



Welcoming a new UCT Fellow

We would like to congratulate Prof. Vivienne Russell on being awarded a prestigious UCT Fellowship (one of only 58 at UCT).

The fellowships are granted to "permanent academic staff in recognition of original, distinguished academic work that merits special recognition". She has undertaken innovative research on developing an animal model of maternal separation. Her team, which includes Prof. Willie Daniels at UKZN and Prof. Michael Zigmond of the University of Pennsylvania, received an NRF IRDP grant (as part of CUBBI) as well as a NIH grant to pursue this work further. Viv is also involved in the new Masters in Neuroscience course being offered at UCT.

— Jonathan Ipser

Prof Tim Noakes awarded Order of Mapungubwe for contribution to sport

Prof Tim Noakes was one of four UCT staffers, past and present, who were awarded National Orders by President Kgalema Motlanthe at the Union Buildings on Tuesday 28 October.

The Order of Mapungubwe is awarded to South African citizens for excellence and exceptional achievement. National Orders are the highest awards that a country, through its president, bestows on its citizens and eminent foreign nationals. The Order of Mapungubwe (Silver Category) was bestowed on Professor Tim Noakes for his excellent contribution to the field of sport and the science of physical exercise.

The Discovery Health professor of exercise and sports science and a National Research Foundation A-rated researcher, Noakes established the fledgling Exercise Science and Sports Medicine (ESSM) in the early 1980s. It is now an acclaimed research unit of the Medical Research Council.

"I am extremely proud that the importance of this discipline should be acknowledged," Noakes said. "I was overcome by the messages of congratulations that I received at the ceremony from a broad cross-section of South Africans from many different disciplines and interests, including politics, the arts and culture.

"All expressed their support for the value of sport and the way in which we at UCT and the Institute have used science to help South African sport and to promote health and wellness for all South Africans."

Vice-Chancellor Dr Max Price endorsed the valuable contribution UCT academics and staff, some of them Nobel Laureates, have made to broader society, both at home and internationally.



Prof Tim Noakes acknowledges the audience at the award ceremony, as President Kgalema Motlanthe looks on.

"Their input has been across a wide spectrum, from great literature and pioneering medicine, to cutting-edge mathematics and sustainable technology.

"The group that received this year's Orders is again testimony to the span of disciplines in which UCT scholars continue to stand out."

The Faculty of Health Sciences boasts another recipient of the Order of Mapungubwe—Prof Wieland Gevers, who was the driving force behind the establishment of the Institute for Infectious Disease and Molecular Medicine, and who was recognized for his contribution to higher education and medicine.

DEAN'S CORNER

Last week I was privileged to attend a meeting convened by the Rockefeller Foundation in Bellagio, Italy. The purpose of the gathering of about twenty colleagues from across the world was to explore opportunities for building capacity for health systems leadership through – among others – learning from the experience of institutions such as ours.

Although it rained all the time and one could barely see Lake Como through the mist and clouds, I valued the space to reflect on our own leadership and management challenges and opportunities in the Faculty.

This past week, Heads of Department (HODs) have been in an all-day meeting, convened annually to discuss aspects of their leader-

ship. Concern has been expressed that HODs may be so overloaded with administrative and operations management tasks, that the core function of a head of department—academic leadership—is not given priority attention. I look forward to the outcome of this week's meeting and to supporting HODs in finding ways to distinguish their roles (and ours, in the deanery!) as managers and administrators from that of leadership; the distinction and its implementation is crucial to academic success.

But there are two other areas which deserve attention: the potential erosion of leadership of clinical medicine in a time of change in the public health sector; and the preparation of our young students for leadership in their future

careers. There is an opportunity to review the former matter in a meeting to be arranged by the College of Medicine in early December. While training for specialist medicine will be the major topic for consideration, discussion on the issues of leadership in academic medicine will surely also be pertinent.

My time in Bellagio has also reminded me that for the last decade, our Faculty has hosted many leadership and management training programmes in a range of aspects of the health system. While we share these experiences with the global community, it is also time to give ourselves a pat on the back, and pay tribute to those who have led these programmes over so many years. Congratulations!

Publications of the Month

Modern humans arose in Sub-Saharan Africa, an area that is home to a rich heritage of human genetic, linguistic and cultural diversity. It therefore makes sense that much can be learned by the characterization of human genomic variation in our part of Africa, particularly if we consider applications in health. These ideas are the focus of the recent article:

Hardy BJ, Séguin B, Ramesar R, Singer PA, Daar AS (2008) "South Africa: from species cradle to genomic applications", *Nature Reviews: Genetics*, 9 (Supplement 1): S19-S23.

Raj Ramesar is the only author not affiliated with the University of Toronto. Given the high profile and impact of the *Nature* journals, and the importance of research into African human genetic variation, this is a perfect example of the kind of collaboration our government should be encouraging and rewarding. However, there is one small catch. We will earn just 20% of the R85,000 publication subsidy because only Raj is affiliated with UCT. What is to be done? Some alternative models for research funding have recently been suggested in this paper:

Vaughan CL (2008) "Alternatives to the publication subsidy for research funding", *South African Journal of Science*, 104: 91-96.

