

International relationships

During the first quarter of 2007 UKZN forged a number of significant international relationships.

A delegation from the Sultanate of Oman, led by the Minister of Education, Her Excellency, Dr Rawya Saud Al Bousaidi, visited the University on 15 March. UKZN was represented by Vice-Chancellor Professor Malegapuru Makgoba, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Head of the College of Humanities Professor Fikile Mazibuko and the Deans of Engineering, Health Sciences and Management Studies.

The governments of South Africa and Oman have signed a broad agreement on co-operation and are looking to define specific programmes, particularly in the areas of Science and Technology and Higher Education. The delegation from Oman is exploring sending students, particularly at PhD level, to study in South Africa, academic staff visiting Oman to teach there, and collaborative research projects. Teaching staff are particularly needed in the area of communications and design.

After presentations by the Minister and the Vice-Chancellor, fruitful

discussions were held on possible areas of collaboration.

Intellectual pact

The Premier of the State of Queensland and Minister of Trade in Australia, the Honourable Peter Beattie visited South Africa to facilitate the signing of a co-operation agreement with UKZN on 22 March.

Professor Malegapuru Makgoba, Vice-Chancellor and Director-General of the State of Queensland, Mr Ross Rolfe signed the agreement, which provides for staff and student exchange programmes, and research collaboration.

Addressing the 20 delegates from Queensland, Professor Makgoba said that UKZN has identified water as one of the research areas where collaboration is possible. The Honourable Peter Beattie added that research on water will make an important contribution to the future of our planet. Environmental research, with a particular focus on the impact of climate change on agricultural systems, is another possible area for collaboration. UKZN's Pro Vice-Chancellor of Research Professor Salim



Her Excellency, Dr Rawya Saud Al Bousaidi presents Professor Makgoba with a replica of an Oman dagger. The Oman delegation also received gifts from UKZN.

Picture: Madoda Mahlangu

Abdool Karim who acted as programme director for this event, responded that the shortage of water is a global challenge which we need to grapple with together.

He said he looked forward to a flourishing relationship between UKZN and Queensland.

India-SA relations

India's High Commissioner to South Africa, His Excellency Mr RK Bhatia addressed the University community on "Reflections on India and on India-South Africa Relations" on 22 March.

His Excellency, who was accompanied by the Durban-based Consul General of India, Mr Harsh Vardhan Shringla, presented 18 books on India to the University Library. The eThekweni Municipality was represented by Deputy Mayor, Councillor Logie Naidoo.

The High Commissioner said that India is in the process of undergoing huge transformation. India has 27 states, each with its own language and culture. However, there is unity in spirituality, intellectualism and religion. Democracy has matured and is healthy and vibrant.

Focusing on business trends, he said that economic growth is booming and India has strong links with the rest of the world. India's relationship with South Africa "is based on a unique blend of unity and freedom through shared economic development". He highlighted a number of factors that mould South Africa and India together, including the 1,2 million South Africans of Indian origin, the 'Gandhi factor' and a broadly similar approach to domestic, economic and foreign policy. Investment relations between the two countries have grown tremendously in the past five years.

His Excellency emphasised that he would like to see a strategic partnership and intellectual co-operation developing between universities in India and South Africa. "I am happy to facilitate such communication", he said.

- Bhekani Dlamini and Deanne Collins



Mr Ross Rolfe (Director-General of the State of Queensland), Honourable Peter Beattie (Premier of the State of Queensland and Minister of Trade) and Professor Malegapuru Makgoba (Vice-Chancellor).

Picture: Madoda Mahlangu

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UKSU chairperson, Khetha Mabaso, reflects on the recent wage negotiations

How would you characterise the salary negotiations this year?

The salary negotiations this year were frustrating as there were more than ten fruitless meetings. We sometimes thought we would never reach an agreement but obviously both parties wanted to resolve the matter as soon as possible. I think that Unions really did a good job.

Why was it necessary for the Unions to approach the CCMA?

We declared a dispute when management presented their 'final



Khetha Mabaso.

offer' to the Unions, which was rejected. We were obviously forced to take the matter to the CCMA as that was the next step for us. I do feel that it was necessary as we wanted someone to mediate between the Unions and management. We were of the opinion that the matter could still be solved internally, but we were forced to go to the CCMA by management.

Nehawu settled separately from the other Unions. What implications does this have for worker unity and future negotiations at the University?

Nehawu did settle separately. I must say that we respect Nehawu for what they did; whether that was a wise thing to do or not is a separate debate altogether. Workers were angry that the alliance was no more there but credit must go to the other three unions who then had meetings across all five campuses and explained the situation. Contrary to management's theory, the membership supported us and gave

us the assurance that what we did (not signing the Nehawu/Management deal) was a good thing. I believe the workers are more united now than ever.

I would like to believe that we will be working together in the future. Obviously we have to reflect on these negotiations and take it from there.

Do you foresee a time when there will be one Union representing all UKZN staff?

I personally believe it will be very difficult to do that given the fact that two of the unions are national unions. We continue to explore this idea and maybe in the near future something will change.

Are the Unions happy with this year's settlement?

We are happy with the settlement. We spent almost the whole day at the CCMA and the outcome is very good. We believe that all of our issues were addressed. We

believe that we scored a victory and are delighted with the outcome.

What has been the reaction from union members?

We reported back to the membership across five campuses and the feeling is that we did well. When you are doing salary negotiations there will be always one or two individuals who are not happy with the outcome but UKSU has received a positive response from our members. Now we have to sit down and see how, for instance, the closing period will affect the University. It is my view that the essential services will go on. When we closed last year essential services like Security still continued. If there are Departments/Faculties that need to be operational we will have to sit down and come up with some mechanism.

What issues remain outstanding?

The salary negotiations are concluded for this year and members will get their well-earned money at

the end of April, backdated to January. I hope they enjoy it!

Harmonisation remains critical for us. I definitely would like to see it happen this year. A task team was formed and the HR director is steering that ship.

The issue of skilling our people and driving equity also remains critical.

What can be done to improve employee/employer relations at UKZN?

