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US DELEGATION VISITS AIDS Research projects at UKZN

On March 9, the Director of the United States National Institutes of Health (NIH), and the Head of the US President's Emergency Plan for Aids Relief (PEPFAR) led a US delegation on a visit of HIV/AIDS research project sites of UKZN.

WORDS & PHOTOS: MARYANN FRANCIS

Professor Salim Abdool Karim, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) and Director of the Centre for the AIDS Programme of Research in South Africa (CAPRISA), guided the delegation on a detailed tour of CAPRISA sites. The group included Dr Francis Collins, NIH Director who previously led the Human Genome Project, Ambassador Eric Goosby, the United States Global AIDS Co-ordinator in charge of PEPFAR, Ms Deborah van Zinkernagel, Deputy Global AIDS Co-ordinator, Dr Roger Glass, Director of the Fogarty International Centre, Dr Samuel Adeniyi-Jones, Director of the African Region, US Department of Health and Human Services and Ms Stacy Wallick, Public Health Analyst (NIH).

The NIH delegates started their visit with a tour of the Doris Duke Medical Research Institute, a visit to CAPRISA and an opportunity to see the building site and the plans for the new K-RITH building, currently under construction at the Nelson R Mandela School of Medicine. Guided by Professor Quarraisha Abdool Karim and Dr Kogie Naidoo, the PEPFAR delegates made an early start with a tour of the CAPRISA eThekweni clinic and the adjoining Prince Cyril Zulu Communicable Diseases Centre (PCZCDC), which is Durban's busiest Tuberculosis (TB) clinic where approximately 5 000 TB patients are treated each month.

Visiting the groundbreaking Microbicide Gel Trial research site in rural Vulindlela (near Howick), delegates were impressed with the warm welcome received from the community. Dr Collins said, 'There has been very exciting



Viewing the architect's impressions of the new K-RITH building at the CAPRISA Offices are, from left; Dr Roger Glass, Dr Francis Collins, Professor Malegapuru Makgoba, Vice-Chancellor, Professor Salim Karim, Ms Stacy Wallick, Professor Nelson Ijumba, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research and Dr Samuel Adeniyi-Jones.



Ambassador Goosby presents Professor Nceba Gqaleni with a gift from PEPFAR.

work done on the microbicide gel here. However, one should never forget that the work was possible only through the vision and leadership of a Chief that saw the benefit in partnering with CAPRISA for his community. The eyes of the world are upon you and you're a beacon of hope to the world. Not only are you doing God's work for your community but also for the world at large'.

Inkosi Zondi, traditional leader of the Vulindlela District gave an emotional account of how CAPRISA has benefited the community by reducing the number of deaths caused by HIV/AIDS. He said that all lives belong to God and as the leader of the community, he thanked PEPFAR and the US government for providing the funding for research of this kind to take place and pledged the ongoing support

of the Vulindlela community to the project.

Baba Sithole, the local pastor who is Chair of the Community Support Research Group in the district described how the project has impacted on the community by not only reducing the number of deaths but by educating the youngest members on HIV/AIDS. He said, 'A seven-year old at home knows how to take her AIDS medication and at her age, she knows that she needs to take the medication for life'.

Ambassador Goosby thanked the community for their willingness to engage and respond to the growing needs of the community. He said, 'Your ownership and investment in the project is gratifying'.

Professor Quarraisha Abdool Karim recounted the initial *imbizo* with the community where two traditional healers already on antiretroviral drugs disclosed their status and encouraged the community to be tested for HIV and to attend the CAPRISA clinic for AIDS treatment. She went on to say that in those years, members of the community would never share utensils or even a toilet used by an HIV/AIDS infected individual. This has turned around significantly through awareness and interaction with the PEPFAR provided AIDS education and treatment at the CAPRISA Vulindlela clinic.

Ms Gethwana Mahlase, who assists the researchers as the community liaison officer in the district, said that the current challenge facing the community is the growing number of orphaned children. The community has taken the initiative with the support of the

Law Professions' Day opens new horizons

UKZN's Faculty of Law held its annual Law Professions' Day on the Pietermaritzburg and Howard College campuses to provide students with an opportunity to interact with prospective employers.

WORDS & PHOTO: SITHEMBILE SHABANGU



Students interact with representatives from the Adams & Adams law firm at Law Professions' Day.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Head of the College of Law and Management Studies, Professor John Mubangizi said: 'Hosting the Law Professions' Day gives the Faculty an opportunity to explore and strengthen professional links and relationships – which is one of the main strategic objectives of the Faculty.'

UKZN alumnus Ms Samira Bayat, who graduated in 2004, recruits graduates for Bowman Gilfillan Attorneys. The law firm offers students bursaries every year, as well as summer and winter vacation programmes and a job shadow programme. Students are also given an opportunity to serve their articles with the firm. Bayat said the advice she would give to students in order for them to succeed is to maintain a good academic record, be passionate and be willing to put in the work.

Students turned up in their numbers to hear for themselves

what the companies had to offer, ask questions and hand over their CVs to the firms they would like to work for. Student, Mr Brian Mbokazi, said that the Law Professions' Day was very helpful. It showed students that there are many law firms out there. Some even offer international work. Mbokazi added that some of the information he got from the firms is something he wouldn't get in lectures.

Ms Lameeze Jean-Piere, an Associate for Bell Dewar Inc., advised students not to stop applying to companies even if they get no response, but cautioned them to apply at a time when they think they can get in. She added that vacation programmes are important, as firms get the opportunity to see what a student can do. Jean-Piere added that it is important for students to look for companies where they think they will get the best training. This will help them

decide if they want to specialise.

'Apart from exposing our students to the legal profession, the Law Professions' Day also serves to forge important links between the academics in the Law Faculty and the members of the profession. The most obvious benefit of this relationship is that our academics are kept abreast with the needs of the profession. As a result we are able to ensure that the training we offer to our students is always relevant and of the highest standard,' said the Dean of the Faculty of Law, Professor Managay Reddi.

