Main Hall representatives of different political parties argued their views, with the audience punctuating the speeches with liberation songs.

The African National Congress (ANC) was represented by Mrs Thandi Modise. Mrs Shameen Thakur-Rajbansi represented the Minority Front (MF), and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and National Democratic Convention (Nadeco) were represented by Reverend Musa Zondi and Reverend Hawu Mbatha respectively.

Also on the platform were political analyst Mr Jabulani Sithole of

UKZN's School of Anthropology, Gender and Historical Studies and Violence Monitor, Mrs Mary De Haas.

With the election date (April 22) around the corner it was a chance for political parties to showcase what they have in store for the electorate.

The debate focused on the rights of minority groups including traditional leaders.

Throwing the first salvo, Reverend Mbatha accused both the ANC and the IFP of being obsessed with power at the expense of the people.

"In pursuit of power, political parties must make sure that people are protected. It seems as though the ANC and the IFP wants power at all costs even compromising

people's lives. Power cannot supersede the importance of human lives," he said.

Reverend Zondi said that power was a scarce resource that is highly contested: "This is all about power. In politics power is critical, that is why you have seen images of political intolerance. But the IFP cannot do it alone. We need other parties to work together for a common goal of peace and stability," he said.

Mrs Modise said parties should instil party discipline: "As political parties we should introduce a code of conduct for our members. I am happy to say we in the ANC have that and our members understand that not everyone will be ANC," she said.

- Sabelo Nyuswa

International teaching experience



Picture: Supplied

Mr Henry Gumede with students from Hankuk University of Foreign Studies in South Korea.

MR HENRY Gumede from the School of isiZulu Studies on the Howard College campus was the first Black lecturer to teach and introduce IsiZulu as a course at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies in South Korea.

During 2008, Mr Gumede spent 10 months at the University's African Studies Department teaching different modules, including selected authors of African drama, research methodology and the isiZulu language to undergraduate and postgraduate students.

Professor Chang, Head of Department in the African Studies Division and former PhD student on the Howard College campus facilitated the visit. Professor Chang studied Basic IsiZulu Language Studies when he was a student at UKZN.

Mr Gumede was invited to teach IsiZulu because students at Hankuk University had an interest in the

language. "I was so amazed by the love shown by students in learning isiZulu language," he said.

He said that the experience was exciting and challenging. "It was an unbelievable experience, however the environment and lifestyle is different and it was quite a challenge to adjust at first."

During his visit, Mr Gumede was privileged to work with international scholars from Brazil, Russia, Kazakhstan, Germany, Italy, Romania and Iraq.

He feels that this experience benefited him both as an academic as well as an individual. "I had an opportunity to promote UKZN and South Africa to South Korean people ... one of my postgraduate students visited South Africa in July last year and was very excited about her trip," he said.

- Thembeke Dlungwane



Picture: Sally Giles

(l-r) Mrs Mary De Haas, Violence Monitor; Mr Jubulani Sithole, UKZN; Mr Tim Modise, SABC; Mrs Thandi Modise, ANC; Reverend Musa Zondi, IFP; Mrs Shameen Thakur-Rajbansi, MF; and Reverend Hawu Mbatha, Nadeco.

Sasol sponsorship builds capacity

UKZN's School of Chemistry is the latest beneficiary of a capacity-building sponsorship by Sasol Technology. The School will receive R400 000 over the next two years.

This cash injection follows a recent visit to UKZN by the Head of Sasol Technology's Analytical Solutions Department (Research and Development), Mr Bongani Nkosi and Ms Heidi Assumption, who commended the School for its leading research and teaching initiatives in the discipline of analytical chemistry. The latest visit was a follow-up to previous dialogue between the School of Chemistry and Sasol Technology aimed at obtaining an insight into the type of research and teaching carried within analytical chemistry.

While the School had entered research collaborations with Sasol in the past, receipt of such a sponsorship is a first for analytical chemistry.



Students work out of a refurbished chemistry laboratory.