The Unions have always maintained that they wanted to be consulted on issues. The Unions do not want to run UKZN but want to be recognised as an important stakeholder.

When decisions are made that affect staff without the Unions' involvement it becomes a problem. Management are beginning to understand this concept. We now have standing meetings with the whole Executive. I feel that we are moving into the right direction and hope it continues this way.

SRC strategic planning workshop

THE Central SRC together with local SRC's convened a strategic planning workshop from 2-4 February to develop a programme of action for 2007.

With the theme "Advancing student activism against racism in higher education – 30 years since the brutal assassination of Steven Bantu Biko," the workshop was addressed by Professor Siphon Seepe, who spoke on curriculum transformation in the context of a development state. Professor Seepe is the Research Director at the Henley Management College in Johannesburg.

This highly interactive workshop was attended by representatives of NEHAWU, BAAF and Student Funding. The SRC welcomed the improvements that have been introduced by the Student Funding Centre since the merger. Mr Jerry Moodley and Mr Richard Morrison were applauded for their workable plan for 2007 and the increase in the financial aid package.

At the workshop the SRC resolved that all public debate – be it on national or University issues – should receive qualitative input from student leaders. It was further resolved that the SRC will meet with the Umsunduzi and eThekweni Municipalities, which have an agreement with UKZN, to find out what they can do for students. They will also be visiting schools in the province to educate matriculants about opportunities that UKZN can offer them. This will be done in consultation with both municipalities, community organisations, councillors and Amakhosi (traditional leaders).

The workshop also considered some constitutional amendments. Amongst these was that all SRC elections be conducted by the national Independent Electoral Commission (IEC). House Committee and Faculty Council constitutions were also finalised.

- Ayanda Kunene



Ayanda R Kunene (Central SRC), Mar Adam (Medical School), Ntobeko Zuma (Edgewood campus), Brandon Adams (Howard College), Saran Swart PMB campus), Ronal Muranga (Westville campus).

Editorial

Send your news to news@ukzn.ac.za

Pursuing the International agenda

THE lead article in this issue of ukzndaba firmly indicates UKZN's commitment to the fostering of International relationships. The visit by the Minister of Education from Oman, the signing of an agreement with the University of Queensland and the visit of the High Commissioner of India to SA during March were all high profile events with the attendant pomp and ceremony. Such visits and agreements create expectations on all sides and the onus in meeting such expectation falls upon the University community. Signed memoranda can only be translated into reality by researchers working collaboratively with their international counterparts, by academics through the internationalisation of their curricula and by students actively pursuing opportunities for international exchange.

Exchange programmes at all levels work when our standards are globally competitive, when our residences and other accommodation arrangements are of an acceptable standard and when Universities, research institutes and external funders commit resources that translate MOU's into active, mutually beneficial partnerships. This is one of the reasons why the infrastructural upgrade programmes currently taking place on the Westville Campus in particular are of critical importance. World class infrastructure in our laboratories and other teaching facilities, quality equipment and residential development will all serve to make UKZN more appealing as an international partner.

Presently the University has more than 200 partnership arrangements with Institutions throughout the world and the target for the number of International students at UKZN has been set at 10% of the total. Such a significant number of foreign students will serve to infuse the University with more cultural diversity creating a more stimulating academic and social environment for all academics and students. Our efforts to internationalise must therefore be supported politically by decision makers and implemented enthusiastically by all stakeholders.

Professor Dasarath Chetty, Executive Director, Public Affairs and Corporate Communications

The ukzndaba team



Dasarath Chetty



Deanne Collins



Bhekani Dlamini



Fikisile Mabaso



Thembeke Dlungwane



Vidhya Singh



The Equity

Dialogue

Retirement at 60: whys and wherefores

THE issue of an agreed retirement age for staff at the University of KwaZulu-Natal has been a vexed one since the merger. After extensive consultation with staff of the University, the Council-mandated Working Group on Retirement proposed that the University of KwaZulu-Natal retain a retirement age of 60 for a two year period commencing in 2005. A policy in this regard was approved by Council.

The Mission of the University of KwaZulu-Natal includes academic excellence, research innovation and equity. The existing policy takes cognizance of the Mission. It acknowledges the need for a retirement age of 60 based *inter alia* on the University's commitment to transformation and the need for renewal and rejuvenation. At the same time, however, the policy recognises the need to retain certain exceptional, highly skilled and productive staff, particularly those in scarce skill disciplines.

Over the years staff have raised various concerns in relation to this policy. On the one hand some staff have argued that a retirement age is a form of age discrimination which is unconstitutional. Others have argued that there should be an agreed retirement age but that the retirement age should be increased to varying levels between 65 and 70.

In the case of the former, our Bill of Rights prohibits unfair discrimination on grounds including age, but in line with the International Labour Organisation (ILO), Convention 111, age discrimination can be allowed on the basis of inherent requirements of the job and affirmative action. Most retirement policies are linked to inherent

requirements of the job and affirmative action and are therefore unlikely to be unconstitutional.

Further in our law, a dismissal based on age is unlawful. However section 187(2)(b) of the Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995 provides for an exception: 'a dismissal based on age is fair if the employee has reached normal or agreed retirement age for persons employed in that capacity. "In fact, currently in our law, a contract of employment comes to an end by effluxion of time at the normal or agreed retirement age".

That then leaves the issue of determining the agreed retirement age. Most universities in South Africa have varying retirement ages. In the last few years several of the universities changed their policies in favour of a later retirement age. In most cases, anecdotal evidence suggests that this has come about because of sustained pressure, often from aging staff, rather than compelling operational requirements.

Concerns

Members of staff at UKZN have expressed mixed views on our current retirement age. Generally support staff, while not necessarily agreeing with it, are reconciled to the retirement age. Academic staff are far more divided on the issue citing amongst others the following perceived downsides:

- Scarcity of senior academics to lead the academic endeavour and an aging researcher profile.
- The policy is inconsistent with that of other comparable Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in

South Africa, thus denying UKZN a competitive advantage in recruitment and retention.

