The UKZN Annual Research Dinner on December 1 recognised the contribution made by academics in advancing the research status of UKZN and also saw the launch of the UKZN Research Report 2008/2009 and UKZN Research Voices, a new publication from the Research Office.

In his keynote address, the Vice-President of the National Research Foundation (NRF) and UKZN alumnus Dr Gansen Pillay focused on what he termed the “ugly and bad” challenges facing South African Higher Education Institutions, and the “good and new” developments in research. Dr Pillay cited the AIDS pandemic and the misconceptions of transformation as the ‘ugly’, alluding to the millions of lives the disease continues to claim in Africa, and the adverse effects of a narrow view of transformation. He said Higher Education needed to make decisions in responding to these issues.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Professor Nelson Ijumba launched the Annual Research Report 2008/2009. He congratulated all categories of researchers who featured in the Research Report owing to success in their research areas. UKZN’s research output increased by 13 percent over the past two years, while the proportion of research active staff increased from 69 to 75 percent. Professor Ijumba said that the increased research capacity among African women must be applauded, largely due to the work done by the Women in Research Academy, an initiative of the Research Office.

Launching UKZN Research Voices, University Dean of Research, Professor Cheryl Potgieter explained that the publication aims to make the University’s research output accessible to a diverse range of readers, and to promote the new UKZN Research Focus Areas. The new Focus Areas are: HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis (TB) and Health Promotion; Biotechnology; Water; Environment and Biodiversity; Social, Development and Economic Studies; Agriculture and Food Security; Energy and Technology for Sustainable Development; Gender, Race and Identity Studies; Indigenous African Knowledge Systems; and Maritime Studies. Each edition of UKZN Research Voices will feature a chosen focus area. For the inaugural edition, the focus area was HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis (TB) and Health Promotion. Professor Potgieter explained that the launch of the first edition on World AIDS Day was no coincidence.

UKZN’s researchers in the categories of South African Research Chairs, University Fellows, and NRF A-Rated Researchers were acknowledged. Two new awards – the DVC Research Award for the Top Published Researcher, and the Dean of Research Award for the Top Published Woman Researcher at UKZN – were presented to Professor Johannes van Staden (School of Biological and Conservation Sciences: Top Published Researcher 2008), Professor Steven Johnson (School of Biological and Conservation Sciences: Top Published Researcher 2009), Professor Colleen Downs (School of Biological and Conservation Sciences: Top Published Researcher 2008), Professor Steven Johnson (School of Biological and Conservation Sciences: Top Published Researcher 2009), Professor Colleen Downs (School of Biological and Conservation Sciences: Top Published Researcher 2008), and Dr Sarojini Nadar (School of Religion and Theology: Top Published Woman Researcher 2009).
Bekukhangiswa ezobunjiniyela ezhimba phambili

Ubuchule nobungcweteli bekukhamba phambili ngesikhathi abafundi baseNyuselisayi yakeZulu-Natal abayikhulu nambili abena unyaka wokugcina ezifunzweni zobunjiniyela kwezozegesi nezamakhompuyutha bebekhangisa ngomsebenzi wabo esikhungweni sase Howard College.

UKZN Commemorates World AIDS Day

In commemoration of World AIDS Day on December 1, UKZN hosted simultaneous public lectures at the Nelson R Mandela School of Medicine, and the Westville and Howard College campuses on November 29 and on the Edgewood campus on December 1.

Professor Nceba Gqaleni lights candles in memory of those who have passed on and in support of those infected and affected by HIV and AIDS.

**UKZN Commemorates World AIDS Day**

**On the Westville campus, Professor Quarraisha Abdool Karim, Associate Scientific Director at the Centre for the AIDS Programme of Research in South Africa (CAPRISA) provided an update of advances made in HIV prevention in 2010 during a lecture titled: What’s new in HIV Prevention? She outlined a series of scientific studies, including the CAPRISA 004 Study, initiated in 2007 which aimed at developing an effective microbicide for women who were at risk of being infected with HIV. The study produced ground breaking results.**

Professor Abdool Karim recognised the importance of global solidarity in the fight against HIV and AIDS, and the role of the scientific community, advocacy groups, government leadership and collaboration among stakeholders for making a difference. She raised concern over the continued increase in HIV infections in KwaZulu-Natal and stressed the importance of individuals knowing their HIV status so as to seek the necessary treatment if one is HIV positive, or protect themselves against the possibility of HIV infection in future, if uninfected.