As well as law firms, the National Prosecuting Authority and the Bar Association showcased their activities at Law Professions' Day. Professor Shannon Hoctor from the Law Faculty said that UKZN is grateful to the law firms for their presence on the day.

Abazali nabafundi bamatikiletsheni bakhuthazwe i-UKZN

Isigceme saseNewcastle (Amajuba District) sibe esokuqala ukuthamela imicimbi ehlelelwe ukucebisa abazali nabafundi bamatikiletsheni ngeminigwane ebalulekile mayelana nokuqhuba izifundo eNyuvesi yaKwaZulu-Natal (i-UKZN) mhla-ka 2 kuMbas.

AMAGAMA NESITHOMBE: LUNGA MEMELA

Isu lovokovakashela izigceme ngeziceme lizovula amathuba okufinyelela kubafundi bamatikiletsheni kanye nabazali abahlala kude nezikhungo zethu,' kusho Mnz Len Mzimela, uMqondisi we-University Relations and Marketing Support.

Ngokohlelo lwethimba elivakashela izikole e-UKZN, izigceme zaKwaZulu-Natali namaphethelo zizozuza ngokuthola ulwazi mayelana nemikhakha efundeleka e-UKZN, ukubaluleka kwemiphumela emihle ezingeni lamatikiletsheni mikhakhayonke, ukufuna isikhala eNyuvesi kanye nesikhathi esinqunyelwe, kanye nosizo olitholalayo ngokwezizimali zokufunda e-UKZN.

Abazali nabafundi ababehambele lomcimbi eNewcastle High School bajabulele ukuthola ulwazi olubalulekile, kakhulukazi ngezindlela nangesikhathi sokuqala ukufuna isikhala e-UKZN. Baphinde babonga ngokuthola ithuba lokubeka imibuzo ebebenayo mayelana

nezezimali kanye nezindawo zokuhlala abafundi eNyuvesi. Ochwepheshe bemikhakha eyahlukahlukeneyezemfundo eNyuvesi nabo bebhona behambisana neCentral Applications Office (CAO) okuyiyona eyamukela amafomu alabo abafuna izikhala e-UKZN.

Umpathi weSchools Liaison Unit, uMnz Wesley Canham ugcizelele ukubaluleka kokuzimisela ezifundweni kubafundi bamatikiletsheni. Uphinde wanxusa abazali ukuba bagququzele izingane zabo ukuba zizikhandle uma zizimisele ukufunda e-UKZN. I-UKZN iphakamisa ubunyoningco kwezemfundo nakwezocwaningo.

'Usuku lwanamhlanje lube usizo olukhulu kuthina bazali,' kusho uNkz Noncedo Cwele obehambele lomcimbi. UMnz Ranjiv Moodley kanye nendodana yakhe uPravin ezimisele ukuzofunda i-Mechanical Engineering e-UKZN bajabulele ukuthola izimpendulo ngemibuzo ebebenayo ngezifundo zasenyuvesi.

For the English version of this article, see page 6



Abafundi nabazali bajabulele ithuba lokubuzwa imibuzo ngemfundo ephakeme e-UKZN.

Continued from page 1

US Delegation

traditional leaders to provide a feeding scheme, home support and school uniforms and fees for 150 orphaned children in Vulindlela.

Ambassador Goosby and the PEPFAR representatives then went on to visit Professor Nceba Gqaleni's traditional medicine laboratories and were met by senior leadership of the Traditional Healers Association in the province. Professor Gqaleni informed the delegates of the patient referral system

where patients of the healers are requested to complete a consent form to allow the traditional healer to maintain a patient record. After the consultation, the healer will refer the patient to a nearby public health clinic for HIV counselling and testing. Aftercare, including treatment support, behavioral change counseling, and palliative care are among the services provided by the traditional healers.

The PEPFAR guests learned that, through the PEPFAR-

funded Traditional Healers Project, 1 200 traditional healers in three districts reported working with 85 000 patients who had seen them for the first time. Many of these patients would visit the traditional healer another four to five times for follow up. Virtually all of these patients were referred for HIV counselling and testing, and approximately 10 percent were offered palliative care. A study conducted in Hlabisa found that 84 percent of the population

would choose a traditional healer as a TB treatment advisor.

Ambassador Goosby said, 'The power of the natural healer in the culture and the wide acceptance of their role in the population should not be underestimated in delivering the HIV/AIDS message effectively'. He encouraged the healers to use their gift and the trust the community has in them to educate mothers in the community on the role they need to play in preventing mother

to child infections. 'I'm very impressed with the work you've accomplished and encourage you to continue to bring primary health care to the village level,' said Ambassador Goosby.

The Provincial AIDS Council, chaired by Premier Zweli Mkhize, is facilitating the expansion of the Traditional Healers Project to reach all 25 000 traditional health practitioners in the province.

NEW APPOINTMENTS AT UKZN



Mr Louwrens Butler
Lecturer
Mechanical
Engineering



Mr Eric Hadebe
Subject Librarian
Library Services,
Pietermaritzburg
campus



**Miss Nomakhwezi
Pride Khanyile**
Administrative Officer
Department of
Behavioural Medicine



**Ms Saziwe
Madikane**
Admin Assistant
Officer
Risk Management
Services



**Ms Sabathile
Magwanyana**
Faculty Officer
Faculty of
Humanities,
Development and
Social Sciences

UKZN Ornithologist Leads Bird ringing project

South Africa's longest-running bird ringing project at the Darvill Bird Sanctuary in Pietermaritzburg recently celebrated 30 years of monthly bird ringing.

WORDS: VICKY CROOKES PHOTO: SUPPLIED

UKN ornithologist, Dr Mark Brown, is the leader of this project which has seen over 30 000 birds, representing 200 species, ringed and their vital data recorded. Some of these ringed birds have been found as far afield as Latvia and Corsica.

The project was initiated in 1982 by Dr David Johnson of the former Natal Parks Board to track the movement of migrant and local birds. In 2003, Brown inherited the project and has been running it ever since, recording valuable data that plays an essential role in ornithological research. All the collected information is stored in the South African Bird Ringing Unit (SAFRING)'s data base which operates out of the Animal Demography Unit at the University of Cape Town.