- As a result of the retirement policy, many productive academic members of staff are actively seeking employment elsewhere once they reach the age of 55 in anticipation of being forced to retire at age 60.

On the other hand there are academics who see the retirement policy as critical to achieving our transformation goals. In this regard, since 2004 the majority of retirees each year have been from over-represented race or gender categories, presenting UKZN with opportunities to ensure greater representivity.

Other academic staff have argued that the existing policy is a much needed mechanism to weed out 'deadwood' or non productive academics, many of whom wind down even further after the age of 60 years. Arguably this aspect of the management of human resources should be dealt with through Performance Management. In reality, even universities with Performance Management have difficulty in addressing under-performance due to the inherent collegial nature of academia.

Another, often overlooked consideration is that as a new institution still trying to regularise our staffing, the retirement policy allows us to evaluate the need for certain posts and to disestablish those that are superfluous to our operational needs in the current context once the incumbent reaches retirement.

As a university committed to excellence, a fresh injection of new

skills and experience is absolutely critical.

Whilst there is merit in some of the arguments for and against retirement at 60, but there is a tendency towards exaggeration and misinformation.

The current situation

In the academic sector, productive, highly skilled academics and technical staff are not at risk of being expected to retire at 60. For this category of staff, retirement at age 65 is almost a norm. The retirement age should therefore not influence this category of excellent staff to leave the University and in fact line management should react swiftly to allay concerns of their key staff should they evidence uncertainty. The vulnerability of staff in the 55-60 years category is also not borne out by the facts. The turnover in this category of staff has remained at approximately 2% of total turnover since 2004. Total turnover has ranged between 5.6 to 7.8% over the last three years. This is considered to be healthy.

In the past three years, all applicants for superannuation at the level of professor were successful. In 2006, five out of the nine academics who applied for superannuation were supported. Those rejected were because of a combination of poor/no income generation track record, inadequate performance in teaching and postgraduate supervision, insufficient research productivity and lack of recognised professional standing.

It is only academic staff who are not performing at the requisite level or those whose posts are no longer

needed that are vulnerable to being rejected for post-retirement employment.

A larger number of applications are received each year from the support sector and the success rate is, not surprisingly, lower. The reason most often cited is the large pool of available candidates to correct race based distortions and the need for rejuvenation and improvement of the skills base.

There are also certain key principles around which the policy is structured that are crucial for transformation:

- All persons offered a contract beyond retirement have an obligation to mentor junior staff.
- Persons on extension should not hold leadership positions like Dean, Head of School and Head of Support Division, to create opportunities for younger staff and for employment equity purposes.
- Succession plans are in place for all LEAP appointees which are based on planned retirements.

The existing agreed retirement age meets the needs of a merged University focused on a Mission of excellence and should only be changed on solid grounds related to operational reasons rather than as a result of pressure from staff or on the basis of misconception or conjecture.

What do you think?

Make sure we hear your voice. Send all comments or queries to the Equity Support Unit.

Human Resources and Equity Support Unit Campus Dialogues

HR & the ESU will be jointly hosting a series of campus dialogues to allow staff to raise issues and obtain clarity regarding policy and procedure in an informal setting. Apart from the Director of Human Resources and the Executive Director Equity, the panel will comprise the Deputy Directors, Human Resource Administration, Employment Relations and Staff Development, the Diversity Manager and the LEAP Manager. The first campus dialogue will take place at the Senate Chamber, Westville campus on 2 May from 12h30-14h00. All members of staff are welcome. Details of Dialogues on other campuses will be advertised on the lan.

APSTAR Graduation

The second APSTAR Graduation ceremony and handing over of certificates on 10 March was a memorable event. The School of Development Studies treated graduates to a breakfast ceremony at the Emakhosini Hotel in Morningside, Durban.

The APSTAR programme was initiated and implemented by the Department of Social Development, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and UKZN. This training programme offers short courses in Population Studies and

is situated in the School of Development Studies. APSTAR aims to build the capacity of government officials at all levels of Government to understand population issues and to integrate these into development policies, programmes and activities

The ceremony was attended by Mr Jacques van Zuydam from the Department of Social Development, Professor Fikile Mazibuko, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and the Head of College of Humanities, and Professor Julian May, Head of

Department, School of Development Studies.

In her official address, Professor Mazibuko said that as professionals and academics associated with UKZN, we need to ask ourselves whether we are helping and making a difference in confronting the pressing issues of our time.

“We must assess how our scholarship is contributing effectively to the fight against crime, hunger, disease, poverty, instilling basic values as outlined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and eradicating unethical practices, particularly in the public sector, which is charged with the responsibility of service delivery to the populace. All these threaten to overwhelm and compromise our hard-won democracy. We are confident that as you acquire new competences, skills and understanding of the current reality, you will make a significant contribution to South Africa in particular and Africa in general” she said.

- Thembeke Dlungwane

Fundza Bursary

THE scarcity of qualified teachers is a major challenge facing South Africa.

In 2003, the former Minister of Education Professor Kader Asmal, set up a committee to review the national supply of teachers. Professor Michael Samuel from UKZN's Faculty of Education served on this committee together with Professor May Jiya of Fort Hare University and Professor Wally Morrow from the University of Port Elizabeth.

The committee was charged with the development of a National Framework for Teacher Education. It found that the Department of Education needs to recruit about 20 000 newly qualified teachers a year. Currently the number of teachers produced varies between 5 000 and 7 000 annually.

Arising from these findings, the Department of Education set aside R700 million for bursaries for aspirant teachers. The Fundza Lushaka Bursary Scheme covers tuition, accommodation, books, an allowance for monthly living ex-

penses, and for traveling costs where necessary. UKZN's Faculty of Education has received 180 full cost bursaries and the balance has been distributed to other Higher Education institutions.

The programme is intended to promote teaching in public schools, especially in the rural areas. A further priority is to recruit African teachers in the Foundation Phase. Once qualified, bursary holders are required to take up posts offered by the provincial education department. They are contractually obliged to work for the number of years for which they received a bursary.

