

Health workers march for OSD



Above and left: Scenes from the march on Parliament Friday, 5 June 2009.

A large contingent of health care workers braved the rain on Friday, 5 June 2009 to march to Parliament to demand that the implementation process for the Occupation Specific Dispensation be sped up and that the state of public health care in the country be addressed.

More than 400 doctors, nursing and pharmaceutical staff, among others, took to the streets of Cape Town, for a successful march. This was despite concerns that the march was misinterpreted by some as strike action, and as a result some doctors were threatened with disciplinary action.

When the march reached the gates of Parliament, a memorandum was handed over to a representative of the Office of the Presidency. A copy was also given to the chair of the Portfolio Committee on Health, Dr Bevan Goqwana.

The Dean of the Faculty, Prof Marian Jacobs, expressed her support for the health workers of South Africa as they fight for appropriate remuneration for the work that they undertake. "It is commendable that these health professionals have remained committed to the public sector

under challenging conditions," she said.

An offer was put on the table by the national department of health in May, which was taken back to members of the various representative bodies, who rejected it as being woefully inadequate.

The increase proposed by the representative bodies was approximately 50%. According to a representative of SAMA, this figure was not "plucked from the air", but was reached following a review of the salaries of other professionals in state departments, such as engineering, where it was found that many health professionals in

the public sector earned up to 50% less than their colleagues.

Following the pickets of late May, and the marches in city centres, the parties have returned to the bargaining table to try to reach common ground. SAMA's representative was quick to add that although the representative bodies were in talks at present, should these talks break down and there is a deadlock, then labour and its constituents will declare a dispute and a grievance procedure will ensue which may include strike action. It is hoped that this action will not be necessary and that an amicable solution may be reached.

DEAN'S CORNER

At the end of June, *FACULTYNews* will take its leave of Kit Vaughan as he embarks on a well-deserved period of sabbatical leave prior to his early retirement in December. In the coming six months, there will be several opportunities to recognise Kit's tremendous contribution to the discipline of biomedical engineering; to research; to the Faculty leadership; and to the university at large.

But for now, *FACULTYNews* thanks him for his contribution to the success of the newsletter. For more than a year, Kit was the editor, a position which he managed with efficiency and enthusiasm. And when he

relinquished that role to the Development, Communication and Marketing Manager, he continued to provide support, to identify an interesting article every month, to convene the quiz, and to seek out every possible opportunity to showcase success and achievement in the Faculty.

There has been no academic gain to be had through this activity, as *FACULTYNews* is, of course, neither peer-reviewed nor ISI-listed. Yet from the lofty height of being A-rated and a University Fellow with more than 100 peer-reviewed publications, Kit's commitment to the newsletter has been unwavering. We will

miss his monthly contribution, and we wish him the very best for his sabbatical leave, and then, great success in his new post-retirement career.

Kit's shoes are large, and hard to fill, but *FACULTYNews* needs a Kit-like person who can – at the very least – provide support, contribute a monthly feature, and manage the quiz. If you are an aspirant popular writer, or wish to expand your CV in the areas of social responsiveness and leadership, please write the editor or to me: we will be delighted to work with you. Until then – thank you, Kit, for a magnificent innings at *FACULTYNews*.

Publications of the Month

It is that time when we celebrate the successes of our students at the mid-year graduation ceremony. Of particular interest are those students who will be earning their PhD degrees, the first step in becoming an academic. One of the models for a PhD that is fast gaining popularity is the degree by compilation of published papers, with the rules having recently been updated by the Senate.

The Department of Human Biology has a bumper crop of eight PhD graduates this month. Although none have adopted the new model, five of them have managed to publish at least one paper based on their doctoral theses. Congratulations to Liane Azevedo, Fleur Howells, Khalid Hussein, Amod Kulkarni and Michael Posthumus – and their

supervisors – for publishing these papers:

Azevedo LB, Lambert MI, Vaughan CL, O'Connor CM, Schweltnus MP (2009)

“Biomechanical variables associated with Achilles tendinopathy in runners”, *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 43(4): 288-292.

Howells FM, Russell VA (2008) “Glutamate-stimulated release of norepinephrine in hippocampal slices of animal models of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (spontaneously hypertensive rat) and depression/anxiety-like behaviours (Wistar-Kyoto rat)”, *Brain Research*, 1200: 107-115.

Hussein K, Vaughan CL, Douglas TS (2009) “Modeling, validation and application of a mathematical tissue-equivalent breast phantom

for linear slot-scanning digital mammography”, *Physics in Medicine and Biology*, 54(6): 1533-1553.

