

Professional Standards Committee is a watchdog for the Faculty

The 2010 Human Rights Day commemoration on 18 March provided the perfect platform to launch the revamped Professional Standards Committee (PSC).

The proceedings were augmented by an interesting insight into health rights in Uganda, delivered by Mulumba Moses, a lawyer in Uganda, who has a special interest in health and human rights. His talk sparked lively debate—not the least of which was around a law being put forward in Uganda at the moment that would ensure the death penalty for homosexuals.

Some discussion on the role of DISCHO (the UCT Discrimination and Harassment Office) in the process of registering complaints and concerns. It was made amply clear that any cases received by the Professional Standards Committee would be reviewed by DISCHO and, where appropriate, they would assist with resolution.



Prof Marian Jacobs, guest speaker, Mulumba Moses, Roshan Galvaan (Transformation Committee), and Francois Botha (DISCHO).

The PSC will play a proactive as well as a reactive role. It aims to promote awareness of professional standards among staff and students, receiving complaints about alleged violations of professional behaviour, and

supporting and advising those who speak out.

"Witnessing abuses may erode a student's own respect for professionalism and patient rights," said PSC chair, James Irlam. "Recent research into these experiences highlighted the need for processes for reporting violations of professional standards."

The PSC will review all incident reports at monthly meetings, then give the alleged perpetrator an opportunity to respond. The next step will be to write a report for the dean of Health Sciences, including recommendations for an appropriate response by the dean. This report will also be made available to the complainant and the alleged perpetrator.

Mr Moses welcomed the formation of the PSC, and stressed the importance of creating awareness among patients as well as medical professionals on patient rights.

"In order for this committee to work, people must be aware of it," he said.

Dan Stein wins Pifer Award

In recognition of his contribution to welfare-related research, Professor Dan Stein, head of UCT's Department of Psychiatry and Mental Health, was awarded the prestigious Alan Pifer Research Award at a function on 24 March.

The annual award honours UCT researchers whose welfare-related work has contributed to the advancement and welfare of South Africa's disadvantaged people.

Stein's research focuses on the psychobiology and management of anxiety disorders, including posttraumatic stress disorder and obsessive-compulsive disorder. His work ranges from basic neuroscience all the way through to epidemiological and cross-cultural research.

Stein and his colleagues recently undertook the first nationally representative epidemiological study of mental illness in Africa. This research led to the key finding that although there is significantly more impairment associated with mental illness than with physical disorders, mental disorders are less likely to receive treatment.

With his team, Stein has also conducted some of the first research on mental disorders in patients with HIV/AIDS, and how, with short questionnaires, these disorders can be rigorously



Prof Dan Stein and UCT Vice-Chancellor, Dr Max Price.

screened.

Stein is also the director of both the Medical Research Council's Unit on Anxiety & Stress Disorders and UCT's Brain-Behaviour Initiative.

In receiving the award, worth R10 000, Stein expressed his passion for his field: "The brain is the sexiest and most challenging of organs, and psychiatry is so rewarding because it is the medical speciality that's most interested in people."

Stein also thanked his family, who attended the function. "They forgive me for being a workaholic, and they also keep me sane," he said.

STOP PRESS

Professor Graham Louw's inaugural lecture takes place on Wednesday, 21 April 2010 at 5.30pm (guests to be seated by 5.15pm) in the New Student Learning Centre in the Anatomy Building on the Faculty of Health Sciences Campus, Anzio Road.

The title of his lecture is: "Mummy—the cat has gone missing! Does she have a microchip? Mummification—a glimpse into the socio-cultural practice of preserving the bodies of animals".

Refreshments will be served after the lecture.

Mental health pioneer will be sorely missed

Alan Flisher, who held the position of the Sue Struengmann Professor of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry & Mental Health at the University of Cape Town, died on Sunday 18th April 2010 of leukaemia after a relatively short period of illness. His death robbed South Africa and the region of a remarkable scientist, academic, mentor and mental health professional.

An absolutely prodigious researcher with more than 200 peer-reviewed articles and over 70 books or book chapters to his name, Alan pioneered a much neglected field in South Africa – that of public mental health. He was born in 1957 in Cape Town and first studied Mathematics at UCT in a career that took him through clinical psychology, medicine and finally specialising in psychiatry in 1995, with a sub-specialisation in Child and Adolescent psychiatry in 1998. He was responsible for running a variety of psychiatric services in the Metropole, including the psychiatric emergency services at Groote Schuur Hospital for 10 years and then the Child and Adolescent psychiatry service at Red Cross Children's Hospital from 2003.

