



Faculty News June 2007

Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Cape Town



Inaugural Lecture by Martin Schwellnus

After a wonderful start to the inaugural lecture series by Lyn Denny at the end of May, Professor Martin Schwellnus will be our next speaker. Here are all the details:

Date: 27 June 2007
 Time: 17h15
 Venue: Student Learning Centre, Anatomy Building, Faculty of Health Sciences



Title: Wisdom from the African Pot – Contributions to the Growth and Development of Sports Medicine

Martin Schwellnus was awarded his MBBCh degree (cum laude) in 1983 from the University of the Witwatersrand. He obtained his Masters degree in 1988 and his MD degree in 1991, both from UCT. He received his Fellowship from the American College of Sports Medicine (FACSM) in 1991, and a Fellowship from the International Sports Medicine Federation (FFIMS) in 2006. His research contributions cover three main areas: (1) the identification of risk factors for, and treatment of common overuse injuries in sport; (2) aetiology, diagnosis and management of medical problems related to sports participation; and (3) physical activity in the prevention and treatment of chronic diseases of lifestyle.

Visitor to Health & Rehabilitation Sciences



Mary Law with some of the full-time and part-time lecturers at the Division of Occupational Therapy, UCT. Back row (left to right): Mary Law, Lana van Niekerk, Helen Buchanan, Elelwani Ramugondo and Loren Lewis. Front row (left to right): Theresa Lorenzo, Susan Landman and Hanske Flieringa.

The Division of Occupational Therapy was privileged to have Professor Mary Law from McMaster University, Canada, visiting from 16–29 April 2007. The visit was

funded by a Distinguished Visiting Scientist grant awarded by the Medical Research Council. The purpose of the visit was capacity development of academics and practitioners in research and publication as well as evidence- and outcomes-based methodology.

The programme consisted of workshops, individual research consultations, community visits, meetings with leaders within Universities and Research institutions and discussions related to occupational therapy practice, education and research in the South African context.

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NSTF Award for Heidi Segal

At a gala dinner held on 23 May in Kempton Park, Dr Heidi Segal won an award from the National Science and Technology Forum (NSTF) for her outstanding contributions to science, engineering and technology. Her award was in the category of young black researcher over the last 2 to 5 years. Heidi's research involves a detailed genetic analysis of strains of bacteria isolated from people or animals in specific locations. The motivational speaker for the evening was Professor Tim Noakes, while the prizes were handed out by the Minister of Science and Technology, Mr Mosibudi Mangena. Congratulations Heidi!



Dean's Corner

The introduction of the University's new policy on internationalism underpins UCT's mission to be a world-class university and consolidates our goal to grow UCT's global profile. The process of rolling out this policy will challenge the University to debate the definition of benchmarks which reflect local needs and realities, while also allowing us to be measured against the best in the world. But it will also challenge us to examine our own traditions and practices in forging partnerships with global institutions, and collaborations with groups and individuals in the international community.

These matters deserve special attention by a Faculty like ours, which has an outstanding record of research on globally-determined health priorities; which enjoys international recognition for the quality of its teaching; and which has maintained its national reputation of providing a full set of health care services – from community to highly specialised care. And our location, at this beautiful tip of Africa, makes us an even more desirable site with which to engage. So what, then, should we consider in reviewing our international practice?

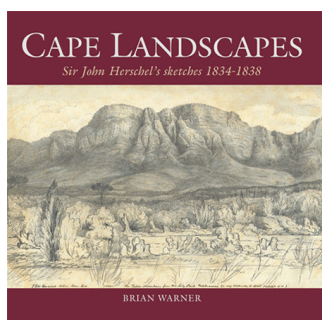
Firstly, attention should be paid to the notion of “international,” which has largely been interpreted as the development “north”. While global funding arrangements have supported this interpretation, our challenge will be to redefine “international” in relation to global development imperatives, and pay special attention to strengthening our relationships with the rest of the “south,” in particular countries in Africa. Secondly, we need to review the impact of global health policies on national, and – indeed – our institutional, endeavours. While this will have to include, for example, policies on migration of health workers, trade, and intellectual property in its widest interpretation, it will also have to consider research ethics rules which can be applied, and practised, in every setting in the world. And finally, in the spirit of our commitment to health equity, we should examine partnership agreements, to make sure that exchange agreements are truly bi-directional and benefits can accrue equally to each partner. I look forward to rigorous debate on these issues in the coming months.