Picture: Supplied

In correspondence to the School of Chemistry, Dr Nkosi confirmed a donation of R200 000 per year for the next two years.

He said: "As Sasol representatives we are pleased to say that we have identified your institution as one of

the leaders in the research and teaching of analytical chemistry. This capacity building donation may be used for any initiatives that make you a cutting edge institution."

Professor Andrew Kindness, Head of the School of Chemistry said the

School is pleased to have received a grant targeting staff and student development.

"This shows that companies are truly interested in developing capacity within the country and that they are helping universities do so.

It gives us opportunities to develop strengths within students that we couldn't do before due to budget constraints."

According to Professor Kindness funds acquired were likely to be used for staff training, student bursaries, inviting guest speakers and awarding prizes for excellence in analytical chemistry.

UKZN is one of 10 universities to benefit from the Sasol University Collaboration Programme introduced by Sasol Technology four years ago. The company has committed to spend R250 million towards the initiative over ten years. It aims to develop skills within the fields of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering through the provision of grants. Since its inception, UKZN has received more than R3,2 million in sponsorships.

- Neesha Maharaj

History prize-giving

The top History students for 2008 were honoured at a prize-giving ceremony at the McIntyre Library on the Howard College campus on 11 March.

Ms Kylan O'Neill, currently doing her honours degree in History, received the prestigious Jan van Riebeeck prize, an external award by the Jan van Riebeeck Society presented to the best history student in each university's History Department.

The prize-giving is an annual occasion aimed at encouraging excellence in History. While the

Jan van Riebeeck prize is an external award, all the others are internal awards. Prize-winning students are nominated on the basis of internal and external examiners' assessments of long papers and final examinations.

Three undergraduates, Mr Peacemore Mhodi, Ms Bethen Haddon and Mr Suhail Vawda were joint winners of the the Louis Botha Prize for their excellent work during the two first year courses.

Mr Dylan Arslanian scooped the McIntyre prize for the best History essay of the year. He produced a

final paper for "Law and Society in History" based on original thought and research as well as wide reading. This has been hailed as an unusual achievement for a second level student.

Masters student, Mr Karthigasen Gopalan received an award for his outstanding work during his Honours work year and for his excellent final thesis.

"It means a lot to receive this award. I always work hard but honestly I was not expecting to receive anything ... it's a cherry on top. There are also many students who are doing well and I feel special to have been chosen," he said.

Professor Catherine Burns said the students deserve recognition for their work: "The level of energy and passion shown by the students for their work; high levels of reading and research work; and their final papers matched the high standards of their examined work. External examiners confirmed that these students were outstanding and met and surpassed expectations for their level of study."

- Sabelo Nyuswa



(l-r) Top History students Suhail Vawda, Bethen Haddon, Dylan Arslanian, Peacemore Mhodi, Karthigasen Gopalan and Kylan O'Neill.

Picture: Sabelo Nyuswa

Promoting sustainable development



Ms Kiara Worth.

Picture: Supplied

THE effectiveness of the arts as a tool to communicate sustainable development messages will be emphasised by Ms Kiara Worth, a Masters in Agriculture student at UKZN, when she delivers a presentation at the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development in New York in May.

Ms Worth, whose Master's research tackles Climate Change Communication through Theatre, will provide insight on the positive impact of theatre in informing communities on issues pertaining to climate change. As a representative of the Bahá'í International Community she will also provide an overview of the threat of climate change to food security in KwaZulu-Natal based on research carried out by Golders Associate Africa, a consultancy specialising in ground-water engineering and environmental services that Ms Worth works for.

Of the view that theatre is a "brilliant" way of approaching climate change communication, Ms Worth said: "It pays attention to people's feeling and concerns, it relies on their current knowledge systems, and it is fun, engaging and dynamic, thus inspiring people to take control of their own lives and to engage in the world more completely. Theatre and the arts can inspire the human heart for change, love and compassion in the world, and I think that this is the most crucial aspect that is needed in creating sustainable development."