The Darvill Bird Sanctuary, which forms part of the Pietermaritzburg sewage works, is an ideal site for capturing birds. Due to its high nutrient content, it represents a haven for high densities of birds, especially seed-eating, reed-dwelling and water birds. Also, by using the same site, the recovery or re-catch rate is significantly increased – the national recovery rate is less than one percent as opposed to the re-trap rate at Darvill which is approximately 25 percent. Brown said that he has re-trapped birds that were initially ringed 11 years earlier.

Every month, Brown and his team of up to 35 volunteers, including around eight qualified bird ringers, gather at the crack of dawn at the Darvill Bird Sanctuary. Their first task is to strategically position fine nets and traps to catch the birds. As the birds are caught, they are expertly extracted and placed in cotton bags which are hung in a safe and shady place. The qualified ringers, seated at a table under cover, carefully remove the birds from the bags and identify, weigh, and measure them, recording the data. Aluminum or stainless steel rings are then placed on their legs and they are released. An average of 150 birds



UKZN ornithologist, Dr Mark Brown, holding a Jackal Buzzard which he has ringed and is about to release.

are captured and ringed during any one session which normally lasts between six and seven hours. Although the process is a fairly invasive one, the birds are not hurt in any way. 'If we lose one in 1 000 birds, it's a lot,' said Brown.

According to Brown, 'Ringing is an essential research tool for the modern day ornithologist.' Apart from migration, the data is used to study longevity, patterns of breeding and moulting and differences between species and sexes. The effect of climate change on bird species is gaining ground although, 'little to no work of this nature has been published from data in Africa,' said Brown. Although much work has been conducted in the northern hemisphere, the only significant research on birds' reaction to climate change in the southern hemisphere has been conducted by Australian researchers. From their studies they established that over time some species of birds have changed their body size in response to climate change. This is in line with Bergman's rule which states that 'warm-blooded animals will exhibit smaller body sizes in warmer areas than colder areas.'

The 30-year-old data set obtained from Brown's bird ringing project at Darvill

provides the ideal platform for engaging in research related to changes in species' body mass, wing length and moult over the past 30 years. Brown plans to start analysing this data, focusing on local bird species, such as Red Bishops and Village Weavers. He will complement this analysis with a laboratory study, conducted with Professor Colleen Downs, on how Cape White-eyes respond to temperature changes. This will involve two groups of birds which will be placed for a period of two years in different environments – one will mimic the Pietermaritzburg climate and the other will be set three to five degrees warmer to represent the anticipated temperature in the year 2100. Changes in the birds' metabolic responses will be monitored and measured, providing an indication of their physiological capacity to cope with a change in climate.

Brown's research will break new ground and he is excited at the prospect of being able to impact research at a global level. Although he is not making any predictions about the outcome of his research, he is confident that it will silence the naysayers who predict that birds will become extinct as a result of global warming.

Maiden Scientific Experiment

conducted at K-RITH Laboratory

The KwaZulu-Natal Research Institute for Tuberculosis and HIV (K-RITH) at UKZN's Nelson R Mandela School of Medicine commenced its first scientific experiment in the new Biosafety Level 3 (BSL3) and Mass Spectrometer Laboratories on February 14.

WORDS & PHOTO: LUNGA MEMELA

Funded by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) in the United States of America, these laboratories are a prelude to what is to be expected in the new K-RITH building, which is currently under construction at the Medical School.

A Biosafety Level 3 laboratory (BSL3) is a highly sophisticated and sealed room capable of containing infectious material for scientific research. At K-RITH, this facility will be used to safely study many infectious strains of tuberculosis.

Fully gowned and with a respirator inside the BSL3 lab, Mr David Miranda, a visiting Research Technologist from Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, inoculated liquid M.tb cultures of wild type H37RV and MDR strain A169 from culture plates. This is the first tuberculosis experiment to be conducted in the lab and is

to be used for screening drug candidates when cultures are ready. The laboratory has now gone "live".

In addition to working in the BSL3 lab, Miranda was appointed by the K-RITH Director, Dr Bill Bishai, to assist with the setting up of a mass spectrometer laboratory to measure drug concentrations in persons being treated for tuberculosis. In March he will be joined by Fulbright Scholar, Mr Blake Balcomb.

Miranda said working at UKZN has been an invaluable experience and he enjoys working with colleagues who have been very supportive of his work. 'There are many people who suffer from TB and HIV/AIDS in this country and it is encouraging to see so many researchers tackling these diseases,' he said. He is also excited to be part of growing the pharmacology core for K-RITH.



Mr David Miranda in the Biosafety Level 3 Laboratory.

NEW APPOINTMENTS AT UKZN



Miss Mbali Mahlangu
Assistant
Administrative Officer
Department of
Rheumatology



Professor Genene Tessema Mola
Associate Professor
School of Physics,
Pietermaritzburg
campus



Ms Balungile Moleme
Subject Librarian
Library Services,
Pietermaritzburg
campus



Mr Charlie Molepo
HOD: Technical
Officer
Library, Howard
College campus



Ms Nonjabulo Mthethwa
Library Officer
Howard College

Geologists use Coral to track climate change

Climate change is widely acknowledged as one of the greatest environmental issues of our time. It is fundamentally altering our world. Scientists around the globe are challenged with understanding climate and predicting how the environment will change.

WORDS: VICKY CROOKES PHOTO: SUPPLIED

They use evidence obtained from a wide range of sources such as ice cores, pollen, vegetation and insects to reconstruct past climate and make predictions about the future. Corals are one such source. They are ultra-sensitive to changes in climate and are like a history book, representing an unbroken record of weather patterns and changes in the ocean environment.

Dr Ron Uken, based in UKZN's School of Geological Sciences, has recently initiated a new research project which is investigating the palaeoclimate (the climate of the geologic past) record preserved in corals from Sodwana Bay on the eastern seaboard of KwaZulu-Natal. This area is home to the most southerly-located corals on the east African coast and represents a dynamic environment as it is washed by the Mozambique and Agulhas currents.