I also wish to pay tribute to two colleagues who passed away in the recent past. Nompumelelo Mdladla was just a month short of completing her final year MBChB when serious illness forced her to leave the programme. Professor John (Joe) Ireland was head of paediatric gastroenterology and the cystic fibrosis service at Red Cross Hospital, where he worked for more than thirty years, until just a week before his death. Both of these – a young fledgling with unknown potential, and a colossus in the community of children’s health – were incredibly brave souls, who will be missed with great sadness. The Faculty salutes them.

[MJ]

Publications of the Month

This month I have selected two publications by authors who are not members of our Faculty. The first is by Brian Warner, Distinguished Professor of Natural Philosophy at UCT, and is entitled *Cape Landscapes*. This beautifully produced book maps the historical and astronomical landscapes of the Cape in the early 19th century through the exquisite sketches of Sir John Herschel. I have featured this publication because it has been published by UCT Press, an imprint of Juta & Company. After some years where UCT Press was virtually invisible, Juta’s executives have promised to rejuvenate the imprint, enabling our academics to publish their scholarship to a wide audience. Watch this space!



Our second featured publication is a news piece by Michael Cherry of Stellenbosch University:

Cherry M “HIV: a tale of two centres” *Nature*, 447: 26-27, 2007.

The article contrasts the research on HIV that is being conducted at the Africa Centre for Health and Population Studies in rural KwaZulu-Natal and our own Institute of Infectious Disease and Molecular Medicine (IIDMM). Those mentioned in the news feature include Carolyn Williamson, her sister Anna-Lise and Robert Wilkinson. While Cherry (whose father was Professor of Physics at UCT some years ago) is positive in his assessment of our scientists’ accomplishments to date, he does suggest that the IIDMM and the Africa Centre should be developing concrete plans for collaboration in the future.

Faculty Prize Giving

The Faculty’s annual prize giving ceremony took place on Tuesday 22 May 2007 in the new Learning Centre. Over 200 class medals and undergraduate and postgraduate prizes were awarded. Among those recognised was 2006 MBChB graduate, Dr Debbie Rencken.

Professor Janet Seggie joked that Debbie needed a supermarket trolley to carry her cache home: 11 prizes. Among these were the University Gold Medal in Medicine for the most distinguished student graduating with honours, the Surgery Class Medal, and the Jack Prisman Prize as the best final-year MBChB student.

The evening also saw the first award of the Professor Mary Robertson Prize for Excellence to the top female MBChB graduate. No surprises, there; Rencken gathered this one, too, a very generous R20,000. A UCT alumna and eminent neuropsychiatrist who is now working in the UK, Robertson travelled especially to Cape Town to make the award. She instituted the prize in recognition of the DSc (Med) she earned from UCT last year, and her family’s enduring relationship with UCT. Robertson also bestowed a full scholarship for a financially needy female medical student (from second to final year). This will be awarded at the end of the year.



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Monthly Quiz

This month’s question is about the history of our University’s leadership. How many of UCT’s Vice-Chancellors since 1918 (the year we became a fully-fledged university) have been medical doctors? What are their names and who among them, if any, earned their MBChB degree from UCT? Send your answers to: kit.vaughan@uct.ac.za

Answer to last month’s quiz: The source for the title of Lyn Denny’s inaugural lecture, “Angels with Wet Wings Won’t Fly,” is: Nations MK, Rebhun LA. Maternal sentiment in Brazil and the image of neglect. *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry*, 12: 141-200, 1988. Stanford Flanagan was first with the correct answer and wins the book voucher. Well done Stanford!