



FACULTY NEWS

Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Cape Town
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New UCT lab to safeguard SA public

Groote Schuur Hospital in conjunction with UCT, recently opened South Africa's first hair and skin research (HSR) laboratory on the top floor of the hospital's Old Main Building.

The lab will focus on comprehensive hair testing and safety in cosmetic formulation and is the brainchild of **Assoc Prof Nonhlanhla Khumalo, head of the Division of Dermatology at UCT and Groote Schuur Hospital.**

"The idea of establishing the laboratory was initially to prevent or reduce side effects from cosmetics," explained Khumalo at the lab's launch. "Later the idea grew bigger with the emerging field of using hair as testing substrate in medicine. Unlike blood and urine that have a high turnover, hair is a medical

repository that can be used, for example, to detect drug exposure dating back months and even years – depending on the hair length."

Khumalo recently made headlines with her findings following **research into Brazilian keratin hair treatments.** Khumalo found that these popular hair-straightening treatments contained higher than the recommended levels of the cancer-causing substance formaldehyde. Six of the seven tested brands, available in South Africa at the time, contained five times the legal limit of formaldehyde, while five of these products professed to be 'formaldehyde free'.

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Special Faculty Assembly
on Transformation

Innovation 5

UCT launches in Eden

Excellence 10

UCT staff nominated for
NSTF/BHP Billion Awards



Professor Nhlanhla Khumalo addressing the audience at the opening of the hair and skin laboratory

Khumalo expressed the hope that the laboratory would provide opportunities for clinicians and scientists to collaborate to protect the public from harmful products. "The availability of a research and testing facility is only part of a multidisciplinary collaboration that is needed, not only to establish a coherent legal and regulatory framework, but to also improve industry compliance."

The establishment of this laboratory was made possible through funding from the National Skills Fund, which contributed R8.6-million to renovate and equip the space that would eventually house the laboratory.

Research interests at the HSR Lab include:

- validating procedures for preparing hair samples for testing drugs, hormones or toxins;
- studying mechanisms that govern hair curl;
- investigating new and safe molecules to modify hair shape; and
- skin toxicology and development of methods to identify toxins.

Story by Abigail Calata. Photos by Je'nine May



Dr Jennifer van Wyk, manager at the new hair and skin research laboratory



FACULTY ASSEMBLY ON TRANSFORMATION FOR ALL STAFF AND STUDENTS

A Special Faculty Assembly on Transformation in April, called for staff and students by the leadership of the Faculty of Health Sciences is being followed up with initiatives aimed at accelerating transformation in the Faculty. These include an online platform to share views, Interim Dean Professor Gregory Hussey setting aside Wednesday afternoons to engage with staff and students, a Dean's Transformation Advisory Board chaired by Prof Elelwani Ramugondo, and the establishment of a Transformation Fund.

Commitment to transformation

These initiatives follow events linked to the recent *#Rhodes must fall* campaign at UCT, which highlighted the need for meaningful transformation.

"The *#Rhodes must fall* campaign presented UCT and our Faculty with the opportunity to accelerate the process of re-engineering itself as fully responsive to its environment, to effect genuine transformation," said Prof Gregory Hussey. The Assembly aimed to create a constructive space for staff and students to voice their opinions and concerns regarding transformation in the Faculty, and to use the opportunity to engage in discussions on how the Faculty's agenda could be fast-tracked.

Prior to calling the Special Assembly, the Faculty leadership had reaffirmed its commitment to transformation in a statement on the *#Rhodes must fall* campaign. The statement recognised that the call for the removal of the statue was symbolic of a deeper issue - the need for transformation at UCT to be accelerated on all fronts; this had alienated black students and staff at the university, and was indicative of the country's failure to achieve true democracy. Citing the definition of transformation adopted in the Faculty Charter on 9 May 2002, the statement acknowledged the Faculty's slowness in implementing transformation.

Constructive engagement

"We were very impressed with the constructive tone of engagement in the Special Faculty Assembly," said Professor Hussey, reporting on the event. "We didn't only hear people's concerns, we heard constructive suggestions and comments for taking the transformation agenda forward." Those who spoke painted a picture that echoed the sentiments of what prompted the campaign in March.

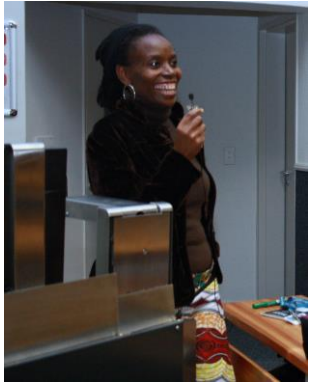
"It was disturbing and sobering to hear that black students still experience subtle, and sometimes overt, racism and discrimination during their training, assessment, in class and social interactions," he recalls. Experiences include difficulties in adjusting to academia due to barriers such as language, stigmatisation and lack of support from some staff and students. Other barriers include the high cost of education in the Faculty, and the burden of debt faced by students who were either excluded or unable to complete their studies due to lack of finance. Criticism was also levelled at curricula which should encourage higher order thinking skills and an appreciation of the socio-economic context of health.

There were those who also asked what they could do to help black students and staff feel less alienated and devalued in the Faculty. The creation of spaces for continuous discussion was put forward to encourage inclusive dialogue so that students and staff, irrespective of their views, can speak up without fear of reproach or judgement. Additionally, these conversations should aim to foster and facilitate understanding, sensitivity and awareness of each other's experiences, feelings and to dispel misgivings.