Professor Samuels says that “Our goal is to resurrect and re-image the professional status of teaching as major contribution to nation building. This can be achieved by providing committed and competent professionals in education”. He adds that it is essential that the Faculty of Education make a contribution to the development of rural education.

- Thembeke Dlungwane



Picture: Madoda Mahlangu

APSTAR Graduation: Jubilation at the Emakhosini Hotel.

Teaching and Learning Entrance testing

MANY university applicants in South Africa are requested to write entrance tests. Thousands of applicants to UKZN in 2007 were also required to write entrance tests. The common question is: Why should applicants write tests if they have just completed the matric examinations? There are several answers to this question.

We sometimes use testing to assist with student selection. Matric ‘points’ are generally used to select students, e.g. 34 points are required to enter the Science Faculty. However, there are many applicants who are not able to achieve the required points because of the limited resources in their schools. Entrance tests, like the tests used for Science access programmes, give such applicants another opportunity to show their potential to succeed in a degree. Testing to select candidates for alternative access is used in the faculties of Humanities, Education, Science and Law.

Sometimes entrance tests are used to assist with the selection of students in programmes where there are more suitable candidates than spaces. All over the country applicants to medical schools write the tests of the Health Sciences Consortium.

Entrance testing in specific academic areas is often used to determine the competencies with which students come into the University. Faculties can then put special courses or other interventions in place to support students who lack these competencies to help them to develop the required skills.

The most widely used test at UKZN is the SATAP test in English for Academic Purposes. This test has been developed by a group of academics from 11 institutions, including UKZN, and is used at many institutions in South Africa. At UKZN alone it has been administered to 5 400 applicants in 2007. Although it is often called an English test, this is not strictly

correct. English is the medium of the test and not the target. In other words, English grammar is not tested. The purpose of the test is to determine the ability of the student to perform the higher order reading skills that are needed for successful academic study: the ability to extract and interpret information, to understand the relationships between different parts of text, to interpret metaphoric language and to develop and express own opinion based on the texts.

Throughout the University test results are used in combination with school performance to track student cohorts. The purpose of tracking is to develop more effective selection criteria so that the University can select students with the potential to be successful in their studies. High failure rates do not only affect the funding of the University, but also cause a lot of unnecessary pain for failing students whose strengths would be better developed at institutions like FET colleges.

What is the future of entrance testing at UKZN? For the 2008 intake the picture will probably be similar to 2007. However, in view of the National Senior Certificate which applicants will present in 2009, Higher Education South Africa (HESA) has initiated a testing project for the development of tests which will provide additional information about the ability of applicants. They are concerned that, until we are sure what the different levels of performance in the NSC really mean, we may not be able to select accurately. The National Benchmark Test project draws on expertise in test development from institutions across South Africa. Two tests are being developed. The first test, which all applicants to all Higher Education institutions will have to write, combines Academic Literacy and Quantitative Literacy. The second test is a Mathematics test which will be required for all applicants to Faculties like Science, Engineering, Health Sciences and other pro-

grammes which demand a high level of mathematical knowledge.

The proposed plan is that all school leavers who plan to apply to Higher Education institutions will write the NBTs at centres across the country. The tests will be administered nationally, and the results will be captured in a national database. Each institution or faculty will be able to download the results of all their applicants. At the moment HESA does not recommend that these tests be used for selection purposes as such, but that the results are considered as additional information about applicants, especially for alternative access or where the number of suitable applicants exceeds the places in a programme. Institutions and Faculties will be able to decide how they wish to use the NBT results, just as they now have the autonomy to set their entrance criteria.

- Leonora Jackson

Literary tourism

Professor Lindy Stiebel from the Department of English Studies has recently undertaken a five year NRF project that explores links between writers and place in KwaZulu-Natal. Working with her in this project are colleagues Mrs Zoe Molver (Media Studies, UKZN) and Professor Graham Stewart (Durban University of Technology).

Literary tourism is intended to create awareness in students and tourists alike about the writers of KwaZulu-Natal. The project aims to create interest both in high profile writers and budding unknown writers. The outcomes of this project to-date have been outstanding and have received national and international interest.

Professor Stiebel says that the project began with major strengths in literature but not in tourism, adding that pulling the two areas together to make a field of literary tourism has required a broadening of reading and thinking on the part of the collaborators. Giving further direction to the project, Professor

Mike Robinson was invited to talk on literature and tourism at the project's annual colloquium in 2005. Professor Robinson is the Director of the Centre for Tourism and Cultural Change at Sheffield Hallam University, UK.

The research aims of the project include developing literary tourism in KwaZulu-Natal through the development of appropriate inter-linked resources on literary tourism such as a literary map on a website, a related resource website which includes academic papers, and documentary films on selected literary figures and landscapes. The project has established links with others interested in this field both nationally and internationally, and networked with similar projects.

Supervision of postgraduate students researching theoretical issues in relation to literary tourism and constructions of identity as manifested through literary landscapes has been a significant part of the project. In 2006 the project had 15 students supported by grants. In the past four years it has graduated six

MA students and nine Honours students and it will produce its first PhD this year. The project has gathered researchers in the field together at workshops and conferences, plus provided teaching aids for the study of KwaZulu-Natal writers at high school and university level. Though not directly on literary tourism, the first book to emerge from the project was recently published on Lewis Nkosi, a renowned writer born and raised in this province.

An important part of the project's work, the Literary Map of KwaZulu-Natal (see <http://www.literature.kzn.org.za>) consists of a number of author entries, each linked to a place on the map of the province, accompanied by photographs of the writer and places with which she/he is associated in life or writing. It currently hosts about 50 entries and receives over 3 000 hits a week from all around the world. It has been a wonderful resource for tourists and researchers alike. It was developed and designed by Professor Graham Stewart and is currently hosted by the provincial

tourism authorities, TourismKZN. The site attracts interest from users both local and international, including the US, Egypt, Japan and Germany. The linked website (<http://www.literarytourism.co.za>), developed by Niall McNulty, research assistant to the project in 2006, contains academic papers, references and literary trails. This site is ranked number one in the Google search engine for literary tourism.

