



# FACULTYNews



MAY 2010 | FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES | UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

## What's under your white coat?





## Oliver Tambo Fellowship Programme graduation

Twelve students graduated from the Oliver Tambo Fellowship Programme (OTFP) at a special ceremony organised by programme convenor (Professor Lucy Gilson) and administrator (Sue Machutcheon) in June 2010.

It was attended by the full scope of OTFP management, teaching staff and some alumni. At this ceremony, students were handed their OTFP certificates by the Dean of UCT's Faculty of Health Sciences (Professor Marian Jacobs) and the Graduate School of Business Director (Professor Walter Baets). They then also participated in the UCT graduation ceremony the following day (as photographed), receiving their Diploma in Health Management.

# Now we know what's under your white coat (from page 1)

Fun, music and laughter filled the Nico Malan Hall on Tuesday, 1 June 2010, with the Faculty of Health Sciences first talent show titled, "What's under your white coat?"

The show was a fundraiser in aid of the sixth-year dinner and Students in Distress Fund. About 304 tickets were sold prior to the event at the Dean's Office and class representatives and HSSC and the evening was packed with talent as students and staff from the faculty took to the stage with their performances. The Dean, Prof Marian Jacobs, along with fellow deanery, Assoc Prof Gonda Perez, Prof Susan Kidson and Dr Reno Morar, welcomed the audience with their own rendition of "Welcome to Cape Town" and all dressed up in eye-catching and somewhat unusual costumes!

Our able MC, Prof Denver Hendricks, kept things flowing smoothly, and ensured that the evening ran like clockwork. 23 acts spanned the full spectrum, from classical compositions on the piano, flute and violin to the Faculty's own rap group, the *Med MCs*, who rap about life as a medical student. The audience was lucky to hear two of their offerings during the course of the evening: *Eating the Chicken* and *Books in my Bag*.

An entertaining performance was given by the *GenoMix*, a (scientifically) multi-disciplinary group hailing from the Division of Human Genetics. The choir ranged from laboratory technicians to lecturers, professors, clinicians, scientists, and postgraduate honours, masters and PhD students, who performed *MRNA*, their own version of *YMCA*.

Prof Maurice Kibel had the audience rolling in the aisles with his performance of "Education" - a very amusing glimpse into life at "Med School UCT", to the tune of the *Battle Hymn of the Republic*. Students struggled to contain their giggles and blushes as the topics turned to matters gynaecological!

The highlight of the evening was the finale where all the performers who had participated returned to the stage and surprised Prof Marian Jacobs with a version of Mamma Mia, with the wording changed to commemorate her reappointment as Dean. After Prof Jacobs' vote of thanks, the occasion ended off with a disco where Faculty manager, Jason Stoffberg, let rip as he displayed his skills as a DJ on the turntables.

And a good time was had by all ...

## DEANERY CORNER—Prof Marian Jacobs

The first of June was International Children's Day - an appropriate date on which to throw adult caution to the wind, and celebrate the talent in the faculty.

The concert was a huge success: from auditions to the after-party, and is reported elsewhere in this issue. In the process, we learnt just how valuable it is to find organizational spaces where academic and PASS staff; under- and postgraduate students; deanery and "clean"-ery; researchers, teachers and clinicians can all meet on a single platform, with a common purpose, and with the same basic values and principles: in this case, to have fun.

The mood of festivity continued later in the month, with the Soccer World Cup "vooma", which was manifest in the decoration of the foyer; deafening sounds of the vuvuzela call to come together; and a general air of solidarity and euphoria. Again, rank and file were joined in celebration of our country's achievement -

off the soccer field - and anticipation of achievements in the contest.

The question that faces us now is how to sustain these feelings of "togetherness" long after the anthems have been sung and the CD of the concert has been developed. The success of the approach thus bodes well for consideration of the institution of a Faculty-wide forum, which can help to keep us together. Such a forum could convene once or twice a year; provide a place at which matters of a general nature could be discussed; and could make provision for the voices of all members of the community to be heard. This could take the form of the University's Institutional Forum, but there may be other options for consideration.

I welcome your comments on this idea, and a message to the editor ([melanie.jackson@uct.ac.za](mailto:melanie.jackson@uct.ac.za)) on your opinion on the feasibility, purpose and possible form of such a forum will be very welcome.

## Congrats!

Congratulations to the head of the Department of medicine, Prof Bongani Mayosi, who has been nominated to receive the designation of Population Health Research Institute International Scholar by McMaster University, Ontario, Canada.

And to the recipients of the 2010 Discovery Foundation Awards:

Dr Graham de Bever, UCT Department of Psychiatry; Dr Rob Freercks, Senior Registrar in Nephrology; Dr Carla Freeman, Registrar in Psychiatry; Dr Diane Gray, consultant paediatrician; Dr Phumla Sinxadi, a registrar in clinical pharmacology.

Sub-specialist training awards: UCT Obstetric and Gynaecology Department, Maternal and Foetal Medicine Unit and the UCT School of Child and Adolescent Health, Paediatric Pulmonology Division.

Zithulele Hospital also received an Institutional Award to build partnerships with the Faculty.

# Professional Standards Committee

The Declaration of the Faculty of Health Sciences commits our staff and graduate students to uphold professional and ethical standards in the institutions and communities in which they work, and to respect and promote the dignity and rights of their patients.