Some of the recommendations included the need for a **collective definition of transformation along with a concerted effort to mainstream the process**; the establishment of a bridging course to assist students in acquiring the necessary skills to succeed; staff diversification, diversity training and a representative Faculty structure to monitor, drive and hold the Faculty accountable for transformation. More importantly, there was an overwhelming sense that professional health-care values such as empathy, self-reflection, professionalism and communication along with Ubuntu should be at the heart of the transformation process.

Faculty leadership's view of a transformed UCT is that of a student and staff body that reflects the demographics of the country's population; its research and curriculum addressing collective heritage, environmental and developmental needs; and UCT's institutional culture celebrating its rich history, diversity and talent in an affirming and inclusive manner, so as to accord dignity and respect to all staff and students.

"...we are strongly committed to constructive engagement in an inclusive process to develop and implement interventions to fast-track transformation," confirms Professor Hussey.



Opening speech by Associate Professor Elelwani Ramugondo, Chairperson of the Dean's Transformation Committee, delivered on 12 June 2015 at the first Faculty workshop on "intersections for healing work"

The question about the role of the university in society is central to what transformation might be about within the academy. In searching around for what others might see as the role of the university, I stumbled upon a speech by Drew Gilpin Faust – the Harvard University President or Vice Chancellor in South African terms. I thought since we all want to be like Harvard, it might be prudent to cite those we are fervently trying to emulate at UCT. It is a speech she gave in 2010 at the Royal Irish Academy, Trinity College, Dublin. In that speech, the Harvard President makes the point that the exploration of meaning is the essence of a university. She elaborates on this and I quote:

"Meaning is about interpretation. It is about understanding the world and ourselves not only through invention and discovery, but also through the rigors of re-inventing, re-examining, reconsidering. To borrow a phrase often attributed to Albert Einstein, it is about figuring out what counts as well as what can be counted. Meaning is about remembering what we have forgotten, now in a new context; it is about hearing and seeing what is right in front of us that we could not before hear or see; it is about wisdom that must be stirred and awakened time and again, even in the wise."

She also implores us as stewards of centuries-old traditions of higher learning to work in order to assure that the understandable effort to promote what is valuable not eclipse our support for what is invaluable. And she reminds us that as we define higher education's role principally as driving economic development and solving society's most obvious problems, we risk losing sight of broader questions, of the kinds of inquiry that enable the critical stance that build a humane perspective.

What the Harvard President says in her speech relates directly to what emerged in our Faculty Assembly on the 15th of April. Questions around who benefits or not, who gains recognition or not and why through our efforts in the academy, are fundamental to what will provide us with a humane perspective.

What is key as we ponder upon these questions is recognising the particular context we find ourselves as a health science faculty in post-Apartheid South Africa. Our collective woundedness as a society has been mentioned on various platforms and is constantly evidenced through violent ruptures in both intimate and public spaces. We can no longer look away or fail to recognise the intricate links between our woundedness and fissures that continue to deepen as we remain divided across racial and more recently, economic lines. These ongoing divisions and shared complicities can only mean that we may not see each other the way we need and ought to. When we think about these things – perhaps the term healing, then does not seem so foreign.

Yes, healing as that which we need to go through as wounded peoples of South Africa but also the work we have the responsibility to do as health practitioners, students and researchers. Given our respective professions, disciplines and positions within the faculty of health sciences, we are differently enabled to contribute to the healing that South Africa needs. We can no longer attempt to do this work in silos, or in ways that are about some professions/disciplines asserting dominance over others. Intersections for healing work demands of us to pay attention to the ultimate purpose of our everyday work & *busyness*, and to stay cognisant of who through our work continues to be ignored or stays on the margins.

The 10 sub-themes that we have identified mostly speak to patterns of ongoing exclusions OR ways in which we can begin to notice the 'excluded other'. It has been extremely exciting and affirming to see individuals come forward and volunteer to lead conversations informed by these themes – this, because these themes speak to these individuals' current work or concerns. An apt name to call these individuals is 'provocateurs' – inspired by Paulo Freire's writings on the "Pedagogy of the Oppressed". Provocateurs do whatever it takes to "bust bubbles & plant seeds so that tidy and stereotypical explanations [about 'the other'] are unmasked and discarded" (Sandy, Year Unknown).

Associate Professor Elelwani Ramugondo was recently appointed Special Advisor to the Vice-Chancellor on Transformation and will take up the position on 18 June 2015 for a year. Being a completely new position, the role of the Special Advisor to the VC on Transformation will evolve with experience. Associate Professor Ramugondo will have advisory, not executive functions. Some of the immediate activities will be the task teams being established to review names of buildings and artworks. She will attend faculty assemblies to hear the issues raised. She will be involved in the reviews of the Discrimination and Harassment Office and the Transformation office. The new plans to accelerate employment equity and career development, as well as identifying issues in the institutional climate that need to be addressed, will form part of her portfolio. If time allows, she will also join the expanded curriculum review process. She will be an assessor member of the IF and University Transformation Advisory Committee.



“Intersections for healing work” kick-starting conversations on transformation in the Faculty of Health Sciences

Faculty staff and student leadership attended a workshop on **‘intersections for healing work’** to initiate engagement on key sub-themes identified for transforming the Faculty. The workshop was convened by the Transformation Advisory Committee (DTAC), created by Interim Dean Prof Gregory Hussey to spearhead faculty-wide conversations on transformation. Tasked with promoting dialogue on transformation amongst all constituencies in the Faculty, the committee was established on the 6th of May following the Special Faculty Assembly held on the 15th April 2015.