At the Nelson R Mandela School of Medicine the Director of the HIV Pathogenesis Programme, Professor Thymbi Ndhung’u discussed strides made towards a vaccine for HIV in his lecture: At a Crossroad in HIV Vaccine Research: Challenges and Emerging Opportunities.

Almost 30 years without a cure for HIV may seem a long time; but Professor Ndhung’u explained that a vaccine to combat polio was made 47 years after the virus was discovered. “HIV is unique because it is very diverse and there are no cases of natural cure once somebody is infected. Therefore, it will require much more innovation and research to develop a vaccine against HIV.”

On the Howard College campus, Professor Alan Whiteside, the Founder and Director of the Health Economics and HIV/AIDS Research Division (HEARD) emphasised HIV prevention in his lecture, Safe SEX. No Sex: Could it Work? An Innovation Response for Preventing HIV Transmission.

He proposed a campaign in South Africa that promoted safe sex or abstinence among all sexually active people for a month. Professor Whiteside believes his idea is a unique behavioural intervention where a population-wide safe sex/ no sex effort for a set period of time could make a significant contribution to global prevention efforts.

“If everyone in a population abstained from high-risk sex for a given period of time, in theory the viral loads of all recent seroconverters should pass through the acute infection period. When risk behaviour resumed there would be almost no individuals in the high-viraemia phase thereby reducing infectivity and HIV incidence.
UKZN in partnership with the Department of Arts and Culture and the Chief Albert Luthuli Foundation hosted the Lecture in commemoration of the political stalwart who was renowned for his commitment to the fight against apartheid. This was the fourth time the University has hosted the Lecture, which is an initiative of the National Legacy Project that seeks to promote the ideals of anti-apartheid heroes who played a pivotal role in eradicating the discriminatory apartheid regime. This year’s Lecture was especially significant as it not only celebrated the achievements of Chief Albert John Mvumbi Luthuli but marked the 50th anniversary of his bestowal with a Nobel Peace Prize, making him the first African to receive the prestigious award.

Hundreds of guests, among them the UKZN academics, political leaders, the diplomatic corps, prominent members of the judiciary, national and provincial government officials and students converged to hear President Zuma present the Lecture on the theme, Service to Mankind. In the run up to President Zuma’s talk guests viewed the Luthuli Museum Exhibition which presented a pictorial history of Chief Luthuli, that made him stand out as a leader and statesman. Luthuli did not believe in words without facts, in action without results. He was an active agent of change. We learnt that at his first teaching post in Blaaubosch he emphasised the importance of intellectual development. He would not let children suffer what oppressors had designed for them,” said President Zuma.

In a message appearing in a commemorative Lecture brochure, UKZN Vice-Chancellor, Professor Malegapuru Makgoba described Chief Luthuli as a “remarkable individual” and “iconic figure” who believed that every individual had the right to freedom. “At this juncture in our history it is imperative that institutions of higher learning promote Luthuli’s ideals which should form part of the holistic learning process. The new generation of leaders should embody his virtues and a deep sense of community that is fundamental to the success of nations,” said Professor Makgoba.

UKZN Chancellor and Premier of KwaZulu-Natal, Dr Zweli Mkhize said that UKZN should be commended for its role in initiating a series of lectures over the years in honour of Chief Luthuli’s life work.

The Minister of Arts and Culture, Mr Paul Mashatile said his Ministry’s support of the Albert Luthuli Memorial Lecture 2010 was in line with its goal to honour the life of an icon and ensure that his vision and values were passed on from one generation to another.

The Lecture was followed by a press conference and gala dinner.