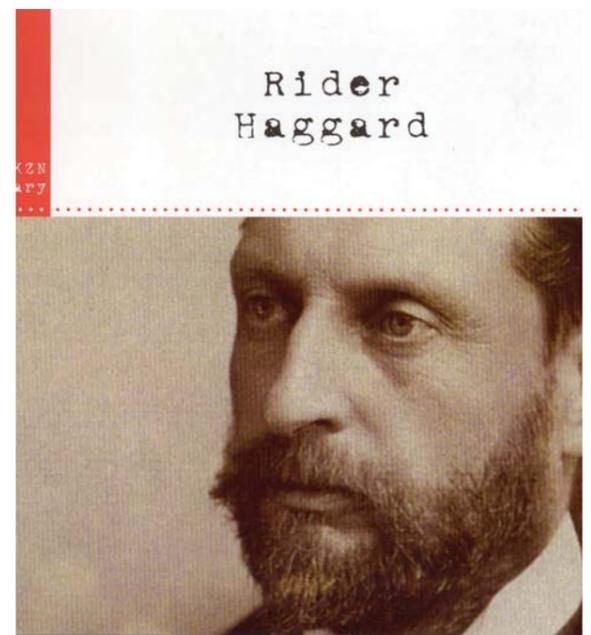
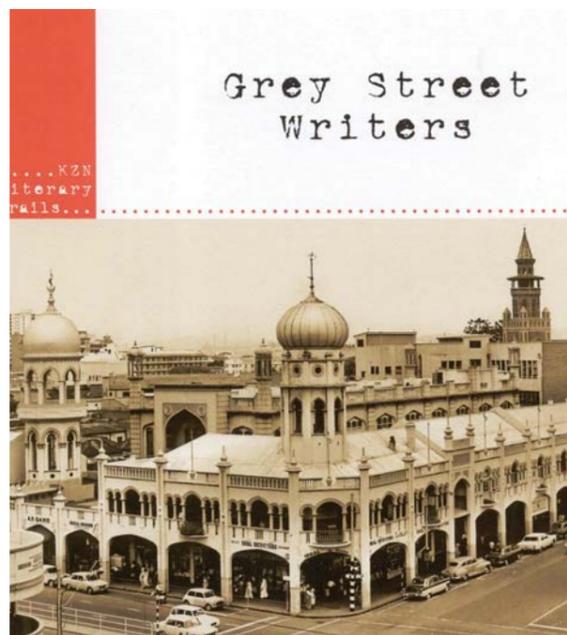
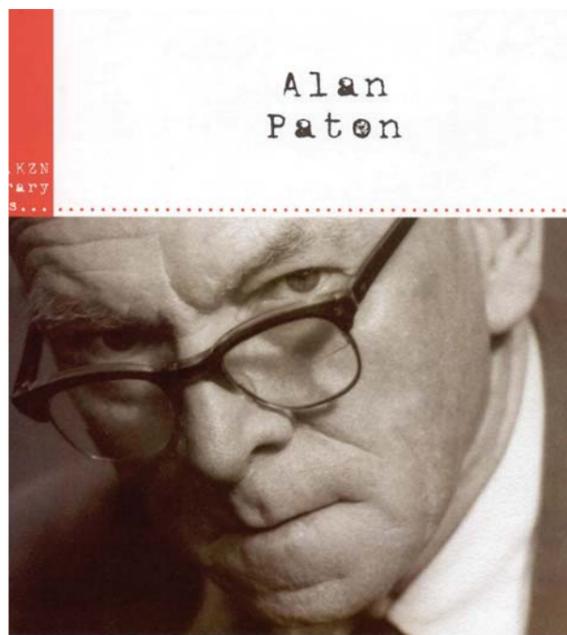
A feature of the project over the past year has been the development of literary trails. These trails trace the life of a writer and places linked to their writing. So far three have been constructed. The first one is on Rider Haggard, a late 19th century British writer who wrote popular novels set in southern Africa. Haggard is a name known both locally and particularly within the British tourist market. Closer to home, the second trail is on Alan Paton's Pietermaritzburg, tracing his time in that city: his birthplace, homes and school where he was both scholar then teacher, and the university (now UKZN) where he

was a student. The third literary trail which came out this year is the Grey Street Writers Trail. This trail features writers such as Fatima Meer, Phyllis Naidoo, Imraan Coovadia, Aziz Hassim, Dr Goonam and Ravi Govender. The trail consists of a brief biography of each writer, a short history of Grey Street and places linked to the writers and their works which tourists can visit. This year the project will do a Cato Manor trail and one on BW Vilakazi.

Remarking on this intriguing project, Professor Stiebel said that "literature is a life long love for me. We try to teach people to be critical readers. You must be able to understand the world around you – one way you can do this is through literature and what it says about places."

Professor Stiebel's next project is to write a literary guide to KwaZulu-Natal and develop literary tourism further within our province.

- Thembeke Dungwane



Photos return home

A UNIQUE set of photographs depicting life in South Africa between 1844 and 1960 has returned home.

Two representatives of the 'Photographs back to South Africa' Project presented UKZN's Campbell Collections with 12 volumes of hard copy catalogues of the photographs; a CD of the catalogues and a CD of every image that is in the catalogues on 8 March.

The Norwegian Missionary Society Archives (NMS Archives) at the School of Mission and Theology (MHS) in Stavanger, Norway

houses an important collection of more than 20 000 photographs produced and collected by Norwegian Missionary Society (NMS) missionaries in South Africa between 1844 and 1960.

Due to interest from South Africans, the Norwegian Missionary Society and the Centre for Intercultural Communication created the 'Photographs back to South Africa' Project. Professor Jeff Guy, Research Fellow at the Campbell Collections and Dr Vivian Msomi from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of South Africa were in-

vited to Norway to select the photographs for the catalogues.

Other institutions that have received sets of the collection are the Lutheran Theological Institute on the Pietermaritzburg campus, the Heritage Centre in Pietermaritzburg, the Lutheran Church Head Office in Umphumulo and the Zululand Historical Museum.