Kulkarni AP, Pillay NS, Kellaway LA, Kotwal GJ (2008) “Intracranial administration of vaccinia virus complement control protein in Mo/Hu APPswe PS1dE9 transgenic mice at an early age shows enhanced performance at a later age using a cheese board maze test”, *Biogerontology*, 9(6):405-420.

Posthumus M, September AV, Keegan M, O'Cuinneagain D, Van der Merwe W, Schweltnus MP, Collins M (2009), “Genetic risk factors for anterior cruciate ligament ruptures: COL1A1 gene variant”, *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 43(5): 352-356.



Delegates who attended the TBM Workshop from 8 to 10 May 2009 at the Spier Wine Estate.

TBM team lays groundwork for long-term collaboration

Tuberculosis (TB) is a major health problem in resource poor countries and South Africa is especially severely affected. Tuberculous meningitis (TBM) is a devastating form of TB that can result in death and disability in many patients. Due to the high prevalence of TB, doctors in some hospitals in Cape Town are faced with these complicated patients on a daily basis.

To address questions of the pathology, clinical features and management an expert TBM workshop was convened at the Spier conference centre in Stellenbosch from 8 to 10 May. The workshop was organised by Dr Suzaan Marais and funded by the UCT Clinical Infectious Diseases

Research Initiative, which is directed by Professor Robert J Wilkinson. Thirteen international experts presented their research findings to 41 invited participants. Prominent speakers included Professors Johan Schoeman and Peter Donald from the Department of Paediatrics, Stellenbosch University. Both have dedicated more than 20 years to the management of affected children and are considered amongst peers to be world leaders in the field of TBM. Also in attendance were Drs Guy Thwaites and Estee Torok who have conducted large treatment trials in adult patients with TBM in Viet Nam, and Professors Usha Misra and Kameshwar Prasad who have extensively researched TBM

in India.

Research conducted at UCT presented at the meeting include a descriptive study of paradoxical neurologic immune reconstitution inflammatory syndrome (IRIS) by Dr Dominique Pepper, and a randomised placebo-controlled trial of Prednisone for the treatment of TB IRIS by Dr Graeme Meintjes, the relevance of strain variation in TBM by Professor Mark Nicol, challenges in the neurosurgical management of TBM by Professor Graham Fieggen and brain ischemia and monitoring in TBM by Dr Anthony Figaji.

Relatively few research studies are conducted in patients with TBM worldwide and comparative interpretation of the published

studies is complicated by the lack of a uniform clinical case definition.

One of the primary aims of the workshop was therefore to devise a consensus clinical case definition of TBM to be utilised internationally in research studies. This will be submitted for publication to a peer reviewed international journal in due course.

There was also consensus that future meetings dedicated to TBM are needed. Another positive consequence of this workshop will therefore be the establishment of an international working group on TBM that will periodically meet to exchange knowledge and discuss research questions.

Dr Suzaan Marais and Prof Robert J Wilkinson

Monthly Quiz

In the past few months we have heard quite a bit about two dangerous types of influenza: Swine Flu (H1N1) and Bird Flu (H5N1). What do the letters and numbers stand for? Send your answers to: kit.vaughan@uct.ac.za.

Answer to last month's quiz: there were two South Africans recently awarded

\$100,000 grants by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation: Boitumelo Semete from the CSIR, doing research on TB, and Walter Focke from the University of Pretoria, who works on malaria.

First with the correct answer was Melverna Wakefield who wins the book voucher.

Inaugural lecture dates

Please diarise the following:

25 June—Prof Paul Potter

15 July—Prof Jennifer Jelsma

22 July—Prof Colin Cook

All events take place in the Student Learning Centre at 5.30pm, followed by light refreshments.



UCT Vice-Chancellor, Dr Max Price, jamming with the band.



The Dean, Prof Marian Jacobs, and the Head of the Department of Medicine, Prof Bongani Mayosi, take to the dance floor to the strains of "Autumn Leaves".

Making beautiful music at the opening of the Clinical Skills Lab

The Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Max Price, joined the UCT jazz band and stole the show at the launch of the Clinical Skills Laboratory in Groote Schuur Hospital on Tuesday, June 5, 2009. A little known fact is that he is an accomplished saxophonist!

Guests made this discovery during the cocktail function after the formalities, when he picked up a saxophone belonging to medical student, Grant Thomas, who provided the entertainment, and joined in.

Dr Price was one of the key note speakers at this event and he spoke eloquently of the need for clinical skills training for students in the Faculty, particularly in the pre-clinical years, where access to patients was limited - for good reason. "We need skill laboratories and should have been doing this a long time ago," Dr Price said.