UKZN’s ‘Centenary Walk’

As part of the Centenary celebrations, a row of trees was planted on the main Pietermaritzburg campus on December 3, to create what will be known as ‘Centenary Walk’. Dr Peter Green, the Councillor for Scottsville and a former lecturer at UKZN was one of the stakeholders who planted a tree.

Showcasing Engineering at its best

Ingenuity and innovation were the order of the day when 102 of UKZN’s fourth-year electrical, electronic and computer engineering students displayed their final-year design projects at the School’s 34th Open Day on November 24 on the Howard College campus.

UKZN’s Vice-Chancellor, Professor Malegapuru Makgoba (right) welcomes South African President, Mr Jacob Zuma (left). Looking on are the Minister of Arts and Culture, Mr Paul Mashatile (2nd from the left) and Dr Zweli Mkhize, UKZN Chancellor and the Premier of KwaZulu-Natal.

The culmination of five solid weeks of intense design, the students’ projects are a test of their ability to survive as design engineers and form the pinnacle of their design activities during their four-year engineering degree. The projects are judged, according to strict criteria, by panels of internal and external examiners, and prize winners in each category are determined. The prizes, which are all sponsored by industry, are presented to the winners by industry representatives at a special awards ceremony at the end of the Open Day.

Several high-achieving women featured amongst the top prize winners including Ms Anna Zawilska, who received the Reutersh Communications Prize for the Most Innovative Design Implementation in Electronic Engineering and the Altron Group Prize for being the Best Final Year Student; and Ms Reevana Balmahoon, who won two CSIR-sponsored prizes in Computer Engineering for being the best student and for having the best design project.

Ms Zawilska’s project focused on the field of research known as “Human-Computer Interaction” that involves finding improved and more natural ways of interacting with a computer. She dealt specifically with direction and gesture hand monitoring which is based on the premise that instead of using a mouse or a touch screen to interact with a computer, you can do things by pointing and moving your hands. Boasting a current average of 94 percent and achieving 100 percent for eight of her courses in her degree programme, Ms Zawilska has been described as “undoubtedly the brightest student the School of Electrical, Electronic and Computer Engineering has ever had.” She attributes her success to hard work, persistence, time management and discipline. She said: “The resources are here and ready for the grasping everything is the challenge.”

An Eye Motion Tracker by Ms Balmahoon showed how it is possible to track and move a cursor accurately and speedily on a computer screen merely by eye movement. Also possessing an impressive academic record, Ms Balmahoon plans to continue studying and will register next year for a Masters degree in the area of communication and security.

Other innovative projects on display included a system that allows a vehicle to perform parallel parking without direct human interaction, a graphical user interface and database for a Zulu-English translator, an automated fingerprint-based examination attendance register and an autonomous digital sphygmomanometer which is a device that is used to measure the systolic and diastolic blood pressure of a human being.

The complement of major prize winners included: Mr Robert Jermyn, Most Innovative Design Project in Computer Engineering; Mr Duncan Frost, Best Final Year Electronic Engineering Design Project; Mr Abdul Qadir Amra, Best Final Year Student in Power Systems and Best Final Year Student in Electrical Engineering; Mr Abohlulphele Amura, Best Control Systems Project; and Mr Nkuluwhele Mazibuko and Mr Velosin Govender who placed first and second for the Best Electrical Engineering Fourth Year Design Project.

Showcasing Engineering at its best
2010 in retrospect

As 2010 drew to a close, UKZNDAZA asked the Deans of UKZN’s Faculties to identify the highs and lows of the past year, and the challenges that lie ahead.

Words: Lunga Memela and Sithembile Shabangu Photo: Supplied

Faculty of Education

In 2010, the University Senate’s Analysis of Research Productivity at UKZN named the Faculty of Education as “the Most Improved Faculty in Research Output.”

Dean of the Faculty, Professor Michael Samuel was proud to announce that 21 PhD students graduated from their Faculty in the April 2010 graduation. “Almost 48% of all permanent staff have a PhD (almost 10% higher than the university average), and 26% are registered for a PhD,” he said. He also said that the Faculty has now “the largest doctoral programme in education in the country”.