The catalogues and CDs at the Killie Campbell Africana Library are available to researchers.

- Mwelela Cele



Kåre Kristensen, Director of the Centre for Intercultural Communication, Norway and Anne Karin Kristensen, Program Director for Management and Organization at the Norwegian Missionary Society; Mwelela Cele, Reading Room Librarian, Killie Campbell Africana Library; and Professor Jeff Guy, Research Fellow at the Campbell Collections.

Picture: Supplied

Vice-Chancellor's award

Molecular virologist, Professor Thumbi Ndung'u of the DDMRI, has been awarded the prestigious Vice-Chancellor's Research Award by Council for exceptional research and research related scholarly activities.

Professor Ndung'u's previous significant research accomplishments include: the development of the first full-length infectious clone of HIV-1C from Africa, a very important reagent for detailed genetic studies of this strain. This genetic tool allows for various studies on drug sensitivity and vaccine design to be conducted; and the generation of a subtype C human immunodeficiency virus (SHIV), the first HIV-1 subtype C based SHIV that has been used extensively for HIV-1B to study the disease process of HIV by using rhesus monkey models and to conduct HIV vaccine tests. A Harvard graduate, Professor Ndung'u's main areas of research are in the biological mechanisms underlying HIV/AIDS pathogenesis and in the development of biomedical interventions that can be used in resource poor settings to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS.



Professor Thumbi Ndung'u.

Picture: Supplied

At UKZN, Professor Ndung'u has initiated a research programme on human genetic factors that influence susceptibility to HIV infection and disease progression. There is evidence that certain people remain HIV uninfected despite repeated exposure to the virus. Among HIV infected people, the rate of disease progression is very variable. It is possible that certain genetic factors may protect certain individuals against HIV infection and/or from getting AIDS. Professor Ndung'u and his team are studying some of these candidate genetic factors, and their interaction with HIV in order to understand the mechanisms that may naturally protect people. They hope that eventually this knowledge will be used to develop novel

vaccines or therapies against HIV/AIDS.

Professor Ndung'u is working with other scientists, and clinical and public health experts to understand how HIV is transmitted, and how it is able to cause disease. As a team they are trying to identify the virus' weak points at the cellular level, so that they can eventually stop it in its tracks. He maintains that an important component of this work is training students who will eventually form a critical mass of scientists and enhance South Africa's competitiveness in the global scientific arena.

He points out that biomedical science and innovative public health initiatives have led to the elimination of small pox and the near elimination of polio. "That was unthinkable a century ago. I believe that HIV/AIDS will eventually go the same route as those scourges, but my hope is that we can accelerate that process. I feel privileged to be contributing to that process through my work at this University."

- Smita Maharaj and Bhekani Dlamini

Gold Class Award

RECEIVING a Hoofstad Skakel Gold Class Award for Afrikaans Cultural Achievement has inspired Professor Dietloff Z van der Berg of the School of Language, Literature and Linguistics to continue his community contribution to language and literature development in the Pietermaritzburg area.

As part of his outreach work Professor van der Berg runs evening creative writing classes for the local community. He helps people to find publishers for their creative work. He is also involved with schools to find suitable methods of teaching Afrikaans and conducts seminars for Afrikaans teachers from different backgrounds.

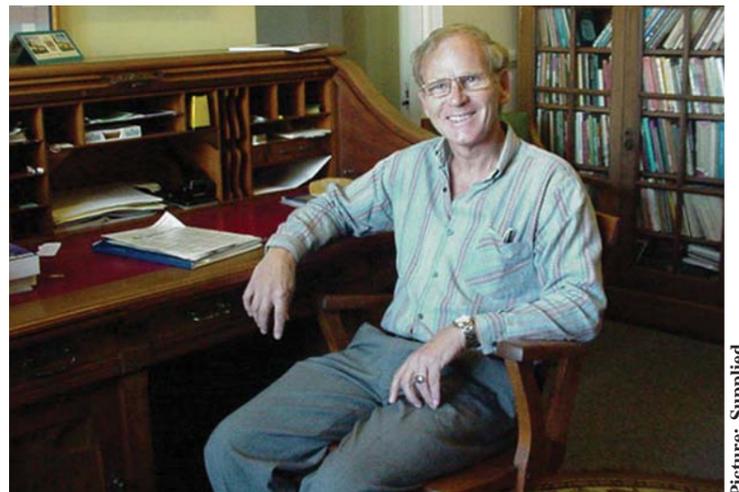
Professor van der Berg is the President of the South African Association for Language Teaching and a member of an inter-

denominational team of translators for the Bible Association of South Africa.

His interest in new methodologies of teaching language motivated him to write and publish Grade 11 and 12 Afrikaans Language books which he recently completed. His passion is making language teaching more interesting and equipping learners and teachers with knowledge. Commenting on his Award, he said that: "It was great realising that people recognise me for my work."

Professor van der Berg supervises two PhDs and one Masters student. One of his students is exploring language policy at UKZN and how minority languages can be accommodated. Another student is looking at cultural iconicity in literature.

- Bhekani Dlamini



Professor Dietloff Z van der Berg.

Picture: Supplied

Worthy winner

AT the 2007 45th Congress of the Southern African Society for Plant Pathology (SASPP) held in Benoni, Plant Pathology MSc student, Ms Eve du Preez, from UKZN's School of Biochemistry, Genetics, Microbiology and Plant Pathology, won the Protein Research Foundation's award of R5 000 for the best MSc thesis sponsored by the Foundation in 2006.

This is not the first of Ms du Preez' awards for her research on the chemical control of soybean rust (*Phakopsora pachyrhizi*). In 2003, she was awarded the prize for the Best Student Paper and an Achievement Award at the annual SASPP congress. She won a Cochran Fellowship in 2005 and spent three weeks in the US with top soybean rust scientists in

various universities and departments of the United States Department of Agriculture. That same year the SASPP awarded her the Applied Plant Pathology Award.