Attendants broke away into groups divided among several sub-themes: black pain & white privilege; challenging patriarchy; challenging heteronormativity; challenging ableism; post-colonial theory, consciousness & health; contextually situated practices; arts, play and health; intergenerational perspectives; indigenous and Western medicine; and understanding violence. Facilitated by **“provocateurs”**, a term inspired by Paulo Friere, the main objectives of the discussions were to lead to a possible review of the definition of transformation in the Faculty, as well as develop ideas about monitoring and evaluation in relation to the sub-themes and other relevant targets in the advancement of transformation.

Consensus after the discussions was that the allocated time was too short indicating an eagerness to continue engagement beyond the session. Associate Professor Ramugondo remarked optimistically that the zeal of the day was a good foundation for further work. Work involving all constituents of the Faculty through **conversation, listening, reflecting and acting in ways that advance healing and sustained transformation.**

Open workshops with stakeholders are also planned for future conversations.





UCT initiative tackles healthcare worker shortage in Southern Cape

Left to Right: Aldm George Standers, Aniefiok Adem, Dr Max Price, Priyanka Naidu, Prof Steve Reid, Prof Gonda Perez, Dr Helise Schumann, Mr Pieter Peplar, Dr Russell Ally, Mr Brett Utian

Responding to the urgent national call to increase the numbers of doctors in our country, particularly in rural areas, the Faculty of Health Sciences has joined forces with the Western Cape Department of Health – this time to launch the 'UCT in Eden' initiative. This partnership will see hospitals and community health centres in the greater Southern Cape acting as teaching platforms for UCT final-year health sciences students.

At the recent launch of 'UCT in Eden' at the George Civic Centre, Vice-Chancellor Dr Max Price called Eden an ideal region for the project. "By stretching out and working in hospitals in more rural districts, like the George hospital, we can do two things at once: We can increase capacity to train doctors and rehab therapists – and we can improve the quality of service. We bring in specialists, experts and the professors."

This exciting collaboration between UCT and the Department of Health aims, by 2016, to see 20 medical students spending their final year in the district as student interns, gaining hands-on experience with clinical teams and contributing to service delivery, said Price. By 2018 it is hoped there will be at least 40 students participating in the initiative. Price also said that the programme provided an excellent opportunity for the university to expand; given a shortage of space in the local hospital environment in Cape Town, the medical school has not been able to grow up until this point. Price

added that UCT is focusing on other educational skills to further equip the region. "The teaching in rural schools, especially maths and science and even English, is really lacking. One of the things we want to do is to see how we can use new technologies to improve service. So the teaching project involves installing broadband, computers, and tablets for pupils in 12 schools that we have identified. But the most important thing is to train the teachers how to use the technologies." UCT is already involved in psychology and HIV/AIDS programmes in the region.

An invaluable opportunity

During the launch, Price introduced a few of the UCT medical students who have already worked in the region in smaller groups for a few weeks at a time, including Victoria Parker, Aniefiok Edem and Priyanka Naidu.

Naidu told the audience it had been a privilege to work alongside the doctors and nursing staff at the Oudtshoorn hospital. "Mahatma Gandhi once said: 'The only way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others'. And that is exactly what this experience in Oudtshoorn has taught us – motivating us to be the kind of doctors that our patients look up to, who are the protectors of society, who never complain about the amount of work they have or patients that won't listen," she said.

"I have always believed that South Africa has a unique healthcare problem, to which we need a uniquely South African solution. And it's incredible to bear witness to a public health system that South Africa can be proud of and a curriculum that UCT can be proud of."

The future of the Eden initiative

Professor Gregory Hussey, Faculty of Health Sciences' Interim Dean, emphasised that this long-term project aims to serve both UCT's medical interns and the local communities. "Students will be integrally involved in service delivery, supported by visiting consultants from Cape Town; staff at the hospitals involved will benefit from professional development offered by UCT staff; and other services and faculties at UCT could be accessible through a permanent presence in the Eden district.

"Our aim is to continue to produce competent students who are well equipped to deal with the health challenges of the South African population," Hussey explained.

Future plans for the initiative include the introduction of a similar model for UCT's Health and Rehabilitation students (occupational therapy, physiotherapy, speech therapy and audiology) in the Eden district, to broaden the scope of exposure to students from other health science programmes.

Story by Carla Calitz



Palliative medicine programme one of the best in the world- visiting Dean

By Jaquelyne Kwenda

Left to Right: Dr Liz Gwyther, Prof Gregory Hussey, Professor Michelle Grunauer, Prof Mohammed Jeebhay and Dr Michelle Meiring

Life-long learning is part and parcel of every health professional's career. Consistent professional development and a keen interest in upgrading one's knowledge are key to providing the best possible care. This, among other things is what inspired **Dr Grunauer, Professor and Dean of the School of Medicine at the University San Francisco de Quito (USFQ) in Ecuador, to apply for the Postgraduate Diploma in Palliative Medicine** in the School of Public Health and Family Medicine. After conducting extensive research on palliative medicine programmes she found that not only is the UCT Diploma one of the best in the world, it has the important component of paediatric palliative care, one of her interests. **"I am very much impressed so I am coming to study again,"** she said during her recent visit to the Faculty.

Knowledge from the Diploma will fit squarely into Dr Grunauer's current work at the Hospital de los Valles (HDLV) where she sees patients, teaches undergraduates and resident doctors. A pulmonologist with a specialty in critical care, Dr Grunauer has a background in mental health and is among the most respected professionals in her field.

Her visit, though brief, saw her give a talk on palliative medicine in Ecuador at a School of Public Health and Family Medicine noon meeting seminar. There is no policy on palliative care in the National Health Plan and Dr Grunauer's advocacy for mainstreaming palliative medicine continues through her teaching and clinical practice. In her lecture she explained the strategic way she incorporated

palliative medicine at the Intensive Care Unit taking care to make balanced decisions that would ensure the best care for patients.