The study is part of the African Coelacanth Ecosystem Programme (ACEP) and is being conducted in collaboration with the Royal Netherlands Institute for Sea Research. It forms one part of a very successful multi-disciplinary project on the Western Indian Ocean involving environmental geochemists, climate scientists, environment modelers and ecologists to im-

prove the sustainable management of the coastal environment.

Uken explained that corals grow at an average rate of 1cm per year, leaving behind calcium-carbonate growth bands or rings, just like trees. These rings store a wealth of information about the environment and are highly valued by scientists, especially those searching for information that predates instrumental records. For example, the thickness of the bands can change depending on ocean temperature, rainfall, water clarity and nutrient availability. However, the most valuable clues to climate are obtained by analysing the chemistry of these bands.

In order to effectively analyse coral, coral cores are extracted by SCUBA divers using specially designed hydraulic drills. Scientists are then able to analyse the core, millimetre by millimetre, using a combination of spectral luminescence, X-ray analysis, stable isotope chemistry and Sr/Ca chemistry to come up with a detailed environmental history. Sea surface temperature change, river runoff and flood events are some of the effects that can be determined through these analyses.

Uken and his team have already begun the process of collecting the coral cores from

a large coral dome (rock-like mounds that make up a coral reef) on 2-Mile Reef at Sodwana Bay. The cores will be sliced into flat slabs in a laboratory and will be taken to a local hospital where they will be X-rayed, much like a bone density scan. This will map out the annual growth and density of the rings – dark bands represent high-density growth that typically occurs in summer and light bands show low-density growth which takes place in winter. It is also possible to isolate stress bands which indicate periods of environmental stress. The next step in the process involves taking a chemical sample which will be sent off to researchers at the Royal Netherlands Institute for Sea Research in Holland who will conduct an elaborate analysis in their laboratories.

Armed with all this data, Uken and his researchers will then be able 'read' weather history, enabling them to put forward possible answers to a range of questions about climate change. 'We hope to be able to look back and see what the trends are and make projections ... establish the threats and what governs survival and where we will be in 100 years' time,' said Uken. In addition, UKZN's School of Geological Sciences is in possession of coral cores which it collected 15 years ago from the same area. The researchers will, therefore, be able to compare analyses of these with the results from the most recently-collected samples and see how things have changed over the last 15 years.

Interestingly, new research released by climate scientists in Australia indicates that the recent extreme weather experienced in northern Australia may become a more frequent occurrence. This prediction was arrived at by analysing coral cores extracted from the Great Barrier Reef. These cores date from 1639 to 1981, representing a 300-year climate record.



UKZN Staff Soccer League Tournament Kicks Off

UKZN hosted its first Staff Soccer League Tournament for 2011 at the Westville Sports Centre on March 8.

WORDS: PHUMELELE MAVANENI PHOTO: LUNGA MEMELA

Team captains were present to sign their teams on for the Tournament, which ends on March 30 with the final fixture.

The UKZN Soccer League was established in 1990 by Mr Allan Moonsamy Naidoo of the School of Electronic, Electrical and Computer Engineering with the main purpose of building staff relationships and encouraging interaction between departments, whilst supporting a healthy lifestyle through sports and recreation. Mr Jay Maharajh, Bursary and Loans Officer who now manages the League, hopes that there will be more participation from other campuses over time. League committee member, Mr Jakes Pheku (COMSA) added: 'The teams are not limited to males only ... in 2009 a few women also participated. We want to branch out [to] other codes such as volleyball etc so that women can participate'. Interventions like these contribute to making UKZN an Institution of Choice for staff.

The first day of the Tournament kicked off with Finance

(Abafana), taking in Anatomy (The Greats), while Chemistry challenged Economics. The match was played at lunch-time (13h00-14h00) to enable staff to support their teams. The matches are run by professional referees, headed by qualified referee Mr Selvan Pillay of Audio-Visual.

This Tournament also offers potential new developments for the League, as Mr Mike Mdakane from the Information and Communication Division is scouting for the two of the best players in each team to form a UKZN Team that will compete against other academic institutions.

Abafana punished The Greats, five-nil in Field A, while Chemistry beat Economics four-two in Field B.

For more information about the League and current Tournaments, contact:

Maharajh1@ukzn.ac.za;
pekhu1@ukzn.ac.za;
naidood56@ukzn.ac.za;
mbilik@ukzn.ac.za; or
nyathikazi@ukzn.ac.za



Divers drilling a porites dome on 2-Mile Reef at Sodwana Bay.

NEW APPOINTMENTS AT UKZN



Ms Nokuthula Mtshali
Committee Officer
Faculty of Humanities,
Development and
Social Sciences



Miss Nelisha Murugan
Microscopy
Technician
Centre for Electron
Microscopy



Ms Hlengiwe Ngubane
Trainee Accountant
Finance Division:
Humanities



Mr Jared Padayachee
Lecturer
Mechanical Engineering

Information supplied by
Human Resources Division

UKZN internships Open doors for graduates

The Education, Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority (ETDP SETA) and UKZN have reached an agreement to provide employment internship opportunities to unemployed graduates.

WORDS: SITHEMBILE SHABANGU PHOTO: UKZN AUDIO VISUAL

ETDP SETA, through a discretionary grant (a government intervention), will also be providing 1 200 bursaries to students that are financially disadvantaged.

As announced by the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Blade Nzimande, ETDP SETA has been re-established for the period 2011-2016 to promote and facilitate the delivery of education, training and development in order to enhance the skills profile of the ETD (Education, Training and Development) sector and contribute to the creation of employment opportunities especially for those previously disadvantaged.

KwaZulu-Natal's ETDP SETA Provincial Co-ordinator, Ms Zandile Ntshangase said the purpose of the internship programme for graduates is to facilitate training and ensure that people are empowered with the required skills, and also to enhance employability, having been exposed to or given an opportunity to be in a workplace to gain practical experience.