Research on soybean rust in the Discipline of Plant Pathology at UKZN has received both national and international recognition. Both Ms du Preez and her supervisor, Dr Pat Caldwell, were invited speakers at the VII World Soybean Research Conference in Brazil in 2004. Dr Caldwell was one of 12 international soybean rust experts invited to a Monsanto Workshop on soybean rust in St Louis, in the US in 2005 to share results from research on this pathogen that has now spread to most of the soybean growing areas of the world.

These studies have impacted greatly on the excellent management and control of the pathogen for South African soybean growers. With outbreaks in South and more recently North America, the research has found application internationally as well.

- Pat Caldwell



Picture: Supplied

Dr Pat Caldwell (left) with Plant Pathology MSc student, Ms Eve du Preez, winner of the 2006 Protein Research Foundation's best MSc sponsored thesis.

Research Chairs

PROMINENT academics and researchers, Professor Sunil Maharaj from the School of Mathematical Sciences, Westville campus and Professor Steve Johnson from the School of Biological and Conservation Sciences, Pietermaritzburg campus have been awarded the South African Research Chairs for a five year period valued at R2.5m and R1.5m respectively.

Professor Maharaj, Director of the Astrophysics and Cosmology Research Unit in the School of Mathematical Sciences is the recipient of the Chair in Gravitating Systems. His primary research areas involve modeling of astrophysical processes in stars and the mathematics of large scale dynamics in cosmology.

Professor Johnson, Professor in the School of Biological and Conservation Sciences was awarded the Chair in Evolutionary Biology. His main area of research includes the field of evolutionary biology and has a specific focus on plant-pollinator interactions.

The South African Research Chairs Initiative (SARChI) was recently launched by the National Research Foundation and the Department of Science and Technology. The purpose of this award is to increase the number of world class researchers in South Africa, and to make the country competitive in the international research arena. UKZN is the second largest producer of published research by a South African institution.

- Indu Moodley

Crop scientist scoops awards

Associate Professor of Crop Science, Albert Thembinkosi Modi, who is also renowned for his work with the Ezemvelo Farmer's Organisation in producing and marketing traditional crops to Woolworths, made history at a recent congress held in Badplaas in the Mpumalanga province.

The Combined Congress of the South African Society of Crop Production (SASCP), the Soil Science Society of South Africa and the Southern African Society of Horticultural Sciences is an annual event that attracts South African and international experts

interested in issues pertaining to soils, crops and the environment.

UKZN was well represented at this year's conference with staff and students from the disciplines of Crop Science, Soil Science and Horticultural Sciences presenting oral and poster presentations on a variety of current research topics. Professor Modi, however, took the honours when he won the prize for the best oral presentation for a person under 40 years of age as well as the overall prize for the best poster presentation at the congress. In terms of the history of the SASCP and the Combined Congress, this was a major milestone

because never before has one person simultaneously won awards for an oral and a poster presentation at one conference.

A further highlight for Professor Modi was his election as President of the South African Society of Crop Production. He is the first Black president of the society since its inception in 1971. The SASCP is a science-based organisation that "provides leadership in crop science to promote training, research and technology" with an emphasis on sustainability and benefit to society.

Professor Modi's presentations at the congress focused on his basic seed science research and his rural development work. His oral paper entitled "Towards a vegetable seed vigour model" dealt with the prediction of seed performances for purposes of seed testing and seedling production. His poster presentation centred on a water harvesting approach for small-holder farmers.

"It was certainly one of the highlights of my career", said Professor Modi of the congress. He attributes his achievements to the conducive environment at the University and to the tremendous support he has received over the years from the University's Research Office. "I hope that the academic freedom I enjoy at the University will continue to exist and be cause for my future success as a researcher, lecturer and community volunteer".

- Vicky Crookes



Professor Modi with the trophies he won at the Combined Congress.

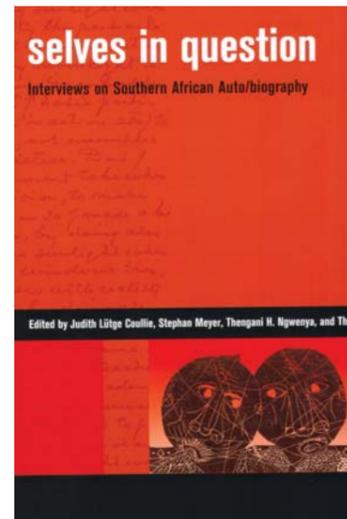
New book

Selves in Question: Interviews on Southern African Auto/Bio-graphy, edited by Judith Lütge Coullie (UKZN), Stephan Meyer (University of Basel), Thengani Ngwenya (UKZN) and Thomas Olver (independent scholar), was recently published by the University of Hawaii Press. It is the inaugural volume of the University of Hawaii Press' *Writing Past Colonialism* series.

The *Writing Past Colonialism* series is the brainchild of the Institute of Postcolonial Studies, an autonomous educational institution linked to the University of Melbourne.

Selves in Question has a comprehensive and extensive introduction and 27 interviews by a number of interviewers, representing a range of disciplinary interests. Amongst the interviewers there are academics from Education, Psychology, English, Drama and Performance Studies and Yiddish studies.

The book examines the various ways in which auto/biographical accounts – across a range of genres – situate and question the self in contemporary southern Africa. Those interviewed include writers and performers, the hardly known as well as the famous (such as Ezekiel Mphahlele, JM Coetzee



and Doris Lessing). The men and women interviewed hail from Zimbabwe, Namibia, South Africa, Mozambique and Lesotho. The interviews (all in English) draw on a wealth of languages which the interviewees use in their auto/biographical texts: isiZulu, Xhosa, Afrikaans, Sesotho, English and Yiddish.

The book was the subject of no less than three launches around the world in 2006: at the South Africa Book Fair in June; at the International Auto/Biography Conference in Mainz, Germany in July; and at the Institute for Postcolonial Studies in Melbourne, Australia in August.

Article: Supplied

Music maestro

BULELANI Madikizela (23), an undergraduate student at the School of Music, will represent South Africa at the Queen Sonja International Music Competition in Australia in August.