It is suggested that our focus should be on a subsidy system which inspires academics to aim for a level of scholarship that can withstand the scrutiny of an international audience, and a case is made for the inclusion of NRF ratings in the research subsidy formula. It is perhaps ironic that this second publication, which appeared in a local journal with a modest impact factor, will earn the full R85,000 subsidy in 2010!

Congratulations ...

... To Claire Castelyn, who recently won the Pfizer-UKZN Young Health Scientist Research Award in the category: Clinical Research.

... To UCT, which has been ranked 179th in the *Times Higher Education* QS World University Rankings 2008, climbing 21 spots from 200th place last year. UCT was the only African university to be listed in the top 200, having been ranked 257th in 2006. The University has also been ranked joint 64th in the world in another survey - MINES Paris-Tech's Professional Ranking of World Universities.

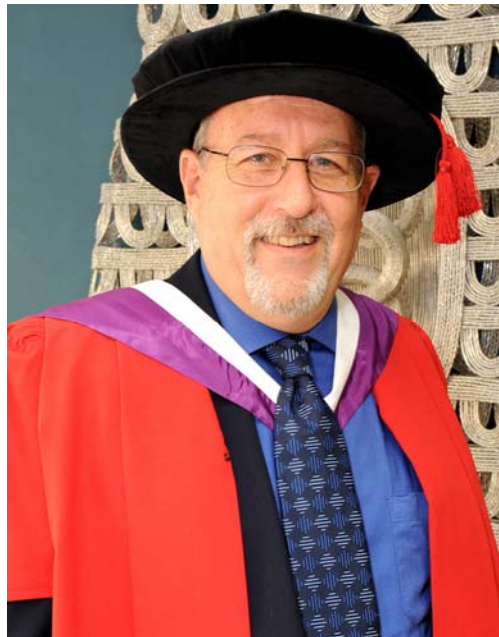
The survey assesses establishments uniquely on how many of their former graduates hold chief executive posts or their equivalents in the leading 500 international companies, as classified by the Fortune Global 500 of *Fortune* magazine.

Monthly Quiz

Who won this year's Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine, and what was it for? Who was the person who considered himself unlucky not to win the Prize?

Send your answers to kit.vaughan@uct.ac.za.

Answer to last month's quiz: the new Minister of Health is Ms Barbara Hogan and her deputy is Dr Molefi Sefularo. Rupesh Daya was the first person (out of eight) with the correct answer and wins the R100 book voucher. There's a correction to last month's answer: Ros Thompson was appointed as a Professor before 1994. In fact, she gave her inaugural lecture in June 1986! Thanks to Pat Mayers for bringing this to our attention.



Prof Alan Morris.

Old bones and politics

Prof Alan Morris caused a stir with his inaugural lecture, which was held on Tuesday 14 October, entitled "The Politics of Old Bones".

As a respected forensic anthropologist, Prof Morris has had to contend with fighting the perception of anthropology being "race science" and the reaction to this negative perception became very apparent in the furore that erupted over the excavation of an 18th century burial ground at Prestwich Place in the centre of Cape Town, where more than 1 200 complete skeletons were unearthed during the construction of a building on the site. Prof Morris and a team of archaeologists from the UCT Department of Archaeology were called in to remove the bodies to place them in a memorial mausoleum. The cemetery housed members of the underclass of Cape Town—among them slaves, "free-blacks", and anyone else who was excluded from settler society and a local pressure group claimed "ownership" on the basis of the poverty and exclusion of the people who were buried there.

Following several, sometimes acrimonious, public meetings, which were facilitated by the South African Heritage Resources Agency (Sahra), where demands were made to stop the construction entirely, and place a memorial at the site, agreement was eventually reached that the mausoleum would be situated elsewhere.

Sadly, due to pressure from these activists, the group of UCT archaeologists and anthropologists were unable to study the remains.

Following a call for proposals, a proposal to Sahra for funding to study the remains to learn more about the health, lifestyle, and demographics, was turned down, on the grounds that the project "failed to address or respond to the provisions and terms of reference as stipulated", which was clearly not the case.

Sahra has publicly responded to Prof Morris' lecture, defending their decision about the Prestwich Place burial ground and stating that they had consulted extensively with all interested and affected parties, and as such, the decision was a reflection of the will of the majority.



Recipients of the new Fellows' Awards are (from left): Dr Anthony Figaji, (paediatric neurosurgery) and Assoc Prof Keertan Dheda (medicine).

Two Win UCT Fellows' Awards

This is the fourth year that our institution has celebrated the UCT Fellows' Award. It was one of the Fellows, Pippa Skotnes whose idea this was and she motivated: "I would like to see us Fellows being able to nominate scholars from UCT who have achieved something unusually noteworthy for a one-off annual award. The awards would have the advantage of being able to reward younger staff for exceptional achievement".

Eligible candidates are permanent members of the academic staff, younger than 40 years of age and preferably in full-time employment at UCT for less than 5 years.

The selection committee identified six outstanding recipients for 2008, two of whom were from our Faculty. They are Tony Figaji, a paediatric neurosurgeon, who has made major contributions to intra-operative monitoring of patients with traumatic brain injury, and Keertan Dheda, a pulmonologist, who has established a world-class team that studies lung infection and immunity. Congratulations to both these young academics!