"By thinking about how to implement a programme on palliative medicine, I needed to put balance first. Second, I'm in a position of power so I needed to use that wisely rather than impose palliative medicine into daily practice. Because you will not bring something positive and construct a better health system where there is an imbalance of power and any change will not be authentic. And, there's the other thing - you cannot impose a model and say we're going to use it because it works elsewhere. It might not work in your own country," she said.

The result of Dr Grunauer's careful planning is an integrated approach that combines critical care with palliative medicine ultimately focusing on the best standard of care. Eager to add to her knowledge Dr Grunauer hopes the Diploma will develop her clinical skills in ambulatory patients that need palliative medicine and improve her knowledge in pharmacology.

"What will be my dream after the programme is to be able to sit at a table and when someone asks a question regarding a patient who is in pain and other things I reply as Michelle (Dr Meiring Programme Convenor and Lecturer in the Division of Family Medicine) does. It's very easy for her; it comes to her mind very easy!"



Fighting the Good Fight

Meet a prominent woman scientist who is making a difference in the AIDS fight.

By Mary Rushton

This interview on Prof Bekker and other extraordinary women appeared in a special issue of the [VAX Bulletin](#) on AIDS Vaccine Research

With more than six million people living with HIV/AIDS—around 3.5 million of them women—South Africa is Ground Zero of the HIV pandemic. Though new infections have been declining since 2000 and AIDS deaths since 2010, South Africa continues to shoulder the biggest burden. It is here that Linda-Gail Bekker works as a principal investigator and chief operating officer of the Desmond Tutu HIV Centre in Cape Town. Bekker planned to become a geriatrician, but a clinical rotation in KwaZulu-Natal in the 1980s pushed her toward HIV and tuberculosis (TB) clinical research. In Cape Town she works alongside her husband, Robin Wood, who is director of the Desmond Tutu Centre. She is also the President-Elect of the International AIDS Society, the first female African to hold the position, and will take office at the 21st International AIDS Conference when it opens in Durban in 2016.

Are the prevention and treatment programs for HIV and TB succeeding in South Africa?

Linda-Gail Bekker: South Africa has carried an enormous burden of HIV since the 1990s and now the biggest worldwide. Unfortunately a period of AIDS denialism slowed down access to antiretroviral treatment [ART], but attitudes have shifted and the new health administration is now grappling with the day-to-day challenges of getting more people into treatment. There is a real sense of urgency, although health systems are groaning under the load. What is more uplifting and more encouraging, I think, is that we have an administration that supports treatment. With TB, I'm afraid we haven't had epidemic control for more than 100 years. Unfortunately,

we don't fully understand what is needed to interrupt transmission so more research is the way to go.

How did you deal with the issue of AIDS denialism in South Africa professionally and personally?

LB: On a certain level it was embarrassing hearing these dreadfully wrong statements. And when asked why these notions existed in government, to this day I don't really have a good answer. Researchers and clinicians did a fantastic job of working around the barriers and obstructions. Academic researchers haven't always agreed with activists in the history of the AIDS epidemic, but in this case civil society across the board formed an alliance and took on the government, providing incontrovertible evidence that, amongst other things, maternal-to-child transmission of HIV can be prevented with antiretrovirals. On other occasions we joined the government and took pharmaceutical companies to court to drive the cost of ARVs and other critical medications down. Thankfully, with the start of PEPFAR, there were other ways to fund ARVs and now South Africa has the biggest treatment program in the world. This is something to celebrate!

What are some of the innovative ways your centre is tackling HIV?

LB: Our mandate is to find innovative ways to tackle the public health challenges of the day. One of the challenges we face in the region is tracking people who move between clinics and are lost to follow-up, so

we are testing a biometric system that captures patient fingerprints electronically, along with their medical history, and stores the information in a confidential website. Names are often interchangeable and hard to track—biometric identifiers such as fingerprints are not. Long ago, we also realized the merits of task shifting. We trained community care workers living with HIV to be adherence counselors in order to ensure that people with HIV remain in care. Many of these participants now are the cornerstones of our treatment programs.

The last time the International AIDS Conference was held in Africa in 2000, the major theme was expanding access to treatment in developing countries. What are the key issues on the agenda for Durban in 2016?

LB: I think we are at a critical crossroads. The prevention revolution is truly underway. We have tools to help end the epidemic but we're going to have to take bold steps around prevention and treatment to move towards epidemic control in all areas and all populations. Now is the time to realize full investment and a worldwide concerted and courageous effort. I also think with the converging of global health issues, there are critical lessons we have learned from the HIV/AIDS response that can and must be brought to bear to change the way we do business in public health throughout the world, particularly in those areas where there are still significant healthcare disparities.

Kudos

UCT researchers shine in prestigious health awards

Story by Carolyn Newton

South African universities, including UCT, have received significant awards – a total of US\$8-million in the first year – to support research targeting HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and HIV-related disorders and cancers. UCT has received 10 of the 24 grants awarded so far by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the South African Medical Research Council (MRC), with another seven still to be announced. Twelve of the awards will support two years of research; 19 will fund five-year projects.

These are the first awards to be issued through the South Africa-US Program for Collaborative Biomedical Research. The programme, established in 2013 with funding from the NIH and MRC, is designed to foster and expand collaborative research in the areas of HIV/AIDS and TB. The new awards will support research conducted at eight South African universities and link local scientists with US researchers at more than 20 US-based research organisations, including the NIH. South Africa will take the lead on all projects.