Dr Saadiq Kariem, CEO of Groote Schuur Hospital and UCT Alumnus, was the other speaker for the evening and he explained that when he was approached by UCT to convert this space into a clinical skills laboratory, he found it difficult to imagine, as the space had not been utilised for such a

long time. He, however, expressed his delight that such an appropriate and important use could be found, and that the laboratory had found a home in the Old Main Building of Groote Schuur Hospital.

With Dr Price setting the tone by joining the band, the Dean of the Faculty could do nothing less than invite Prof Bongani Mayosi, Head of the Department of Medicine, onto an impromptu dance floor to accompany the strains of the VC's saxophone playing 'Autumn Leaves'.

In spite of the light heartedness of the event, it marks an important milestone in the ongoing development of the undergraduate curriculum in the Faculty of Health Sciences and lays a foundation for the implementation of similar facilities.

All of the speakers expressed their thanks to the project team who made the Clinical Skills Laboratory a reality. Their hard work and dedication will continue to pay off for many years to come.

- Lameez Mohd

SAAHE Conference kicks off soon

The Conference Organising Committee of the SAAHE Western Cape Region has the pleasure of inviting you to the 2nd National Health Sciences Education Conference in Cape Town on 2-4 July 2009.

This conference continues SAAHE's practice of annually bringing together professionals with an interest in education of health science students.

The 2009 SAAHE Conference is hosted by the Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Cape Town and is organised collaboratively together with the University of the Western Cape, the Cape Peninsula University of Technology and Stellenbosch University. Please see the web site for more details:

<http://www.saahe.org.za>

International Speakers:

Rev Dr David Taylor

Deputy Director of Medical Studies: Quality, Assessment and Research, University of Liverpool, UK

Prof Deborah Murdoch-Eaton

Professor of Medical Education, University of Leeds, UK

Prof Christina Tan

Head: Clinical Skills Unit, University of Malaya, Malaysia

Prof Ara Tekian

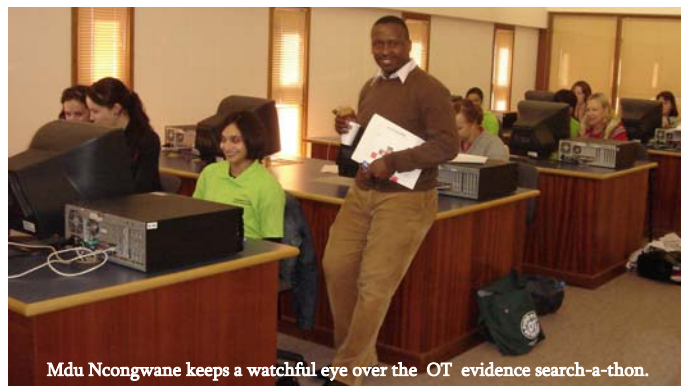
Associate Professor Medical Education, University at Illinois at Chicago, UK

Prof Bill Burdick

Associate Vice President for Education, FAIMER, USA

Prof Paul Bradley

Professor and Director of Clinical Skills, Peninsula Medical School, Plymouth.



Mdu Ncongwane keeps a watchful eye over the OT evidence search-a-thon.

OT Week search-a-thon is a winner

To celebrate OT Week, the Division of Occupational Therapy held an evidence search-a-thon. Occupational therapists around the country were invited to send in questions arising from their practice.

Occupational therapy teaching staff and some fourth year students volunteered their time on Tuesday 12 May to search on-line for the best research articles pertaining to the questions posed. The Health Sciences librarians were a wonderful encouragement and supported this effort completely; Mary Shelton and Mdu Ncongwane were on hand for

the entire afternoon to offer assistance. Articles were found to answer 21 of the 30 questions received (we ran out of time for the last nine!). This is an example of evidence-based practice in action and illustrates one way in which an academic institution can use its resources to benefit practitioners (and ultimately, service users).

We learnt an enormous amount from this exercise and plan to do it again. We would also like to encourage other divisions and departments to consider doing something similar.

- Helen Buchanan

Paediatric surgeons form ties with Italy

A partnership has been brokered between the University of Cape Town and the Fondazione Policlinico in Milan, Italy under the auspices of the government of Lombardy Province in Italy. The project, which seeks to redevelop an Outpatient Neonatal Surgical Clinic Service at the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital, makes provision for an amount of E70,000 per year for

two years, with the possibility of funding for a third year. Research would be conducted into especially follow-up of infants with Short Bowel Syndrome, Oesophageal Atresia, Small Bowel Atresia, Anorectal Anomalies and Hirschsprung's Disease.

Congratulations to Prof Alastair Millar and his team—we look forward to reporting on the progress of the project.