Executive Director: Human Resources Division, Dr Mojaki



Executive Director: Corporate Relations Division, Ms Nomonde Mbadi (second from left); ETDP SETA Provincial Co-ordinator, Ms Zandile Ntshangase (fourth from left); and Executive Director: Human Resources Division, Dr Mojaki Mosia (third from right) with graduates that will be joining UKZN as interns.

Mosia said that UKZN will provide a platform for those graduates who don't have experiential training and the necessary skills as they will be exposed to different meaningful jobs and tasks. He added that some of the interns might be absorbed by the University at the end of their training. Ten interns have been taken in by different departments at the University.

The students that will be awarded bursaries will be notified by the end of February 2011 if they have qualified. Each student will be granted R20 000 to cover tuition fees.

Executive Director Corporate Relations Division, Nomonde Mbadi told the interns to make the most of this opportunity. She added that having interns brings a breath of fresh air in any department and assured the interns that UKZN will give them the experience they require. 'This opportunity gives you a stepping stone and the rest is up to you,' said Mbadi.

The internship programme commenced on March 1 and is co-ordinated by the Human Resources Development Department.

Ubuntu Award for Dean of Education

Dean of Education, Professor Michael Samuel, received the Ubuntu Award for his contribution to the field of Education from the Turquoise Harmony Institute at the Ubuntu Lecture and Awards Ceremony held in Cape Town recently.

WORDS & PHOTO: SUPPLIED

The Institute, which organises the annual ceremony, is part of an international movement promoting mutual respect of all religions, cultures and peoples. The non-evangelical movement recognises individuals who make a selfless contribution in their chosen field aiming to bring about a deep commitment and build the quality of society in general

Professor Samuel said he felt his award was an affirmation of the commitment of the four generations of his family who had contributed to the development of quality education and schooling in South Africa. He was inspired by the new influence of a group of Turkish students and teachers who had left their home countries to dedicate their lives to the service of education in South Africa.

'These devoted teachers choose to interpret education as service to the greater good of the global world and are making an indelible mark by producing top results in Science, Mathematics, Computer Science and Technology Education. They could easily have chosen careers which yield financial reward, but chose instead to inspire learners into these perceived difficult subjects. Their values of volunteer service are a hallmark of Ubuntu in action,' said Professor Samuel

In accepting the Annual Ubuntu Peace Award at the function, former UKZN Chancellor, Dr Frene Ginwala, stressed that like Ubuntu, peace was not the absence of action; but instead a war against injustice and against poverty.

Delivering the keynote address, the Minister of Science and Technology, Mrs Naledi Pandor, said Ubuntu was not just an abstract concept which valued respect, dialogue and tolerance of all human beings, aiming to grow with, in and through others. 'Rather, Ubuntu is a call to action to realise a better quality of life for all those whom we meet, through



Professor Samuel.

our deeds, words and actions.'

Minister Pandor stressed that Ubuntu called each individual to the service of others, without the expectation of reward or favour.

Both speakers criticised the false notion that Ubuntu was an egalitarianism of mediocrity, where individuals choose to impede any one who rose above the ordinary. The "pull him down" version of the tall poppy syndrome could be said to negate the ideals of an Ubuntu philosophy which took pleasure in the success of others, supporting their growth and development.

Others who received awards included the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (Reconciliation Award), Standard Bank for their support of the Arts, Raymond Ackerman of Pick and Pay for his support of Sport, SABC-TV's Vuyo Mbuli (Media Award), Yusuf Abramjee- Crime Line (Community Service Award), Professor Russell Botman (Academia Award), and Durban's Cardinal Wilfred Napier (Religion Award).

The late world-renowned sociologist and UKZN academic Professor Fatima Meer was posthumously awarded the Fidelity Award.

High-achieving siblings choose UKZN

Both came second in the KwaZulu-Natal IEB matric exam in 2009 and 2010 respectively and both have decided to study Law at UKZN. But brother and sister, Mr Darren and Ms Kirsty Frances say that they are very different from each other.

WORDS & PHOTO: SITHEMBILE SHABANGU

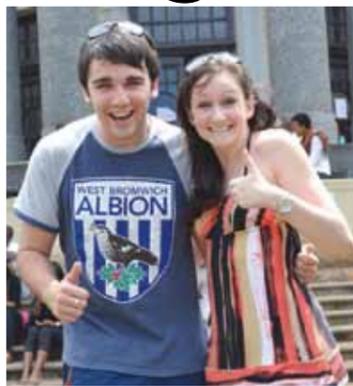
Hailing from Umhlanga, the siblings said their parents never pushed for them to be academically excellent, but gave them the tools to develop.

Kirsty said that there has never been competition between them and being on the same level is a new experience. Even though they are both in Law, they have chosen different electives and won't be in classes together all the time. Darren is very interested in politics, while Kirsty would

like to practice Law and be an attorney.

Darren and three other students received the Dean's Merit Scholarship while Kirsty and one other student were awarded the Faculty of Law Named Scholarship.

Asked what it took for them to get where they are today, Darren said that it takes hard work. He added that he does not study as much as his sister, but tries to get as much as he can from listening in the classroom.



Brother and sister, Darren and Kirsty Frances.

They added that they follow a balanced lifestyle, and engage in extracurricular activities as well as academics.

After completing his Matric in 2009, Darren decided to take a year off and he was part of the Rotary Student Exchange Programme in Australia. He was also a member of the cast of the movie *Spud*.

Dangerous Minds

It is time for a national debate on the ideology of non-racialism in post-apartheid South Africa.

WORDS: CHERYL POTGIETER

I so wish that in 1994 when Kuli Roberts (and I use Kuli as that is the name she is mostly known by and I assume chooses to use) sort of volunteered on a part-time basis in the ANC Woodstock election office, one of us from the movement had given her a copy of Steve Biko's *I Write What I Like* and that we had also introduced her to Marxist-Leninist thought. Had we done so, hopefully she and a whole grouping of her contemporaries would not be disseminating the classist, sexist and racist sentiments as reflected in her recent article in the *Sunday World* Newspaper on February 27.