"South Africa is a major partner in the fight to end both HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis," says Dr Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) at the NIH. "These new awards tap the scientific expertise of both of our countries in an effort to further key research in these disease areas."

For two years in a row, UCT has won more money in direct grants from the NIH than any other university outside the US.

"This achievement is testimony to the fantastic work being done at UCT and, in particular, the Institute of Infectious Disease and Molecular Medicine," says Prof Gregory Hussey, Interim Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences. "It is indeed a proud moment for all of us."

Grants awarded so far to UCT

Prof Carolyn Williamson	<i>Timing of establishment of the HIV latent reservoir in subtype C infected women – investigating how to eliminate the 'reservoir' of virus remaining in people treated for HIV</i>
Assoc Prof Helen McIlleron	<i>Pharmacometric optimisation of second line drugs for MDR tuberculosis treatment – identifying safer and more effective drug combinations and doses to treat multidrug-resistant TB</i>
Prof Janet Hapgood	<i>Combination treatment for protection against HIV1 and pregnancy – combining antiretrovirals with progestin contraceptive for prevention of HIV infection and pregnancy in women</i>
Assoc Prof Christopher Colvin	<i>Using information to align services and link and retain men in the HIV cascade – using health information to improve services that support men through the 'cascade' of HIV testing, treatment and care</i>
Prof Jo-Ann Passmore	<i>Hormone-induced mucosal susceptibility and HIV risk in South African adolescents – evaluating how choice of contraceptive method in adolescent women may affect susceptibility to HIV infection</i>
Dr Catherine Riou	<i>Diversity of CD4+ Th subsets in TB immunity – impact of HIV infection – examining how HIV alters people's immune protection against TB</i>
Assoc Prof Digby Warner	<i>Drug permeation and activity in Mycobacterium tuberculosis infected macrophages – studying the ability of anti-TB drugs to enter the cells in the body where the bacteria are, to help improve TB therapy</i>
Prof Clive Gray	<i>Mechanisms of altered immune responses in HIV exposed infants – investigating why infants born with HIV have poor immunity</i>
Dr Elmi Muller	<i>Risk assessment of HIV infected to HIV-infected transplantation in South Africa – studying kidney transplantation from HIV-infected deceased donors to HIV infected recipients</i>
Prof Robert Wilkinson	<i>Inflammatory determinants of disease severity and treatment outcome in TB patients – investigating the way the body resists TB via the immune response, to improve our ability to treat people more effectively</i>

See the full titles and [full list of grants awarded to date](#).

Kudos



Dr Tolu Oni Next Einstein fellow

Story by Jaquelyne Kwenda

Dr Tolullah Oni's minimal, quiet office belies the cheerful and zesty character of its occupant. A Senior Lecturer in the Division of Public Health Medicine, she has much to be excited about as a **recent recipient of the prestigious Next Einstein Forum (NEF) Fellowship Award.**

The NEF, an African Institute for Mathematical Sciences (AIMS) initiative in partnership with Robert Bosch Stiftung, is a new global forum for science in Africa geared towards propelling Africa onto the global scientific stage. The forum gathers the continent's most outstanding young thinkers and connects them with global leaders to forge links, cross-pollinate ideas and coordinate approaches to transforming society through science.

Born in Lagos, Nigeria, Dr Oni's passion for public health is rooted in a long-standing desire to study medicine from an early age. During her medical studies she completed an intercalated Bachelor of Science in International Health, which sparked an interest in diseases of global importance and the factors that influence health policy and outcomes. The realisation that many health conditions are rooted in social determinants inspired her to switch tracks from clinical to an academic career in public health and epidemiology.

By virtue of its complexity, public health requires cooperation between stakeholders in and outside the health sector. The opportunity to engage with a captive and diverse audience interested in tackling issues of health inequity motivated Dr Oni to apply to the NEF fellowship programme. Academics, policymakers, former Nobel laureates, United Nations officials, politicians, civil society members and journalists will attend the first forum, which takes place in Senegal in March 2016.

Apart from the opportunity to showcase her research at the forum, Dr Oni says she is particularly excited about exploring her **"parallel interest in science and society and the application of research findings in improving society [in addition to] participating in a broader conversation on science development and research on the continent."**

Dr Oni's research investigates the co-existence and interaction between chronic infectious and non-infectious diseases, and the impact of the physical and socio-economic environment on the health populations living in unplanned urban settings. Her previous research has reported the high rates of co-existence of

diseases such as diabetes and hypertension among HIV and TB patients, highlighting the need to re-design health care delivery to be responsive to changing population health. The objective of her work is to build a case for understanding the influence of unplanned urban environments on health, in order to develop targeted evidence-based interventions that bring together different sectors, including some that do not necessarily think of themselves as health related, to the table to intervene.

Commitment to intersectoral problem solving and the contextualisation of one's work for local relevance drives Dr Oni's activities within the university and in her role as co-chair of the South African Young Academy of Science (SAYAS). Within her department she convenes the fourth year medical course Health in Context, which combines child health, family medicine, public health, health promotion, palliative care and community engagement. Designed to be relevant, interesting and responsive to the context in which students are training, the main objective of the course is to inculcate lateral ways of thinking about patients within students. **"As a future health professional, when you see an individual, you don't just think what are they presenting with? But you also think about what is the family dynamic, where do they sit within the community, where do they sit in the societal structure and what are the impacts of that on their health"** she says.

Dr Oni also supervises postgraduate work and while experience has taught her that there is a strong need for teaching young researchers how to navigate their careers she firmly believes in self-determination. "When I first started in research, I always assumed that you just put your head down, you get the research done, apply for lots of funding, get lots of papers and then suddenly one day someone comes up to you and says "...it's time, I'm taking you to the next level." It doesn't happen like that! **What you should be doing, is understanding the institution that you're in. If you can, own the process that you work within,"** she emphasised.