There are many pressures in our society and health system that work against the tenets of this Declaration however. Students often witness abuse during their clinical training and are intimidated into silence, or may act unprofessionally themselves under the stress of high workloads and unsupportive working environments. This has been confirmed by recent research among our medical students in their clinical years, many of whom called for more to be done in reaffirming professional standards throughout their training, and for a channel for reporting incidents of abusive and unethical behaviour.

In response, a Professional Standards Committee (PSC) was formed last November and was officially launched in the Faculty on the 18 March 2010 as part of our commemoration of Human Rights Day.

The PSC has defined professional standards as the values, attitudes, and behaviours that seek to put the interests first of the individuals and communities that we serve. These standards include honesty; integrity; humility; accountability to patients, colleagues, and society; respecting and upholding the rights of patients; a commitment to excellence and life-long competency; and working in partnership with the health care team and the people that we serve.

Promoting professionalism and awareness of the PSC should be an ongoing Faculty-wide effort together with our health service partners and the communities we serve. It will require critical review of how we teach our students to be professionals, and

how we train our clinician educators to be role models. It may require review of how we evaluate the professional conduct of students and staff, and of the institutional culture of the Faculty and the clinical learning environment.

When an incident of unprofessional behaviour is witnessed, several options are suggested. These include discussing the incident with the perpetrator; with the course convener, a trusted staff member, or student colleague; or reporting it to the PSC. All incident reports will be reviewed at monthly meetings of the PSC. Further information may be requested from the complainant and others, and a response from the alleged perpetrator will be sought. The PSC will report the incident to the Dean, recommending an appropriate response.

Incident reports do require the complainants to identify themselves, which is a barrier to reporting and therefore a concern. The PSC has thus undertaken to restrict the identity of the complainants to those who need to act on the complaint, and to reveal the identity to others only with consent from the complainant. Anonymous summaries of the incidents and the PSC reports will be placed on the PSC *Vula* site.

And that is what being a health professional is all about.

#### Contact details for reporting complaints

The Chair, Professional Standards Committee,  
Mr James Irlam, tel no: 406 6377

Email: [psc@uct.ac.za](mailto:psc@uct.ac.za)

*Vula*: Professional Standards Committee

#### For further support and advice

*Discrimination & Harassment Office (DISCHO)*,

Ms Rashieda Khan, tel no: 021 650 3530

Email: [rashieda.khan@uct.ac.za](mailto:rashieda.khan@uct.ac.za)

a/h: 072 393 7824

## Former staffer champions HIV labour standard

The International Labour Office recently adopted an unprecedented new international labour standard on HIV and AIDS at its June Annual conference. The driving force behind the standard, which is the first internationally sanctioned legal instrument aimed at strengthening the contribution of the world of work to universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support and contains provisions on potentially life-saving prevention programmes and anti-discrimination measures at national and workplace levels, was Dr. Sophia Kisting-Cairncross. Dr Kisting-Cairncross, a former senior researcher in the Centre for Occupational and Environmental Health Research, left UCT in 2005 to take up the challenging position



Dr Sophia Kisting-Cairncross.

of Director of the ILO Programme on HIV and AIDS and the World of Work at the ILO in Geneva. Within the space of two years of intense preparatory work and debate, she succeeded in facilitating the adoption of an ILO standard by a majority of 439 votes to four, with 11 abstentions, a remarkable achievement given the political complexities of the HIV world and the difficulties

of steering ILO standards to completion.

The standard will provide a new human rights instrument which, in Dr Kisting-Cairncross's words, will "... harness the strength of the world of

work and optimize workplace interventions to significantly improve access to prevention, treatment, care and support. We cannot do it alone but this standard will, I believe, provide a major contribution to making the dream of an AIDS-free generation a reality."

In summing up, Ms Thembi Nene-Shezi, a South African delegate who chaired the debates on the standard in the HIV and AIDS Committee, described the instrument as "a source of pride for the ILO and its constituents..." that will contribute to "...the

development of national workplace policies anchored in human rights and directed at overcoming discrimination." In a similar vein, UCT can take pride that one of our alumni (MBCHB 1975; DOH 1996; Occupational Medicine Specialist 2005) and a former staff member has played such a key role in a pioneering action to prevent HIV through the world of work. Heita, Sophie, Heita!



Professor Dan Stein.

## Ethics award for Dan Stein

The world's largest global psychopharmacology organisation, the Collegium Internationale Neuro-Psychopharmacologicum (CINP) has awarded its CINP Ethics in Psychopharmacology prize to Professor Dan Stein, head of UCT's Department of Psychiatry and Mental Health.

Stein, who also recently received the prestigious Alan Pifer Research Award this year, will be presented with the CINP prize in Hong Kong, China, for his work on the philosophy of psychiatry and psychopharmacology. Stein has published a range of articles on the subject, and his recently released book, *Philosophy of Psychopharmacology*, is arguably the first extended text to focus on the intersection between philosophy and psychopharmacology.

As the founding editor of *Philosophy, Ethics, and Humanities in Medicine*, one of the first open-access academic journals in the field, Stein helped encourage interest in this area from readers around the world.

With his colleagues, Stein collected some of the only empirical data available on psychiatric disorders in those who testified before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). This work argued that although the TRC may have had certain benefits, it did not mean that provision of clinical care for psychiatric disorders in survivors of gross human rights violations during apartheid could be ignored. Recently, Stein and colleagues published findings from a national survey of attitudes towards the TRC.

"Advocating for equitable resources for psychiatry, whether in services, teaching, or research, is not always a successful process, so this encouragement is welcome," said Stein.

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