In my view, her article is hate speech directed specifically at black, working class women. I use the term Black because in terms of the Constitution those of us who embrace black consciousness ideology while supporting non-racialism are aware that the women she describes in her article are indeed Black. These women who she chooses to degrade with her racist, sexist, classist rhetoric are victims of an apartheid system. The gendered and working class positions which they occupy, and the imposed apartheid identities which some of them identify with, that are often exploited by various political parties in the run up to elections clearly appear to be beyond Kuli's understanding. But whilst Kuli Roberts should take responsibility for her views, I believe that her and Jimmy Manyi's rantings are an indication that we as a nation are reaping what we have sowed.

For the past decade and a half,

we have not been contributing to the discourse of building a South African identity. However, we have replaced old style racist arguments with oversimplified notions of rainbow nation images, and bought into the notion that we all have different cultures (read race); and that while some of us are Zulu, or Xhosa, or Indian, or Coloured or Afrikaners, we should all be given the space to develop our "cultures" and appreciate our "cultural" differences. These cultural arguments create a fertile ground for racism to be dressed differently but remain racism. Norman Duncan, the South African academic who has written widely on racism, defines racism as more than a behaviour or an attitude but is in fact an 'ideology through which the domination or marginalisation of certain "races" by another "race" or "races" is enacted or legitimated....' Listening to Manyi I would argue that he is in fact arguing to legitimate an ideology of domination and marginalisation that discriminates against a particular group and this is racist and dangerous.

While some may suggest that Kuli's arguments are merely bizarre and should not be taken seriously, I beg to differ. In her article socially constructed attitudes and behaviours are assumed to be essentialised biological attributes that these women were born with. So yes, she may have observed that some of them do not have front

teeth and that observation may be accurate, but the statement that 'they love to fight in public and are very violent' as well as other statements in her article are classist, racist and sexist and may border on hate speech.

Last month I spent some time doing work in Rwanda. The genocide that happened there had its roots in initial economic differences between groups being constructed by colonisers and others as racial differences, which obviously included racial superiority of one group above another. And this is where the danger lies.

As a nation we need to go back and critically examine the consequences of the way institutions, including educational and government institutions, are talking about race and culture. I always cringe when I hear children talk of a "cultural day" at school. My sister's daughter, who was identified by her teacher as Indian, was asked to bring samoosas on cultural day. I believe that it is at this level that the seeds are planted for the kind of stereotypes and ideology which Kuli reflects in her article. Manyi is given power to legitimise his racial prejudices in the government and other positions, which he holds.

Kuli in her interview with the *Herald* after the article was published, argues that she is not a racist and has nothing against coloureds as indeed her children are coloured. In the same interview, she makes statements, which compound the racism of

her article on coloured women and indicate that she clearly lacks any understanding of her ethical, constitutional, or psychological shortcomings. In fact, her sentiments and her failure to provide any meaningful, insightful apology are similar to the behaviour of Jimmy Manyi. Trevor Manuel has pointed out that Manyi's failure to apologise says much about his 'acute lack of judgement'; the same holds for Kuli. However, the one valid point she makes in her *Sunday World* article is that 'shouting is also sometimes necessary, especially when you speak to folk like Jimmy Manyi, who might not have a clue what he is talking about'. It calls for another article to try to make sense of her Manyi statement.

As a psychologist, I am worried about Kuli's psychological health and that of her children. Her behaviour clearly indicates that she has desires to be whiter and lighter. She talks about her dreams of being yellow. From a psychological point of view and in colloquial terms she has "issues" about whiteness. I do hope that her children will have access to role models and literature that would hopefully contribute to them being comfortable with a South African identity and a black one at that. But, more importantly, that they will be able to engage issues of race and racism in a constructive way.

I never envisaged that I would be writing a response where I have to deal with a black man and black woman who are dangerous



Professor Cheryl Potgieter.

in that they are promoting racial prejudice against other black people and working class women in particular. However, Nelson Mandela and indeed the ANC has also argued that one has to stand up against both White and Black domination. The other consequence of Manyi and Kuli's ideology is that it provides a fertile ground for white racists to exploit and use for their own agendas.

Just as South Africa is not a post-feminist society, we are most definitely not a post-racist society.

Education and government institutions and indeed the ANC need to engage critically with issues of race and racism. It is time for a national debate on the ideology of non-racialism in post-apartheid South Africa.

Professor Cheryl Potgieter is Dean of Research and Professor in Psychology at UKZN. This article was published in the Sunday Tribune, 6/3/2011.

UKZN Information Evenings inspire parents and learners

UKZN hosted the first of its series of district-specific Information Evenings at Newcastle High School in the Amajuba District on March 2.

WORDS: LUNGA MEMELA

Information evenings are a new initiative introduced by the Schools Liaison Unit in the University's Corporate Relations Division (CRD) to enhance its recruitment initiatives.

'They provide an opportunity to reach out to grade 12 learners and parents who live far from our campuses to directly engage with them,' said Mr Len Mzimela, CRD's Director of University Relations and Marketing

Support. They are also a response to information gaps that exist especially with learners who live far from the University, and the city.

The Information Evenings aim to provide information on various careers at UKZN, requirements for the choice of study, how to apply, when to apply, and about financial assistance.

In an effort to positioning UKZN as an Institution of Choice for students, presentations

were made by the University's Colleges, providing discipline-specific advice and information. There were also presentations from Student Funding and Student Services, addressing financial and academic concerns which parents often have when their children enroll at university.

Manager of the Schools Liaison Unit, Mr Wesley Canham stressed the importance of academic excellence, an important UKZN strategic goal.

He acknowledged the presence of the Central Applications Office (CAO) and pointed to the partnership between Schools liaison and CAO as of strategic importance, especially during these Information Evenings. Learners were encouraged to study hard if they wish to pursue studies at the Institution and parents were asked to support the learners.

'Top students raise the Institution's profile, perform well

in class and raise throughput,' said Mzimela.

Parents attending said they appreciated the 'outreach gesture' from UKZN. 'This has been very useful to us parents,' said Mrs Noncedo Cwele.