Dr Oni's journey from Lagos, to London to Cape Town has been nothing short of inspirational. She is passionate about her work, students and society. More than this she is committed to applying herself in positive and significant ways. In her words, **"I've gone from problems to potential solutions!"** The combination of infectious optimism and a brilliant mind make Dr Oni well deserving of the NEF Fellowship as this indeed is the *attitude* required to propel both science and society in Africa to a brighter and better future.

Kudos



Up and coming research stars receive awards

The award winners, from left to right: Drs Sebastian Skatulla (Department of Civil Engineering), Vanessa McBride (Department of Astronomy, who won the award in 2014), **Grant Theron (Division of Pulmonology)**, **Tolu Oni (IDM)**, **Mashiko Setshedi (Department of Medicine)**, Arjun Amar (Department of Biological Sciences, PFIA Ornithology), Kirsten Corin (Centre for Minerals Research), Steeve Chung Kim Yuen (Blast Impact and Survivability Research Unit). **Dr Nelleke Langerak (Division of Neurosurgery)**, the eighth 2015 award winner, is currently on maternity leave.

How can we better understand drug-induced liver injury? What happens when HIV infections coincide with tuberculosis and diabetes? What mechanisms are behind the distribution and decline of animal species?

These are some of the questions the recipients of the Claude Leon Foundation Merit Award 2015 are attempting to answer. And they are well placed to answer it: the award recognises excellent scholarly work by early-career academics. It is, says Deputy Vice-Chancellor Danie Visser, an affirmation that each recipient is "truly one of the stars of UCT going forward."

The Merit Award recipients each receive R50 000 and have considerable freedom in how to use it for their research, from attending international conferences to funding graduate students. The Foundation was formed as a charitable trust out of a bequest made by Claude Leon in 1963. It is one of South Africa's larger endowment funds and is a longstanding and generous donor to UCT.

Kudos

Associate Professor Roshan Galvaan Awarded Best Manuscript Prize

Associate Professor Roshan Galvaan, Head of the Division of Occupational Therapy, recently received the 2015 Journal of Occupational Science Prize for the Best Research Paper published. Titled "The Contextually Situated Nature of Occupational Choice: Marginalised Young Adolescents' Experiences in South Africa", Assoc. Prof. Galvaan's study was published online in May last year. The Executive Editor and Associate Editors for the journal reviewed all the published manuscripts against rigorous criteria assessing the importance of the study, clarity, argumentation and readability.

Dr Sudesh Sivasaru awarded for innovative medical device

Dr Sudesh Sivasaru, Senior Lecturer in the Division of Biomedical Engineering, has been awarded for the medical device 'reScribe' the 3rd place in the 'Emerging Medical Innovation Competition' conducted by Medical Industry Leadership Institute, Carlson School of Management, University of Minnesota, which was a part of Design of Medical Devices conference. 56 participants competed, who were mostly from medical device companies. The prize is \$15,000 (approx. ZAR180,000) worth Medical Device Valuation report by Carlson MILI.

Kudos

Associate Professor Digby Warner receives two NIH



Associate Professor Digby Warner

Associate Professor Digby Warner (Department of Clinical Laboratory Sciences and Associate Member of the Institute of Infectious Disease and Molecular Medicine [IDM]), has been **awarded two grants** under the prestigious South Africa-U.S. Program for Collaborative Biomedical Research, a joint initiative of the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC). This highly competitive programme has seen a total of 31 grants awarded to U.S. and South African scientists in order to support basic and clinical research targeting HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis (TB) and HIV-related co-morbidities and cancers.

The first of Assoc. Prof Warner's grants is for a two-year R21 project (~R3.7 million) which will be conducted in collaboration with Prof David Russell (Cornell University, USA) and Dr. Lubbe Wiesner (Division of Clinical Pharmacology, UCT). The project, **"Drug permeation and activity in Mycobacterium tuberculosis-infected macrophages"**, will investigate the ability of anti-TB drugs to enter the cells in the body in which the bacteria reside in order to aid the design of improved TB therapies. The second award is for a five-year U01 project (~R8.3 million) which will be pursued in collaboration with Dr. Roger Woodgate of the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, USA.

The project, entitled "Replisome dynamics in Mycobacterium tuberculosis: linking persistence to genetic resistance", aims to elucidate the molecular mechanisms underlying the emergence of drug resistance in TB, and to develop new "anti-resistance" drugs designed to protect current and future anti-TB antibiotics. A/Prof Warner is based in the MRC/NHLS/UCT Molecular Mycobacteriology Research Unit (Director: Prof Valerie Mizrahi), the UCT node of the DST/NRF Centre of Excellence for Biomedical TB Research.

New Research Funding NIH Award to the Division of Social and Behavioural Sciences

A five-year, **R19 million NIH research grant was awarded to the Division of Social and Behavioural Sciences (DSBS)** to investigate and improve men's movement through the HIV cascade. Research shows that men are more likely than women to fall out of the HIV prevention, treatment and care cascade. Improving men's trajectory through the cascade will improve their own health, and result in better health outcomes for their partners, families and communities.