Her participation at the Commission also extends to facilitating a youth training programme which aims to introduce international youth delegates to the Commission, explain its purpose, the topics under discussion and encourage their participation in the event. As part of the orientation Ms Worth is developing an on-line programme providing youth with the basics of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development and information on the thematic discussions, prior to the event in May. Some of these topics include Africa, Agriculture and Rural Development.

"I think it is important to make people, particularly the youth and children realise that the power to change the world lies in their hands. They need to be inspired and active in bringing this change about," said Ms Worth.

She plans on incorporating theatre as part of her programme to unite youth in their contribution to sustainable development.

Having attended the Commission last year as a delegate, Ms Worth said she felt privileged to be afforded the opportunity to deliver a presentation and co-ordinate the youth programme this year.

- Neesha Maharaj

UNESCO-L'OREAL Fellowship



Ms Nonhlanhla Dlamini.

MS NONHLANHLA Dlamini, a PhD student in the Department of Occupational and Environmental Health based within the Nelson R Mandela School of Medicine has received the UNESCO-L'OREAL Fellowship in Paris, France for her research project entitled, "An Investigation of African Traditional Medicine used in the Treatment of Kaposi's Sarcoma".

The UNESCO-L'OREAL International Fellowship is awarded to women in science. Thus far, the programme has awarded 135 fellowships to women across 71 countries. Ms Dlamini has been given the opportunity to collaborate with the University of Florida, United States. Within the laboratory at the University of Florida, she will have access to an in vitro model of Kaposi's sarcoma. This model will be used to test the efficacy of the African traditional medicine against Kaposi's sarcoma.

In South Africa, about 80 % of the population still makes use of traditional medicines. Ms Dlamini will scientifically evaluate and validate an African Traditional Medicine with the potential to be used as a treatment for Kaposi's sarcoma, a cancer of increasing importance in Africa because of its close association with HIV and AIDS.

Ms Dlamini said, "Current clinical treatments for Kaposi's sarcoma have limited efficacy and toxic side effects. Newer treatments have limited availability because they are expensive. It is therefore necessary to find alternative treatment modalities and African Traditional Medicines offers a fresh, new approach. This study has a potential to produce not only an effective and safe product but also a product that will be accessible and affordable to the general South African public."

- MaryAnn Francis

Picture: Supplied

Corobrik Regional Awards

Mr Mark Bellingan a thesis student of architecture at UKZN has won the Regional finals of “The Corobrik Architectural Student of the Year Award” for 2008.

Mr Mike Ingram, Corobrik Director of Sales KZN (Kei / Border Region) said, “As in the past, the standard of entries for the Corobrik architectural student of the year award were very good. With the growing consciousness of the role of architects in facilitating environmental sustainability it is interesting to see how the different thesis projects have dealt with this important issue.

“Corobrik believes these awards give the company an opportunity to make a real contribution to this environmental discourse, this at a time when real global warming concerns require young architects to critically evaluate their building designs from a holistic environmental perspective.”

Mr Bellingan’s entry is titled ‘Towards an architecture that facilitates research and education in a World Heritage Site.’

South Africa’s first UNESCO World Heritage Site; the iSimangaliso Wetland Park is a hive of scientific investigations.

The Environmental Research Facility is designed to provide an epicentre for those involved in such activities, while concomitantly presenting the public with the opportunity to actively engage and learn from these oft times removed endeavours.

The architectural intervention is made within the confines of an abandoned site containing redundant and dilapidated structures which physically straddle the St. Lucia Estuary, the lifeblood of the Park. Within this sensitive setting the solution is by necessity, appropriate, accountable and responsible regarding the social, economic and environmental aspects of its design.

Runner-up is Ms Nicole Sammons. Her entry is titled ‘The Gateway to Inanda’ which is an Interpretation Centre for the Inanda Heritage Route and the Development of Heritage Precinct.