Bulelani was nominated after arduous auditions last year. This competition is held annually in co-operation with the Norwegian National Opera, Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra, the Norwegian Academy of Music and the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation. Her Majesty Queen Sonja attends the finals and present prizes to winners.

Bulelani's career started when he performed his first solo audition for a UKZN scholarship. He won the Classical performers competition in August last year; and he often performs in the lunch hour concerts on the Howard College campus



Bulelani Madikizela.

organised by Debbie Mari from the School of Music.

- Thembeke Dlungwane

Fogarty reunion

IN February, HIV and Tuberculosis researchers gathered to celebrate the reunion of the Columbia University-Southern Africa Fogarty AIDS International Training and Research Programme (CU-SA AITRP) organised by Professor Quarraisha Abdool Karim, Programme Director.

The programme promotes and supports scientific research and training internationally to reduce disparities in global health. It plays a leading role in formulating and implementing biomedical research and policy. It has played a critical role for two decades in building and enhancing research in South Africa and globally to respond to the TB and HIV epidemics.

The theme, "Building Sustainable HIV and Tuberculosis Research Capacity" offered researchers an opportunity to explore the lessons learnt in building HIV and tuberculosis science capacity.

The CU-SA AITRP training offers short and long term programmes. It has trained large numbers of people in Namibia, Lesotho, Swaziland and South Africa. The CU-SA AITRP has consciously tried to contribute to the building of a new South Africa by drawing on and developing the intellectual resources of all segments of the population. The programme has prioritised the selection and mentoring of trainees from population groups previously excluded from careers in science. The majority of trainees have been from previously disadvantaged groups and almost two thirds have been women.

The trainees have been productive as evidenced by over 830 publications that have appeared in peer-review journals. These papers have been published in high impact journals such as *Nature*, *Science*, *Lancet*, *JAIDS*, *AIDS*, and the *Journal of Infectious Diseases*.

- Professor Quarraisha Abdool Karim and Thembeke Dlungwane

Proud of our Proteas

The South African Men's Hockey Team welcomed new coach Gregg Clark at the beginning of 2007. UKZN full sports scholarship holders Wade Paton (Howard College) Tommy Hammond, PG Geldenhys and Geoff Abbott (Pietermaritzburg) were selected to represent their

country in the important build up to the Olympic Games in Beijing in 2008.

The team gathered at OR Tambo airport on 3 January for what would be a testing month of hockey. They started off by playing Scotland in a four game series.

South Africa won the series. The second test was against a powerhouse in world hockey, Spain. South Africa lost both matches in the two match series. South Africa lost against Ireland, but won the series against Belgium 3-2. Overall it was a great month for South African hockey!



RARING TO GO: The South African Men's Hockey Team.

Dance Club achievements

IN 2006 the UKZN Dance Club undertook a community project in which members of the Club taught the grade 10 scholars at Chesterville Secondary School Ballroom and Latin American Dancing.

This project proved to be a great success with five couples from the class participating in the *Shall We Dance* production. This production was produced by the Dance Club's coach Neville Letard. Furthermore,

five of these young talented couples have taken their dancing to another level and are continuing with private lessons.

Throughout the year various members of the Club participated in the SAADA and SADTA dance competitions with excellent results.

The Interschool Competition held at Stellenbosch proved to be a great

success with UKZN coming fourth overall.

This year our student Candice Upfold and her partner David Le Roux took part in the New Year Dance Festival on 24 February and were placed second Adult Bronze Ballroom; second Adult Bronze Latin; and second Open Mambo. They have accumulated the required points and have been promoted to silver.

SASSU Badminton Championships

UKZN's Howard College campus was the proud host of this year's SASSU (South African Student Sports Union) Badminton tournament from 2-7 April.

The tournament followed the SASSU rules and regulations and there were three sections. UKZN featured in sections A and C (A being the most competitive and C for development teams).

UKZN Badminton has a proud record. Kerry Harrington (Sport Science student) is the top seed (ranked number one not only in SA Student sport but also in SA as a whole). The current organiser and HOD for Sport at Howard College was part of the SASSU delegation to Asia in October 2006 where the world's best players of badminton hail from.

Students who would like to join the Badminton Club should contact Sports Administration, Student Union Building 3rd Floor, Howard College campus. Tel: (031) 260 1377.

Send your diary of events to events@ukzn.ac.za



AIDS HELPLINE
☎ 0800-0123-22

Canoeing champs

UKZN paddlers did well at the KNCU prizegiving which was hosted in Pietermaritzburg on 16 February. The club as a whole (Howard College, Westville and Pietermaritzburg campuses) has done UKZN proud and some individuals really excelled especially in the ladies section.

KZN Colours: (u21)

- Michelle Eder (HC)
- Shaun Griffin (PMB)
- Tyron Kimble (HC)
- Danica Vorster (HC)
- Tiffany Kruger (HC)
- Craig Mustard (PMB)

KZN Colours: (senior)

- Tiffany Kruger (HC)
- Pippa Elliot (HC)
- Scott Humphry (PMB)
- Hillary Pitchford (PMB)

KZN Colours: (Canoe Polo)

- Kade Burnett (HC – external member)
- Theresa Cameron (HC)
- Micole Moses (HC)
- Dean Oellermann (PMB)

Canoeists of the Year:

- u21 Man – Shaun Griffin (PMB)
- u21 Woman – Tiffany Kruger (HC)
- Woman – Tiffany Kruger (HC)

Women's Cricket

THE UKZN women's team is currently at the top of the KZN league table and is participating in the 20/20 phase of the competition. Trisha Chetty, a student at UKZN, was selected as the wicket keeper/batter for the SA Women's team and was outstanding in the series against Pakistan in January. Another student, Dinesha

Devnarain, was selected for the SA Invitation side. Our UKZN team has been strengthened with the likes of Jenna Hambrook and Prudence Gcabashe, Noleen Turner and Nivasha Ramnath who all represent KwaZulu-Natal.

Articles by Karen Sharratt



Pictures: Supplied

Recycle your ukzndaba

Please don't litter ... when you've finished with your ukzndaba, why not pass it on to someone else, or place it in a bin for recycling with other paper-waste.