The project—Using Information to Align Services and Link and Retain Men in the HIV Cascade, or 'iALARM'-uses health information to 'raise the alarm' about men's continuing poor performance and outcomes in HIV care, from prevention and testing, through to ART initiation, adherence and retention in care. It emerged out of an ongoing collaboration between the **NY3 Clinic in Gugulethu and Sonke Gender Justice's 'Men's Wellness Centre'**, located on the grounds of the clinic. iALARM aims to strengthen the alignment of the clinic and NGO services for men in the area by developing and implementing a novel health information intervention that will combine data from several existing sources of routine health information into a 'cascade dashboard'. The goal is to use this dashboard consistently to coordinate and improve services for men, locate bottlenecks in the cascade, and identify individuals who drop out of the cascade more quickly.

The Division is working closely with Sonke Gender Justice as part of a broader, joint effort to understand and strengthen Sonke's community mobilisation programmes and better link men and their partners and families with health services. The City of Cape Town and the Western Cape Provincial Department of Health are also active partners in the project. **Assoc. Prof Chris Colvin**, head of the division, and **Honorary Associate Professor Mark Lurie** are the two co-principal investigators leading the research team comprising other staff members in the School (CIDER), the SAMRC and University of California San Francisco.

Kudos



Associate Professor Andrea Rother receives UCT Collaborative Educational Practice Award

Associate Professor Andrea Rother, group leader for the Post Graduate Diploma in Pesticide Risk Management (DPRM) project, along with her collaborators Gregory Doyle (Education Development Unit) and Shanali Govender (Centre for Innovation in Learning & Teaching) have received UCT's award for Collaborative Education Practice (CEP).

The aim of the award was to recognise and promote collaborative approaches to enhance the teaching and learning environment at UCT.

Five years ago when **DPRM was first introduced to provide professionals with skills to be a comprehensive and effective pesticide risk manager, the approach and how the course was offered were cutting edge**. The programme is structured around the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization's (FAO) Code of Conduct on Pesticide Management. Students are from low and middle income countries (LMIC) such as South Africa, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Zambia, Botswana, Namibia, Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, Swaziland, Lesotho, Eritrea, Nigeria, Serra Leone, Uganda, Figi, St Lucia, Samoa, and Guyana.

DPRM was one of the first UCT PG programmes to adopt a blended learning approach in teaching and delivering the course; that is utilising contact teaching time along with distance learning on-line through Vula. Assoc. Prof Rother and Gregory Doyle from the Education Development Unit worked together from the beginning to design a blended learning programme that allowed professionals to study and work while learning practical, applicable and critical thinking skills to apply the various elements of the Code. Content was presented differently from other UCT on-line courses. The latter tended to put the courses under "resources" on Vula whereas this programme developed a stand-alone interactive on-line course.

One challenge addressed was how to build a community of practice on-line for students. **The result has been an innovative approach of a virtual seminar run as a discussion forum through the students' Vula site chat room**. This real time bi-monthly discussion has 364 members including students and global experts debating and discussing current pesticide risk management challenges. This discussion forum utilizes blogs, emails, Skype and Whatsapp to support working students with connectivity issues to participate. The outcome of the discussion is a newsletter circulated wider than to just members.

The Writing Centre and the Centre for Innovation in Learning & Teaching, through Shanali Govender, have been actively involved from the beginning and tailored their teaching programmes to the needs of the DPRM students and distance learning. Students receive regular support for producing policy briefs and other documents, while back at home which has enhanced the quality of their work.

The criteria for the CEP award were:

1. The project exploits the synergies arising out of collaboration to address a challenge that has arisen in the teaching and learning environment.
2. The project has effectively addressed the challenge that the team set out to address.
3. The project involves innovation and goes beyond "business as usual".
4. The project has been implemented for at least three years and is sustainable.
5. The project includes systems of monitoring and evaluation that feed into a continuous improvement cycle.
6. Project members draw on appropriate research literature both in the discipline and the teaching of the discipline.
7. The project has served as an example of good practice to colleagues at UCT.

PhD graduation cocktail celebrates successful candidates

Celebration was the order of the day at the first of this year's PhD graduation cocktails on the 10th of June. Hosted by the postgraduate academic administration office, the event brings together PhD graduands, their families and supervisors to mark the culmination of a candidate's journey.

Interim Dean Professor Gregory Hussey led the toast applauding graduands for a successful end to the courageous and at times trying process. He made special mention of their families, whose support is integral to completing one's dissertation, and encouraged graduands to spend the next few months catching up on lost time with them.

All the graduands received a gift commemorating the occasion presented to them by Professor Peter Meissner, the outgoing Chairman of the Doctoral and Master's Committee. Prof Meissner addressed the gathering and **outlined the highs and lows associated with the path of a doctoral student. He said that the support given to students by their supervisors as well as their families should not be under-estimated.** He reminded graduates to always remember those who had assisted them on their path to graduation.

The occasion was made even more special by the number of staff graduating with degrees - including five members of staff from the School of Public Health and Family Medicine. A special highlight was Associate Professor Ambrose Wonkam from the Division of Human Genetics who was graduating with his third PhD. The graduation ceremony was held the next day in which 23 students graduated with PhDs from the Faculty.





UCT launches next MOOC – What is a mind?

World renowned psychologist Professor Mark Solms led the discussion from 11 May when he taught thousands of people from around the world during **UCT's next MOOC, What is a Mind?** a free six-week online course.

Participants from over 100 countries, including a healthy representation of South Africans, took part in UCT's first **MOOC Medicine and the Arts: Humanising Healthcare**, over the past two months. Drawing in 15 academics, mainly from UCT, Medicine and the Arts showcased UCT as a leading university providing stimulating education in the emerging interdisciplinary field of medical humanities.

Academic convenors Professor Steve Reid (primary health care) and Professor Susan Levine (anthropology) had the somewhat unusual experience last month of running two classes simultaneously: a small face-to-face class and an online class of nearly 4 000.