The launch and appointment of Professor Relebohile Molotsane as the John Langalibalele Dube Chair in Rural Education in September was also a significant milestone for the Faculty. Professor Samuel was appointed as a member of Commonwealth Advisory Council on Teacher Mobility, Recruitment and Retention; Advisory Endorsement Committee for Continuing Professional Teacher Development.

Professor Samuel was appointed chairman of the Commonwealth Professional Teacher Development Committee for Continuing Professional Development in Thermodynamics. The Committee was established to review the state of Education and Development in Thermodynamics.

The Faculty is challenged to develop the Faculty’s undergraduate programmes and engage on the scale and scope of operations and the modes of delivery for the different Faculty sectors.

Faculty of Engineering

In reviewing the year 2010, including achievements of 2009 reported in 2010, the Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, Professor Fambirai Takawira said that some of the highlights for the Faculty include “a pleasing improvement in the overall pass rates and graduation rate.”

He added that the Faculty had an Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA) accreditation visit for the undergraduate programmes in Electrical Electronic and Computer and Chemical Engineering. The project was coordinated by Professor Johan Wimmermann and Ms. Angela Bryne.

Some of the achievements in the Faculty included the winning of the University’s Student Engineering Council. The Faculty now looks forward to the re-curricularisation of all engineering education programmes, the finalisation of the conversion of the Student Dining Hall into a lecture theatre complex; the establishment of new office space for academic and support staff; and the establishment of a large-scale research project undertaken by the School of Education and Development.

The Faculty included the winning of the 2009 national South African Institute of Engineers prize for the best final year project by an Electronic Engineering student, Mr. Yashren Reddi. Mr. Chun-Tsung Feng from Mechanical Engineering won the Engineering Council of South Africa Medal as the best graduating engineering student from UKZN in 2009.

On the social front, the Faculty had an excellent year with their inter-programme and inter-school soccer matches. “There was also good cooperation between the Faculty and the Student Engineering Council.”

The Umgeni Chair in Water Process Thermodynamics, established in 2010, we established the following Chair in Fluorine Process Technology, won the Eskom sponsored National Science and Technology Forum (NTSF) award for research capacity development in thermodynamics. Professor Takawira said: “In 2010 we established the following prestigious postdoctoral chairs: The Umgeni Chair in Water Process Thermodynamics.”

From left: Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching and Learning, Professor Renuka Vithal (back); Dean of Education, Professor Michael Samuel; Vice-Chancellor, Professor Malegapuru Makgoba and the MEC for Education in Kwazulu-Natal, Mr Senzo Mchunu at the opening ceremony.

Professor Michael Samuel.

Top women prize winners, Ms Reevana Balmahoon (left) and Ms Anna Zawilska, give Open Day “the thumbs up” as they pose with the Dean of Engineering, Professor Fambirai Takawira.

Professor Fambirai Takawira.
Memorial Seminar sponsored by the College of Humanities.

Professor Takwira said that amongst the challenges faced with the Faculty of Engineering in 2010, there were serious budget constraints that limited the flexibility and growth of the Faculty, and difficulties in attracting academic staff, especially at senior levels. He added that a difficult decision was made to stop admissions into the Property Development Programme from 2011 as a result of chronic under-staffing – this is despite good demand from prospective students and from industry for graduates from the programme.

He added though that in 2011, the Faculty will need to expedite effort in planning for the proposed elimination of faculties and merging of schools into mega-schools. “The challenges of budgetary constraints and scarcity of qualified academic staff will remain with us. We also have an ECSA accreditation visit to Mechanical Engineering for which preparations are well underway,” he added.

At undergraduate level, the Faculty will continue to foster good staff-student relations and provide an excellent learning environment to improve success rates. The UNITe programme which provides an alternative access route for students from disadvantaged backgrounds will run a new curriculum aimed at introducing more first year content from 2011.

