

FACULTY NEWSLETTER

March 2005

Dear Colleagues

The year is now in full swing and is proving to be challenging as predicted. In an attempt to keep you informed of developments within the faculty, we will be writing to you on a monthly basis in regular newsletters. If you have items for the newsletter, please inform Kurt Dixon on kdixon@curie.uct.ac.za.

Congratulations:

We are very proud of the achievements of Professor Bongani Mayosi and Dr Silke Dyer who have been the recipients of the prestigious NRF (National Research Foundation) President's Award and the HPCSA Award for Excellence in Health Care for 2004 respectively. The Faculty is pleased to be associated with colleagues of such international stature whose works will continue to be of value not only to our institution but also to the recipients of health care services in this country.

Academic Administration

The academic administration offices have moved from the Dean's Suite to refurbished offices on the ground floor of the Barnard Fuller Building. This is accessible via a new passage that has been created adjacent to the Dean's Office stairway.

Undergraduate Academic Administration: We have just completed a very busy and successful admissions, orientation and registration cycle admitting approximately 350 new students into the five undergraduate degree programmes and bringing our total number of registered undergraduate students to 1658.

We are pleased to report that students emerging from the first of the Clinical Years of the new curriculum are confident, autonomous in their learning and display surprisingly mature clinical skills and clinical reasoning abilities. Semester 6, serving as a key transition semester, fulfilled its aims, ensuring that students were thoroughly equipped to deal with patients before entering their clinical clerkships. The first group of students in the new curriculum have begun their first clinical year and we will be able to assess whether there are any gaps in their clinical knowledge that need to be filled.

We are facing a challenge to our admissions policy (subject of the headlines of the Argus a few days ago). We believe that our policy is correct and we will be therefore be fighting this

challenge. We will provide the faculty with more details when our lawyers indicate that it is possible to do so.

Postgraduate Academic Administration: There has been a marked increase in the numbers of applications to postgraduate programmes in the faculty. Postgraduate applications have more than doubled since 2003. To date we have registered 572 master's students and 121 PhD students in 2005.

The Joint Agreement:

One of the biggest challenges we face this year is the revision of the 39 year old Joint Agreement that regulates the relationship of the faculty with the Provincial Government of the Western Cape. Last year saw the formation of the Health Deans Forum (a joint platform between the universities of Stellenbosch and Western Cape) that has been tasked by the Vice Chancellors and the Premier of the Western Cape with putting together the first drafts of the new Joint Agreement.

At UCT Health Sciences Faculty, we have put in place a Task Team, headed by Prof Mike James to ensure that the interests of the faculty are well served in drawing up the new joint agreement.

Selection of new Dean:

A selection committee has been put in place according to the rules of the university and with input from the Faculty through the faculty Board. The first meeting of the selection committee will take place in March. We will keep the faculty informed as far as we are able, of developments in this area.

80th Birthday celebrations:

The faculty is 80 this year! We are compiling a calendar of 80 Significant Events during 2005 to acknowledge this historical occasion. If you wish to record activities on this calendar or obtain additional information on the 80th birthday celebrations, please contact Clare Jeffrey at cjeffrey@curie.uct.ac.za

EE Update:

Although progress in addressing equity has been slow in the course of 2004, we are still able to demonstrate small but measurable shifts in the demographic profile of some key positions. The whole transformation programme will be formally evaluated in terms of an NRF grant application over the next few years where the less senior and non-academic posts receive equal attention and greater attention to gender and disability issues are indicated

Gonda Perez, Dean, on behalf of EXCO