Sammons explains that South Africa’s post-apartheid social and cultural climate has given rise to new museum typology which attempts to commemorate, understand and encourage visitors to explore the significance of areas rich in history. The proposed Interpretation Centre for Inanda, a peri-urban town in KwaZulu-Natal, acts as the gateway into town. The

role of the Interpretation Centre is to encourage people to continue on their journey into Inanda and is designed with reverence towards the destinations. A formalised heritage route running through Inanda includes five major destinations: Gandhi’s Ashram and the Phoenix Settlement, Ohlanga Institute, the Inanda Seminary and the Shembe Church, Ebuhleni.

Third prize was awarded to Ms Kate Walden for her thesis ‘Architecture for the Visually Impaired’. Ms Walden has designed a new headquarters for the Society for the Blind which incorporates weaving and carpentry studios, a showroom where products made on site are sold, a rehabilitation centre, a coffee shop as well as a residence for blind and visually impaired people to live for the duration of their training period in the studios.

The regional winner received R5 500 with the runner up receiving R3 500 and the third place being awarded R2 500.

This is the twenty-second year that Corobrik has sponsored this competition. It was initiated to promote quality design and to acknowledge architectural talent amongst students. Thesis students from Universities and qualifying Institutes of Technology throughout South



Mr Mark Bellingan with his award-winning entry.

Africa are invited to submit entries for one of the regional competitions.

All evaluation in respect of regional submissions is done in house by the University using internal and external examiners.

For the national finals the regional winner’s projects are adjudicated by three independent practicing architects.

- Article and Picture: Supplied

TeleHealth reaches out

PROFESSOR Maurice Mars, Head of the Department of TeleHealth at the Nelson R Mandela School of Medicine played a pivotal role in the launch of telemedicine to hospitals in Rwanda in February.

Under the auspices of the United Nations/Africa Fellowship on Telemedicine in co-operation with the Department of TeleHealth, and the International Society for Telemedicine and eHealth (ISfTeH), Professor Mars conducted an intensive basic training programme in telemedicine, developed by his Department and the ISfTeH.

Seventeen doctors from Ruhengeri and Kabgay hospitals, which are to be the first recipients of telemedicine infrastructure, were trained in the basics of telemedicine, legal and ethical issues, videoconferencing, practical digital photography and tele-education.

According to Professor Mars the doctors who were not aware of telemedicine before receiving the training, responded favourably to the programme, and especially to the practical sessions. They also identified additional telemedicine services, like tele-psychiatry, that they would like to have available at their hospitals.



Professor Maurice Mars and participants.

“This is the first step of an international outreach to raise awareness of telemedicine in the developing world with the aim to develop more advanced courses over time,” Professor Mars said.

In the past Professor Mars has been an advisor to the Rwandan Government in its bid to introduce telemedicine in Rwanda.

- Neesha Maharaj

Picture: Supplied

Innovation Award

The School of Information Systems and Technology (IS&T), at UKZN was recently awarded the IBM Faculty Award with a further boost of \$12 000 for their highly innovative and successful NextEd Programme.

The NextEd Programme developed by IS&T's Head of School, Professor Manoj Maharaj, lecturers Mr Craig Blewett and Ms Rose Quilling, is a first for any South African University and uses web based technology to facilitate the development of a world-wide virtual collaborative education network.

The Programme uses Web 2.0 technologies such as Facebook, Youtube, Blogs, podcasts and many others that students are familiar with to support teaching and learning. Furthermore a virtual university was set up in a 3D world called Second Life, where the students are able to attend lectures, meet their team members from around the world, and simply hang out.

The NextEd philosophy is to provide a collaborative environment where all participants collaborate on an equal footing, and contribute and benefit in a collaborative style. Further to this is the need to provide a haven where imperfect learners and educators,

can create platforms where they can engage in a highly effective way.

One of the key objectives of the NextEd Programme is to embrace a social learning approach, where students learn by constructing their knowledge in groups.

The Virtual University also allows various institutions to share expertise and consequently to be able to provide students with the best possible learning experience. Increasingly, research is showing that the student demographic is changing from full-time school leavers to professional, employed adults who are returning to universities to enhance their qualifications or indeed change their qualifications altogether.