At postgraduate level, the Faculty will endeavour to attract more of our top students to stay for postgraduate degrees and to grow post-doctoral student numbers. “We will continue to encourage increased quality and quantity of our research outputs,” he said.

Faculty of Health Sciences

Substantial investment in infrastructure in the Department of Education’s Infrastructure and Efficiency and Clinical Training Grants resulted in the tele-health platform in the School of Nursing, state-of-the-art skills laboratories in Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy and the new Dean’s Suite and Faculty Administration Office.

The Faculty’s Research productivity hit an all-time high and research into teaching and learning gained momentum. Several staff securing substantial grants, notably the £100 000 Mobilizing Regional Capacity Initiative (MRCI) grant from the Association of African Universities obtained by the Dean of the Faculty, Professor Sabitha Essack to undertake research on Access, Retention and Success in African Higher Education.

The Faculty faced the perennial challenge of over-subscription to its programmes, turning eligible candidates away because of an underfunded clinical teaching and training platform and inadequate infrastructural resources that preclude an increase in student numbers.

“The Faculty is working with the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health on the King Edward VIII Hospital, a flagship project of the National Department of Health, creating an academic hospital which will be the primary student placement site for all healthcare professionals,” said Professor Essack.

“Academics from the two Faculties in the College of Health Sciences came together to form the inaugural multi-disciplinary research collaborative with representatives from the province’s Departments of Health, Education and Social Development, resulting in the proposed Developmental Disabilities Research Unit,” she said.

The Faculty welcomes the allocation of the Health Professionals Training and Development Grant to Universities in 2011 which will allow the definition of a new and expanded clinical training platform with an emphasis on rural and primary healthcare.

“We are committed to engage- ment with the recommendations emanating from the review of the College Model to optimise teaching, learning, research, scholarship and community engagement at the University,” said Professor Essack.

Faculty of Humanities, Development, and Social Sciences (HDSS)

In terms of research productivity and postgraduate students, three Schools in the Faculty were placed in the top five overall in the University in 2010: the Schools of Development Studies (2nd), Anthropology, Gender and Historical Studies (3rd), and Religion and Theology (4th). The Faculty produced 43 doctoral students, and a large number of Masters and Honours students.

Three members of staff were ranked among the ten best researchers in the University and a number of other staff also excelled in research. Three professors from the Faculty presented Inaugural Lectures and an impressive number of books were penned by the Faculty’s academics.

Three Distinguished Teachers’ Awards were awarded to academics in the Faculty. “The fact that this constituted the highest number of teaching awards ever awarded to a single Faculty in any given year, bears testimony to the high teaching standards in the HDSS,” said Dean of the Faculty, Professor Nhlanhla Mkize.

“Cognizant of the need to improve postgraduate output in general, the Faculty... conducted seven workshops on the supervision of candidates for higher degrees. These workshops were attended by both staff and students,” he added.

Professor Mkize also singled out the Faculty’s African Centre for Childhood (ACC) certificate programme – a distance learning programme with in-country support which is now offered to 10 countries in the southern African community; offering a UKZN-accredited certificate to caregivers in communities, in order to professionalise and strengthen service delivery to children, families and communities affected by HIV and AIDS.

The Faculty was challenged by a lengthy registration process due to the large intake of students. Professor Mkize is hopeful that there will be a smooth online registration process in 2011.

Professor Mkize added that he looks forward to the implementation of the University’s Bilingualism Policy, and the development of a major and an interdisciplinary postgraduate programme in African Indigenous Knowledge Systems. He extended his gratitude to his colleagues who coped with the fact that the Faculty started 2010 with a transitional leadership and without a Faculty Manager. Most of the Faculty leadership were appointed in an acting capacity, including leadership at the School level.

Faculty of Law

The year 2010 had special significance for the Faculty of Law, as the teaching of law in the province began in 1900.

Dean of the Faculty, Professor Managay Redli said: “To mark the centenary of Higher Education in the province, Law centenary celebrations were hosted throughout the year and involved a number of high-profile public lectures and alumni events, culminating in a Book Launch and Tree Planting Ceremony in October.”