It was in the field of public mental health that Alan did groundbreaking work for the World Health Organisation and for the Department of Health in South Africa, both provincial and national, particularly in developing norms and standards for mental health services, evidence-based guidelines for mental health services delivery and evaluations of public mental health interventions. He was also highly regarded for his expertise in the field of suicide epidemiology and prevention and established multiple collaborations in research exploring the links between substance abuse, HIV prevention and mental health, particularly among adolescents.

He played a key role in collaborations internationally and across Africa to build the



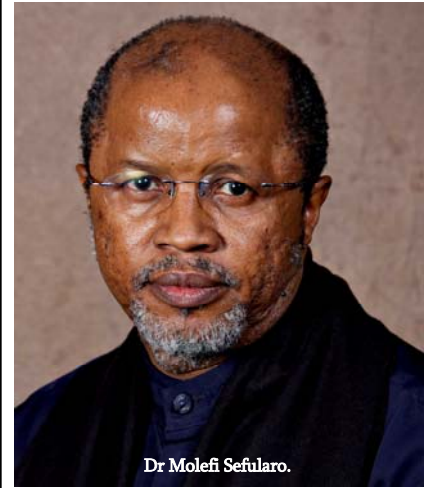
Prof Alan Flisher.

discipline of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, teaching and examining in Tanzania and Kenya and training postgraduate students from neighbouring countries. A large multi-country study under his leadership was funded to develop and implement mental health policy in Ghana, South Africa, Uganda and Zambia, with a focus on breaking the cycle of mental ill-health and poverty.

His research focus was on adolescent health through the multidisciplinary Adolescent Health Research Unit, which he directed for eight years. His postgraduate supervision was extensive, with 24 PhD or Masters students supervised to completion and a further 18 students under Alan's supervision at the time of his death. Alan was the recipient of numerous awards, including, for example, the Alan Pifer award from UCT in acknowledgement of a scholar whose work contributes to the welfare and advancement of South Africa's disadvantaged groups. Even in his illness, he retained the ability to feel and express moral indignation at social injustices and was pre-occupied with what action he could take to redress some of these issues upon his recovery.

Despite his extensive professional and academic involvement, he also made sure he had protected time for his family. He is survived by his wife Mehrunisa, his children Adam and Khaleila, stepsons Zubin and Sirhan, his parents, Jeanne and John, his sister Alison and his brother John. Always a devoted and loving father and husband, his loss will be sorely felt by many people whom Alan touched in different ways – not only his family, both close and extended, but also his students, his colleagues and his friends, for whom he always seemed to find time. We will remember him for unique combination of traits – compassion, loyalty, integrity and intellect. His premature death leaves us all the poorer.

Leslie London, Crick Lund and Laura Czerniewicz.



Dr Molefi Sefularo.

Sefularo's death a blow to health services

Dr Molefi Sefularo, National Deputy Minister of Health, died in a car accident on Monday, 5 April 2010.

A medical doctor, he began his career at Thusong Hospital in North West and with the advent of democracy in 1994, was appointed MEC for Health in the North West. This was followed by a move to national government, and ultimately, the position of Deputy Minister. Staff in the Faculty knew Dr Sefularo as a friend, comrade and leader, who throughout his life and career fought for health and social justice in South Africa.

He is remembered as an open and caring person, whose leadership was based on strongly held values. These translated into an ease with others that enabled communication and engagement. The Faculty mourns his passing and honours his enormous contributions to this country.

We extend our deepest sympathy to his wife Kgomoitso Kgoatse, and children, Chere Monaisa, Bonolo, Mmasechaba and Ipeleng.

DEAN'S CORNER

The need for a Professional Standards Committee (PSC) has been discussed at length, in a process that began at a Faculty Board meeting in 2009, and finally on 18 March, 2010, the new PSC was launched under the able chairmanship of James Irlam in the Primary Health Care Directorate.

It is the intention of the PSC to be a safe, impartial body that seeks to uphold professional standards, and bring transgressors to account. The PSC's role is both proactive and reactive, promoting awareness of professional standards among staff and students, in addition to receiving complaints about alleged violations of professional behaviour in both the workplace and from the students' perspective.

Report forms may be downloaded from the PSC's Vula site and emailed to psc@uct.ac.za.

I would like to thank James and his

committee for the work that they have put into making this committee a reality.

I trust that you and your families enjoyed the Easter break and if you have been travelling, that it was safe and enjoyable.