'The question and answer sessions and presentations were very insightful,' said Mr Ranjiv Moodley and his son Pravin who attended. Pravin hopes to study Mechanical Engineering at UKZN.

Some of our roots Should be left to rot

It may not be a good thing to revive certain traditions, practised thousands of years ago, in an ever-changing world.

WORDS: RELEBOHILE MOLETSANE

Whether it is the desire to re-claim and re-assert “pride” in our identities in the post-apartheid era or our response to HIV and AIDS or simply to justify practices that our noble Constitution and the Bill of Rights have deemed illegal, South Africa is seeing an unprecedented resurgence of notions of “culture” and tradition as a basis for identity construction and performance.

For example, reclaiming the various cultural practices lost as a result of colonial and apartheid laws, or those abandoned as our society evolved such as polygamy and *ukuthwala* (bride abduction), is viewed as appropriate justice and even as “evolutionary” by the proponents of the cultural movement. In families and communities, retrieving and reclaiming “our culture” is evidenced by the revival of old traditional practices such as virginity testing for girls, and the strengthening of others including traditional male circumcision and initiation, and *ukuthwala*.

In our patriarchal society, the notion of “going back to our culture” is used to regulate the lives of girls and women, particularly their sexuality. Who can forget the incident in 2007 when a woman was stripped naked, marched down a street in Umlazi and beaten as punishment for daring to wear pants in defiance of the local “culture police” – a gang of men, often supported by women – who deem it un-African and, in particular, “un-Zulu”, for women and girls to wear pants? A disturbing feature of this “going back to our roots or our culture” is that it is seen, by some sections of our society at least, as the most plausible solution for intervening to prevent HIV infections.

In this article I explore three questions. The first is: Can we and should we remember and retrieve our past cultural and traditional practices?

While local and international scholars have endorsed the use of memory and memory work as effective teaching and research tools, in the context of HIV prevention efforts the current movement of “going back to our culture” is negatively impacting on efforts aimed at HIV and AIDS education in general and HIV prevention in particular.

Like any proud African, of course I do not want to forget my



Professor Relebohile Moletsane.

roots. I want my daughter to know where she comes from so that she can find her way forward in the new South Africa. However, as a feminist scholar, I believe that the sort of “going back to our roots or culture” popular in South Africa denotes a kind of nostalgia; what Svetlana Boym, a Russian-born Harvard University professor, sees as ‘a longing for [a way of life] that no longer exists [and possibly] has never existed ... a sentiment of loss and displacement’. So, it is highly possible that the things we now re-claim as “our culture” – and of course nobody is exactly sure what that culture is – never really existed, and if they did, perhaps they did not happen the way we think they did. Even if they did, can we re-enact things that were practised thousands of years ago in a changed and ever-changing world?

Boym writes that when proponents of “going back to our culture” are not engaging in a nostalgic exercise aimed at restoring what was lost, they raise the proverbial conspiracy theory, a feeling of being under siege and requiring defence against an “enemy”. Capturing this trend, in the editorial of the second volume

of the journal, *Feminist Africa*, Desiree Lewis of the University of the Western Cape, charges that the naturalised discourses of “culture” in Africa have functioned coercively.

Fictional authenticity, custom, and “the past” bolster patriarchal goals and desires, while perpetuating the servitude of women and demonising both the men and women who choose to reject heterosexist norms. Such fictions carry a charged emotional force because they are linked to a sense of loyalty among those with a shared history of misrepresentation and “cultural marginalisation”. And hence, the frequent attacks on those who are seen as acting against the imagined collective “our culture” and thus branded as racists, counter-revolutionaries or feminists.

The second question is: Do we have one common, uncontested “culture”? And what does it look like in practice? Who decides?

Consider this: The way people construct and display their identities is often heavily influenced by schools, churches (and the various denominations within the churches), mosques,

temples, and other cultural institutions they inhabit at different times in their lives. In addition to these, in the context of globalisation and technology, people and ideas have become mobile within and across communities and societies. These local and global “cultures” produce multiple identities and cultures within communities for individuals and groups.

In South Africa, both public and private examples of the use of the notion of “culture” and tradition to explain (justify) patriarchy and heterosexist behavior between and among people abound – these include virginity testing, traditional male circumcision, *ukuthwala* and even rape. Much has been written against these practices. Taking virginity testing as a case in point, critics, among them scholars – such as Suzanne Leclerc-Madlala and Tessa Marcus – and women and children’s rights organisations including the Commission on Gender Equality – have lamented the negative impacts of the practice on the very vulnerable groups it purports to protect: women and children. Beyond the obvious

concern that it infringes on their human rights, and that it puts young girls at risk of rape in the context of the virgin myth (that having sex with a virgin cures men of HIV and AIDS), virginity testing tends to confirm, in the minds of boys (and girls) and men (and women), that HIV is brought to them by the female body, and, as such, they are absolved (or absolve themselves) from taking responsibility, including responsibility for prevention.

The third question is: Have our nostalgic attempts at reclaiming “our culture” and “going back to our roots” created interpretations of what it is to be male and female in some of our communities, that, for example, are teaching girls to keep their virginity until marriage, while simultaneously teaching boys and men to freely and, if necessary, violently express their sexuality?

Is this why HIV infections are negatively skewed against young girls and women? Most importantly, is this why interventions targeting HIV prevention have been largely ineffective?

I am not totally against remembering. I am, however, against re-interpreting the past in ways that flout the very Constitution we all fought hard and paid dearly for. Like the Canadian scholars, Claudia Mitchell and Sandra Weber, I believe that remembering the past and acknowledging that it is the past and will never come back, and accepting the possibility that the past we remember may never have existed the way we remember it, offers possibilities for imagining productive and inclusive alternative futures.

So, I see remembering as potentially providing educational opportunities for fostering gender equality and reducing risky sexual behaviours. Like Jackson Lears, I see nostalgia as a ‘pedagogy of possibility’ and an ‘energizing principle’ that we might use to imagine and work towards an alternative future without gender inequality and HIV and AIDS.