The Faculty of Law boasts a number of outstanding...
achievements by staff and students. Law students participated in Moot Competitions at a number of levels. Professor Reddi said that the Faculty was proud of its two final year students who were awarded three prestigious scholarships between them: Mr Cherese Thakur and Ms Toni Palmer.

In an effort to attract the best students into the Faculty of Law, a high profile Law Scholarship Programme was presented by Professor Reddi and the Deputy Dean of Law, Professor Shannon Hctor, to the high school community at the end of July.

Five members of staff in the Faculty of Law featured in the University’s Top 30 Researchers for 2009. During 2010, the Faculty implemented a number of initiatives to strengthen and improve its research output.

Initiatives such as the Mentoring and Research Incentive Programmes (MARIP) continued and they were used by the Faculty to motivate established researchers to mentor emerging researchers in order to produce recognised publications.

The Faculty has appointed a Research Facilitator and Editor to assist academics with the conversion of research articles into publishable articles.

Professor Reddi said that there were a number of other initiatives to increase PhDs among staff. The Faculty of Law is proud of their two academics, Professor Ed Couzens and Dr Portia Ndlovu, who were awarded PhDs during the April 2010 graduation ceremonies.

Currently 15 law academics are registered for doctoral degrees and it is anticipated that at least seven of these staff members will complete their degrees by the end of 2011.

The South African Journal of Criminal Justice (SACJ) which was founded in Pietermaritzburg in 1988 and moved to the University of Cape Town with Professor Jonathan Burchell has returned to the University’s Faculty of Law under the editorship of Professor Hctor.

In an effort to increase postgraduate intake the Faculty of Law has introduced innovative, new cutting-edge Masters Modules as part of its current LLM Programmes. These Masters Modules are: Gambling Law, Politics of Law and Sports Law, and are available in 2011. Professor Reddi added that the University has invested over R8.5m on the upgrading of teaching and learning facilities and resources on the Howard College and Pietermaritzburg campuses.

Based on the successes it achieved this year, the Faculty plans to consolidate and improve its position as a leading Law Faculty nationally.

Faculty of Management Studies

2010 was a productive year for the Faculty of Management Studies in terms of research, international conferences, the Centenary celebrations and a number of other achievements by staff and students.

Dean of the Faculty, Professor Lesley Stainbank, said the Faculty has implemented a number of initiatives to promote a research ethos. Four staff members were conferred with PhDs during the April Graduation Ceremonies. Currently 20 staff members are registered for doctoral degrees and 47 for a Masters degree.

Workshops presented by visiting academics in 2010 included Getting Published by Professor Richard Wilson; and Making Your Academic Record Rigorous and Relevant, presented by Professor Dan Remenyi. A number of writing workshops were held for Masters students.

An Academic Research Co-ordinator has been appointed by the Faculty to strengthen and improve research output. The Co-ordinator will also be responsible for the conversion of masters and doctoral thesis into publishable research articles.

Highlights included the hosting of three international conferences, where academic staff members attended and presented papers.

The Technology, Entertainment and Design (TED) and UKZN Conference was hosted by the School of Information Systems and Technology, and the second NETRIS seminar was hosted by the School of Economics and Finance. The Graduate School of Business hosted the 12th Annual multi-disciplinary conference on World Wide Web Applications.

Professor Stainbank said: “In celebration of the centenary of Higher Education in KwaZulu-Natal, the Faculty of Management Studies hosted an Alumni Reunion Dinner where the Chairperson of the Business Leadership South Africa and Co-Chairperson of the Millennium Labour Council, Dr Bobby Godsell, delivered a thought provoking keynote address which was titled: South Africa’s Road to Becoming a Developed Country.”

“The event reunited, for the first time since the merger, Management Studies graduates of the former University of Durban-Westville and the University of Natal as well as Management Studies graduates from UKZN,” she added. Three public lectures were also hosted as part of the Centenary celebrations.