"The online space is a new and exciting one, with the strangeness of never meeting most [students] physically, but it allows us to have a series of extraordinary conversations, that are located precisely in that inter-disciplinary space that we were aiming for," wrote lead educator Reid to participants after the first week of the course. "I must admit to being somewhat addicted to reading what [students] had to say each day!" At the end of the course, seasoned online learner Jonathan Vernon described his learning experience on his blog post: "Great videos, and graphics, a balance of views, a variety of approaches (video, text, audio, quizzes and assignments), engaging conversations with fellow participants, an extraordinary wealth of speakers, moments of magic, and shock, and inspiration ... The course creators at the University of Cape Town and the support they will have had from FutureLearn should make them deservedly hugely proud."

The Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching's development officer Janet Small said she hoped that when *What is a mind?* opens next week, UCT would hear from many diverse thoughts on this fundamental question. "If the comments thus far on Mark Solms' [blog post](#) about this course are anything to go by, we expect a lively and engaging encounter ahead," she said.

FACULTY NEWS EDITORIAL TEAM

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Open Day a Huge Success



Open Day

The Faculty Undergraduate Administrations Office enjoyed a successful Open Day when hundreds of prospective students flocked to the FHS stand on the 18th of April on upper campus. The inquisitive and eager learners explored the different stalls pausing to speak with current students and staff as they went along. In addition to information on all the departments, there was a dedicated stall for those seeking clarity on admissions. A comprehensive and detailed lecture on the new admissions policy, admission requirements and guidelines was given in the Humanities Lecture theatre to help both parents and pupils understand the process. Prospective students were encouraged to apply early to ensure their applications arrived in good time.



Professor Harsha Kathard speaking at the book launch

Speech-language therapy and audiology students in South Africa now have an invaluable resource with which to develop relevant, context-responsive practices in the school environment.

Responding to the large scale challenge to develop communication for socialising and learning, editors **Professor Harsha Kathard of the Department of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences and Dr Sharon Moonsamy of University of Witwatersrand**, along with several contributors, recently launched *Speech Language Therapy In A School Context: Principles And Practices*. The first book of its kind, it is a much-needed academic text for training students to work effectively in an educational environment.

The book promotes effective communication as a key aspect of inclusive education and approaches communication as a systemic challenge therefore resisting the deficit approach which works towards "fixing" or "treating" children.

Speaking at the launch on the 25th of March, Deputy Dean Professor Gonda Perez said the book should be a key text for all undergraduate students. Amy Grant, a student who had the opportunity to read the book echoed Prof Perez' sentiments and emphasised the importance of the book in challenging her mind set through the different themes, principles and practices.

"Nothing else like this exists; there are a few articles here and there which are profession specific. Yet South Africa is a complex, ever-changing environment. The school we were in changed every day, and we had to learn to adapt to the current. Had I read this before I entered this block, I believe my own preconceptions and set of (what I previously believed to be firm) beliefs

UCT staff collaborate in key text on speech language therapy

would have been moderated, adapted, and broken down for new ideals" she said.

Speech-language therapy in a school context promotes collaborative practices among professionals, including occupational therapists, physiotherapists, learning support therapists and teachers, while reinforcing the ethical principles and practices required by the Health Professions Council of South Africa. It provides theory and practical guidelines in line with the Revised National Curriculum Statement and is supported by interactive learning activities.



Assoc. Prof Roshan Galvaan, Mrs Liesl Peters and Ms Pamela Gretschel of the Department of Health and Rehabilitation Services sharing their experience of contributing to the book

SATVI launches Kick TB Program on World TB Day



On World TB Day (24 March 2015), the University of Cape Town-based **South African Tuberculosis Vaccine Initiative** joined hands with **Aeras**, a global TB vaccine research group, and several government departments and civil society organisations in the Worcester area to raise awareness about TB, launching the **Kick TB Program** at local schools on World TB Day (24 March 2015) and hosting a **TB Wellness Day** on Saturday 28 March 2015. SATVI runs a clinical field site in Worcester, located 100 km from Cape Town, from where clinical/epidemiological studies and clinical trials of new TB vaccines are conducted.

The Schools Kick TB Program, reached four schools in the Worcester area, teaching children about the signs and symptoms of TB in a fun and interactive way. The Schools TB program, which has been implemented with phenomenal success nation-wide, reached more than 5 000 learners at Avian Park Primary, Roodewal Primary, Alfred Stamper, Vusisiwe Primary and Avian Park Primary Schools. This outreach program was funded in part by Aeras.

On Friday 27 March 2015, SATVI coordinated a TB Awareness Program at the local shopping centre, with the Department of Health, Social Services, Amatekki Athletic Club and several local ngo's, interacting with customers to promote wellness. The Department of Health conducted health screening. During the month of March, Dr Michele Tameris and Dr Zameer Brey from SATVI, as well as health professionals from the Department of Health, spoke on Valley FM, a local community radio station, about various topics relating to TB and the month long program.



Emeritus Professor Marian Jacobs delivering the keynote speech

The month long program was ended with a **Kick TB Wellness Day** at the Zwelethemba Sport Stadium reaching 5 000 community members. The program included a Soccer Tournament for under 13,15 and 17 soccer teams, a 3 Km Fun Run, various Indigenous Games, and Health screening which was conducted by the Department of Health.

The keynote speaker was **Emeritus Professor Marian Jacobs**, retired Dean of UCT's Health Faculty. The program was made possible through the financial support of the Cape Winelands District Municipality, Government Communications, Department of Education, and local businesses.

By Kelvin Vollenhoven SATVI