"Since these professional students cannot leave their workplace to study full-time, it is necessary for us to bring the University to them," said Professor Maharaj.

He added: "This allows our University to reach out to potential students throughout the world and increases access to education to individuals and communities in remote areas who would otherwise not be able to get to a university campus."

This year, the NextEd Programme is being extended to include

Daystar University in Kenya, with many other universities and courses in the pipeline in the future.

Mr Blewett said the ultimate goal is to facilitate a collaborative network for not only institutions but individuals to connect and grow and to empower participants to propagate their learning through to their networks, thus resulting in a viral growth in the learning.

He said: "For years we have been looking for an approach with which to teach students that supports social construction of knowledge and now for the first time, we have a whole bunch of applications that not only support this form of learning, but which students choose to use each day."

Currently, two fourth year modules, Computer Mediated Communications and Special Topics in IS&T, have been used to test the implementation of these new approaches with very encouraging results.

Ms Quilling added: "The true power of these environments is the ability to collaborate with other universities around the world. We've already run shared courses with the University of Massachusetts which was a great opportunity for our students to work in virtual teams with other members from around the world.

"We are also challenging people on their understanding of how universities should work and the boundaries are falling away. Africa is no longer on the lower end of the scale. Our students are dynamic and have gained confidence in this virtual university. It gives them the space to explore this new environment and to showcase their knowledge. The NextEd Programme is in line with the University's vision and mission to be research driven and to focus on the needs of Africa as a community."

At the South African Computer Lecturers Association (SACLA) conference in July 2008, Ms Quilling and Mr Blewett's paper on their work earned them the Best Paper Award.

- Xoliswa Zulu

Exchange student

FACULTY of Management Studies (Pietermaritzburg campus), Mr Njabulo Mathe has just returned from a fruitful four-month student exchange programme in Belgium.

Mr Mathe was the first student to benefit from the tripartite agreement that involves joint research, lecturing and the development of staff between UKZN and the Universities of Liege in Belgium and Lubumbashi in the Democratic Republic of Congo.



Mr Njabulo Mathe.

Picture: Supplied

"It was a fantastic experience to be there. The food, the people it was great. I learned a lot from our cultural differences. It was indeed an eye opener for me and I feel very privileged that I was chosen," said Mr Mathe.

Mr Mathe is currently doing his honours degree specialising in finance and says he aspires to be an Investment Banker.

With the guidance of Mr Barry Strydom, Head of Department, Mr Mathe was able to select the courses that would be suitable for his BCom.

Before departing to Belgium Mr Mathe attended French evenings classes to overcome language barriers.

"Without those classes I was going to have a huge problem in understanding the language. People over there are very loyal to what they speak," said Mr Mathe.

He received a bursary from Nedbank last year and will join the banking group next year at their Johannesburg head office.

- Sabelo Nyuswa

Partnership for vision screening

THE Head of the Department of Optometry at UKZN Mr Khathutshelo Mashige has announced a joint initiative with World Vision International (WVI) – South Africa. The two organisations will offer free vision screening tests to children in communities identified by WVI. Children that are identified as having a vision problem will then be referred to the Department of Optometry's state-of-the-art paediatric clinic on the Westville campus.

WVI's South Africa Office was created in 1950 as an emergency relief, development and advocacy agency. The organisation's mission is based on Christian principles and its vision for every child is "life in all its fullness, our prayer for every heart and the will to make it so". World Vision South Africa focuses on children as the heritage and future of the community. Currently the organisation has a total of 500 050 children registered and in receipt of its services.

Mr Mashige says that, "the Department of Optometry was excited to collaborate with an organisation such as that of World Vision South Africa due to its strong commitment to uplifting the lives of children in poverty-stricken communities."

For further information, contact Mr Mashige on 031-2607352 or Ms Precious Geveza at Precious_Geveza@wvi.org

- MaryAnn Francis



Mr Craig Blewett and Ms Rose Quilling.

Picture: Xoliswa Zulu

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