The Graduate School of Business (GSB) won the FNB KZN Top Business Portfolio Award in the Social and Community Service category in recognition of their contribution to community outreach.

“The Faculty of Management Studies acknowledges and rewarded top performing students throughout the year. A number of events were hosted in celebration of academic excellence which saw students from various academic levels recognised for good academic performance. Students from the Pietermaritzburg and Westville campuses from first year level up to Doctoral level were honoured with certificates and cash prizes,” added Professor Stainbank.

The School of Management will offer four new Postgraduate Diplomas in Finance, Banking and Investment Management; Marketing; Management; and Human Resources Management.

The postgraduate programmes are aimed at helping individuals in the private and public sector sharpen their business acumen.

The Faculty of Management Studies successfully launched two Local Economic Development (LED) Programmes in April 2010. The Postgraduate Diploma and Masters Programmes are offered to existing LED practitioners.

The University has invested R10 million in the refurbishment of the Westville campus J block 2nd level and in the creation of new space for the Leadership Centre at Westville. Management Studies students now have access to world-class teaching and learning facilities.

In 2011 the Faculty will host the 2nd Business Management Conference at the Graduate School of Business from September 28-30; and the 23rd Southern Africa Institute for Management Scientists Conference.

Nelson R Mandela School of Medicine (NRMSM)

The NRMSM which was established in 1950, marked its 60th Anniversary with a week of celebrations including a Research Symposium, a Clinical Conference, the Steve Biko Commemorative Lecture, a Cultural Day and a Gala Dinner.

Under the leadership of its Dean, Professor Willem Sturm, the NRMSM is proud of its achievements in research in 2010. On April 8, UKZN formalised research collaboration with...
the signing of three Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with the Oslo University Hospital (Norway), the University of Agder (Norway) and the University of Antwerp (Belgium) in 2011. These MOUs are to undertake visits to six leading European institutions. Only three main partners in this project are the Oslo University Hospital and UKZN. It is envisaged that this project will have far-reaching, positive consequences for the fight against genital disease and HIV.

On May 26, UKZN and the Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) announced the appointment of Professor William Bishai as the first permanent Director of the KwaZulu-Natal Research Institute for Tuberculosis and HIV (K-RITH). The HHMI has committed R218 million for the construction of this research facility and a further US$40 million for research capacity development over a 10 year period.

UKZN’s Enhancing Care Initiative Unit successfully applied for the Medical Education Initiative Unit successfully applied for the Medical Education Initiative Fund and was awarded $10 million over the next five years for research equipment and facilities. The two Liquid Nitrogen plants for the Westville and Pietermaritzburg campuses were completed and commissioned at a cost of R7 million. Two state-of-the-art, high-resolution transmission electron microscopes (HR-TEM) for each of the microscopy facilities have been ordered at a cost of R9.2 million. In addition the NRF in collaboration with the Research Office awarded the Faculty the total sum of R7.9 million towards the purchase of a Field Emission Gun Scanning Electron Microscope. This investment should see the facilities at both centres equipped for the next 15 years. The Faculty also invested R2.8 million to fund 20 postdoctoral students in addition to the ones supported by the Research Office, i.e. two in each School.

Computer Science, together with the School of Literary Studies was awarded an Erasmus Mundus mobility grant, a SAPENT programme for 1,58 million euros, for UKZN postgraduate students and staff to undertake visits to six leading European institutions. Only three awards out of 83 applications were successful.

In 2010 a total of R11 million was invested in state-of-the-art equipment for teaching and research. This will make the Schools in the Faculty more competitive nationally and internationally. The Faculty also invested in the training of its access staff.

Students scooped a number of accolades too numerous to mention. A number of staff members in the Faculty were appointed to professional bodies.

In 2010 two staff members were named Fellows of the University; and a member of the Faculty received a Distinguished Teachers’ Award. The Faculty’s Emeritus Professors did it proud, receiving a number of prestigious awards.

In 2010 the Faculty exceeded the agreed Department of Higher Education and Training (DoHET) target of 3 450 by registering a total of 3 557 students. This means that the Faculty is three years ahead of their enrolment plan.