To Christian readers, I hope you had a blessed Easter and Jewish readers, a happy Passover.

Music man kicks TB—at FHS



R&B singer Craig David with his "posse" - the team from WHO, SATVI and the Dean's Office (and his manager!), who were involved in the filming of a DVD to launch the soccer-themed 2010 WHO "Kick TB" campaign.

British R&B singer and songwriter Craig David is lending his voice - which has helped him sell more than 13 million albums in more than 20 countries - to the global fight against tuberculosis (TB). Craig marked his appointment as Goodwill Ambassador against tuberculosis for the Stop TB Partnership by participating in events at United Nations Headquarters in New York on World TB Day, 24 March.

But, the Faculty got him first! Craig travelled to Cape Town earlier in March to film a promotional DVD about the fight against TB in South Africa, and highlighting the work of SATVI (the South African Tuberculosis Vaccine Initiative). He interviewed Dr Sizulu Moyo, a clinical researcher at SATVI to learn more about TB and to be used for promotional purposes by WHO.

Far from his world of packed concert halls and glittering celebrity events, he visited communities hit hard by TB, schools and a research centre. There he met people on the

front lines - people who have beaten the disease, children and teens who face the threat of TB every day and scientists who have dedicated their lives to making TB history.

His aim, as TB ambassador, will be to raise awareness about TB among his millions of fans worldwide. "Music is a universal language. I believe that through people's love of music we can increase knowledge and understanding and support people affected by TB. I hope that people who feel inspired by my music will also feel moved by what I have to say about TB," Craig says.

1.8 million deaths

In many of the countries where Craig David's music is appreciated, people generally view TB as a disease of the past. Yet 9 million people still became ill with TB and some 1.8 million died of the disease in 2008. Craig also has a massive and loyal following in many African and Asian countries which have been heavily affected by TB.

"Craig can reach people all over the world with messages of hope about our ability to cure TB, and the need to step up the fight against this devastating disease, which causes suffering and death almost everywhere," says Marcos Espinal, Executive Secretary of the Stop TB Partnership. "We are grateful to Craig for his commitment and his belief in this important cause."

"It was a life-changing experience for me to hear first-hand what it is like to live in a country where half a million people become ill with TB every year and meet people who are fighting hard and making progress every day," Craig says.

FIFA World Cup

Craig, a native of Southampton, England, now divides his time between London and Miami. His first mission as Goodwill Ambassador will take him back to South Africa, where he will participate in events surrounding the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

"At the Limits" gets Lancet nod

Emeritus Professor Lionel Opie describes the At the Limits (ATL) annual conferences as once "petite and elite", but that descriptive perhaps no longer applies to the meetings, especially now that famed medical journal *The Lancet* has come on board as official collaborator.

Opie, founding-director of UCT's Hatter Institute for Cardiology Research, co-established the ATL medical-education series with Professor Derek Yellon, director of the Hatter Cardiovascular Institute at University College London, England, back in 1997 as a specialised conference on diseases of the heart. The meeting was a companion piece to the launch of both the Hatter Institute and a five-year chair in cardiology research at UCT, funded through money that Opie and Yellon had scared up from Sir Maurice Hatter, English business mogul and philanthropist, and from Old Mutual and other donors.

One of the founding principles of the series was to attract delegates from Africa and Asia as well as from the developed world. Which is why the conferences are all hosted at UCT - fully accessible to many from Africa, and still a sensible overnight travel option for delegates from Europe.

The series started off with an annual conference on cardiology only, but now also includes regular-if-not-annual meetings on diabetes, nephrology, Alzheimer's disease, osteoporosis, oncology, gastroenterology and respiratory conditions. And since its launch, ATL has grown into one of the world's leading and sought after - attendance is by invitation only - medical-education events.

"When people get invited to speak, very seldom do they say no," reports Opie.

The event's stature received another boost this year with the leading British and international medical journal, *The Lancet*, agreeing to endorse the

programme and content of the meetings. In addition, the journal will also place videos of the ATL talks on its website, which boasts some 1.9 million registered users.

The most recent ATL meeting, attended by around 250 delegates from 26 to 29 March, should have pulled in a good many of those by virtue of its conjoined theme *Cardiology & Diabetes*.

It's increasingly being accepted that obesity, diabetes and related conditions lead to cardiac complications, explains Opie. "So diabetologists are interested in the cardiological complications, and cardiologists are interested in how to treat people with diabetes."

The March meeting was the series' second of the year, following on a four-day nephrology conference in February.

- Daily News