Professor Relebohile Moletsane is the J.L. Dube Chair in Rural Education at the School of Education and Development in UKZN’s Faculty of Education. This article was published in The Mercury, 14/2/2011.

The UKZN Griot Of Hoaxes and Parody



Sniggering 20-something female staff and students, huddled around a desk, caught my attention. They were like pre-pubescent teens who had jointly encountered their first exposure of pornography: bewilderment, fascination and disbelief characterised their responses.

WORDS: KEYAN G TOMASELLI

But they were not looking at porn.

They had just found an intriguing MA thesis called "Not Another Soap Opera". I kid you not. Their descriptions of it included 'wackypedia', 'catalogue', and 'juvenile, my kid sister makes drawings like these'. Beyond the gold braided leather cover they tentatively paged through 250pp of bits and pieces, extracts, pictures, a magazine insert, dialogue, comics, and other stuff. 'Is this thesis for real?' a hovering professor was asked.

This reaction got me thinking about academic hoaxes. Piltdown Man fooled the archaeological community for 50 years. It was finally exposed by two researchers who got their hands dirty. The 'fossil' comprised a human skull and an orangutan jawbone. The hoax's perpetrator was never identified. – some thought it may have been Conan Doyle, he of Sherlock Holmes fame.

In Cultural Studies, The Sokal Hoax of 1995 is infamous. Physicist Alan Sokal raided the Cultural Studies theoretical lexicon. He imported the passwords of postmodernism into quantum mechanics, and submitted the paper to an *au courant* journal. The published paper was then trashed by none other than the same Sokal in

another journal. His objective: to reveal the banality of certain forms of Cultural Studies that read like they have been written by a random word generator. The stringing together of meaningless jargon creates the appearance of logical argument despite empirical evidence to the contrary. The editors of *Social Text* were baffled and insisted that Sokal's arguments had merit even after he had exposed his own hoax.

"Not Another Soap Opera" continues the genre of hoax. This mish mash has nothing to do with the TV soap. The thesis deals with the author's invention of her own object of study, a sub-culture of style in which she includes herself. It's rather like the director of *Planet of the Apes* registering for an MA degree and then studying his own creation as empirical evidence of early hominids. One symbolic invention gives rise to another and eventually all semblance of reality is lost in an endlessly mediated haze of intertextual illusion, simulacra and parody. The reality becomes illusion and it is illusion that is now studied as reality. Every discipline has a story to tell in this regard.

Supervisors of this kind of stuff are like religious zealots. They propagate a mindless postmodernism – everything is a game to

them. Everything has to be subverted, even subversion itself. To answer the bewildered students, yes, the thesis is "for" real – it was approved, passed and now sits in a library. What is produced is a kind of relationless, meaningless, pseudo-intellectual porn, a genre of academic subversion, 250 pages of randomly generated words. Adequate referencing is not required. This supervisor will be rewarded with credits, while the gigglers may find yet that the entire academic enterprise is discredited by the skeptics who belittle the BA as the Bugger All Degree.

But what if we expand the argument? Quantitative researchers scorn qualitative inquiry. Cultural Studies is terrified of numbers. Many scientists dismiss the Humanities, and the Humanities dismiss scientific positivism. While Archaeology has learned from Piltdown, Cultural Studies has conveniently forgotten the lessons conveyed by Sokal. But the least educated, the students and admin staff who found the thesis, were able to tell the difference between hoaxes and soaps on the one hand and *bone fide* research on the other. One suggested burning.

But, unlike Chippy Shaik's plagiarism, there is nothing to be done. Con artistry that does not defraud is not a criminal offense.

Indeed, it was the academy that accepted the proposal, approved its submission, and appointed examiners whose reports were assessed by the relevant committees which agreed to conferal of the degree. Collective responsibility must be taken by the institution at which this thesis was registered. Or, am I missing something here? Maybe I'm just a Luddite living in the academic past. So I consulted some peers. One commented: 'This thesis is fluff – it skates over real intellectual work and so is dismissive or contemptuous of it ... could it have passed as a production for a MA in creative writing – but no – it's not even good prose or renditions of the genres the student seeks to emulate. It's narcissistic and indulgent. Postmodernism has been written about as potentially resistance or ludic and the former retains a concern with inequalities, the latter tends to a playful critique. This thesis attempts to be playful, but – sorry – it's banal and meets none of the criteria of demonstrating knowledge of a field, and no critique.' A more cautious student suggested that the compilation is designed to work at the level of the ordinary, that its lack of depth is the student's achievement.

Postmodernism when properly applied offers critique of what went before – the grand

narrative, single explanations, and absolutes. The ultimate irony is that a modernist bureaucracy conferred a degree on a post-modern expression that considers modernism, structuralism and accountability as enemy. What grabbed Cultural Studies' attention however was Sokal's deliberately misleading claim to have found a unified theory that supposedly legitimated postmodernism *via* Physics. Unified theories can only exist in modernist and positivistic thinking – the anathema for cultural studies.

Does the thesis have any academic value? It does represent a serious criticism of the academy's attempts at quality control, and maybe this is its prime academic achievement. Is this the reality of the contemporary academic enterprise? If porn is nothing more than parody and illusion offering the vicarious promise of release, just what is it that we are doing in the academy?

Keyan G Tomaselli is Director of The Centre for Communication, Media and Society. There is no truth in the rumour that Tomaselli is a closet Physicist.

¹ Not the actual title. Take your pick from SABC.

Sudoku

		1						
		3		5	2		1	6
				3		2		
6	1	7		9				3
			2	4				
			3				7	9
	8			1			3	7
1	9							
							6	4

Music students drum up a storm

"TALKING DRUMS: African drumming meets Western Drumming" was presented by students from the School of Music's African Music and Dance Programme on March 7. The Lunch-hour Concert captured the musical magic created by the collaboration of African and Western musical instruments. The performance was conceived by final-year student, Mr Lebogang Sejamoholo.

WORDS & PHOTO: LUNGA MEMELA



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