“The huge numbers of undergraduate students posed a challenge to all of us, but as usual the Faculty staff stood the test of time. As a Faculty we introduced for the first time the repeat teaching of MATHS 130 and CHEM 110 in both semesters as part of our strategy of meeting our enrolment target. This initiative has seen over 280 first year students who would not have completed the modules, complete and remain in the Faculty. The Faculty was able to raise over R11 million to fund our disadvantaged students in the Centre for Science Access,” said Professor Jagani.

The Faculty officially opened the new premises for the School of Biochemistry, Genetics and Microbiology on the Westville campus, bringing to an end the consolidation of schools due to the merger process and the creation of the Science Park on the Westville campus.

To strengthen the operations of its teaching and research support units, the Faculty reviewed its Central Academic Workshop, Electronic Workshop and Mechanical Instrument Workshop and implemented the recommendations. This is also true for the two microscopy facilities.

The Faculty held a number of activities as part of the centenary celebrations. The School of Chemistry in Pietermaritzburg hosted a very successful Centenary Celebration for its 100th birthday.

There are a number of plans in the Faculty for 2011. Plans are underway to introduce the Discipline of Genetics on the Westville Campus. The Faculty is currently investing approximately R10 million in renovation and equipping the laboratory in preparation. The biggest project is fund raising and constructing a R100 million African Institute of Sustainable Rural Livelihoods building in Pietermaritzburg. Funds permitting the Faculty plans to recruit a number of research professors and more postgraduate doctoral candidates to advance its research agenda.
The UKZN Griot
Of Responses and Respondents

This is my last column of the year, so like the international TV news services, an endless replay of the year’s coverage would seem to offer a sensible closure.

The UKZN Griot

Words: Keyan Tomaselli

My column has been greatly appreciated by many. I know this because some write me long philosophical responses debating issues I have raised. Others collate me in the corridors and at parties, and furtively congratulate me in the corridors and at parties, and furtively congratulate me on Special Leave, if properly made. On the other hand, there are many who are less motivated. Some departments however still have time to take tea once or twice a day, keeping up the appearance of academic collegiality. If every tea room was turned into an office or seminar room the space problem would disappear. Each building should then be allocated a single, welcoming, collegiate, shared and serviced space, for all. At the moment the tea rooms are protected by disciplines as was East Germany by the Berlin Wall.

The mess at the HC front gate continues unabated, as does the excessive noise – screamers seem to predominate at the MTB coffee shop (during term). The PMB folks have similar problems what with rallies on the grass but otherwise life there seems to be more tranquil, certainly of a 9-5 nature. A dean once got locked into the Admin block there when working late. At HC, I often arrive at 6am to try to get some work done before staff, students and e-mails interrupt my productivity. I am never the first to arrive, there are always a few students trickling their way onto campus from the drop-off zone before sunrise. Edgewood remains marooned amid an industrial area and Westville continues to squat on a ridge surrounded by an empty moat once used as a barrier by the military.

Corporate Relations continues to improve. Not only did I get a birthday card from my alma mater, Wits, but from the UKZN Vice-Chancellor also, personally signed. The new director of Corporate Relations has revealed herself in a photograph only once in the UKZN print media, but her appearance of her predecessor. PR is now about the institution, not personalities.

To wrap up, let me revisit with due acknowledgement to Wikipedia.

A griot (French pronunciation: [ɡʁi.ɔ]), English pronunciation: /ˈɡri.oʊ/, (to which no-one has to know many traditional songs without error, he must also have the ability to extemporize on current events, chance incidents and the passing scene. His wit can be devastating and his knowledge of local history formidable.”

That’s me! Although griots are popularly known as ‘praise singers’, griots may also use their vocal expertise for gossip, satire, or political comment. By calling myself a griot to which no-one has objected I give myself the necessary license to write what I write.

Keyan G Tomaselli is Director of the Centre for Communication, Media and Society. He has been known to perform on occasion in public and to gossip with historical intent.

Sudoku

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