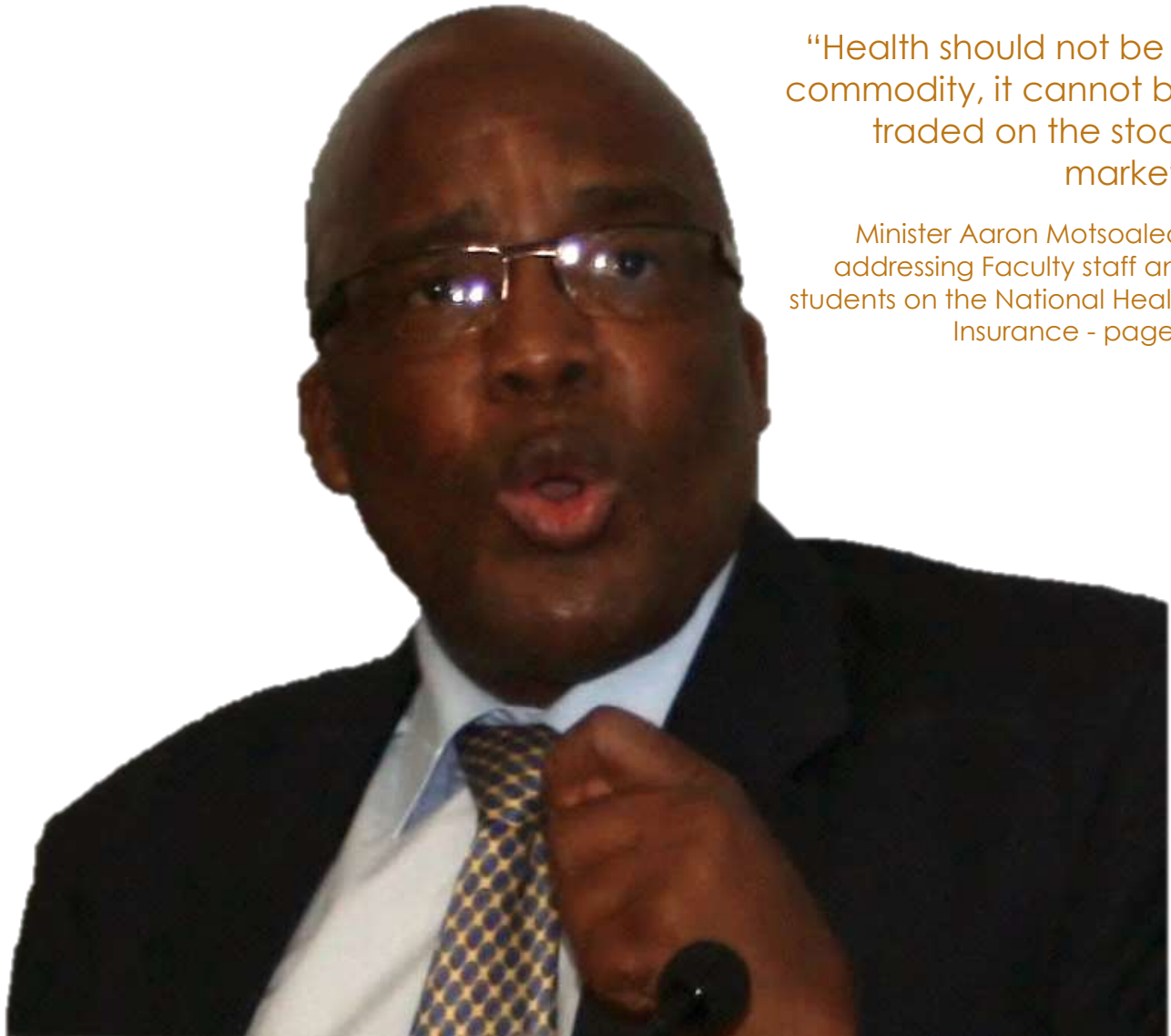




FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

# FACULTY NEWS

First Quarter 2014



“Health should not be a commodity, it cannot be traded on the stock market”

Minister Aaron Motsoaledi, addressing Faculty staff and students on the National Health Insurance - page 3

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World Cancer Day 'debunks the myths'



Dear colleagues and students

We are just past the first quarter of 2014 and what a busy year it has been already. 'O' week' has come and gone, and I want to single out the Student Administration Office team for their hard work and commitment over the exam and this period. Our (mostly first year) new students have by all accounts settled into university life very well, and are now busy with their first term's tests. Best wishes to all our students and colleagues during what is a very stressful period for many.

We have had several high-profile visits to the campus. These include the entire board of the Wellcome Trust, a long-standing funder of many of our projects, as well as a talk by UCT alumnus, Dr Mark Suzman, President of Global Policy and Advocacy for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

There have also been other exciting events held on campus, including a very illuminating seminar commemorating Human Rights Day on the lessons we can learn from the Wouter Basson case. Our Dean's Forum continues to generate lively staff engagement on matters of importance for the Faculty, such as the need for establishing a Department of Health Sciences Education. The highlight for the term must be the talk by the Minister of Health on the National Health Insurance. I was very proud that he mentioned the specific contributions made by the Faculty to the shaping of health policy, and that he acknowledged the important roles played by academics in contributing to health.

And although early in the year, our colleagues continue to draw accolades for their work (see 'kudos' on page 4). The latest highlight is the recent news that UCT receives the most funding from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) of any university outside the USA, with our Faculty getting the lion's share! NIH grants are highly competitive, and this wonderful achievement reflects the superb quality of research in the Faculty.

Sincerely

Wim de Villiers

## UCT wins lion's share of coveted NIH funding

The University of Cape Town attracted more funding for direct grants from the prestigious National Institutes of Health (NIH) in the USA than any other non-American university in 2013. Even as the NIH's funding of foreign institutions has declined, UCT has attracted increasing amounts of funding every year – growing more than threefold in the last three years alone, from \$2,622,671 in 2010 to \$9,150,889 in 2013.

The NIH is the largest source of medical funding in the world. Professor Danie Visser, Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research at UCT, said: "NIH grants are highly competitive. This growing support is confirmation that UCT, along with other research institutions in South Africa, are recognised internationally for making a significant contribution to solving global health issues."

Other top South African research institutions – including the University of the Witwatersrand, the University of KwaZulu-Natal and the South African Medical Research Council – also outperform foreign competitors in attracting NIH funding. Overall, South Africa received \$38,610,755 in direct grants to research institutions from the NIH in 2013, second only to Canada (\$39,783,607). Professor Visser said: "One of the many benefits of this funding from the USA is that it allows local researchers to build capacity in Africa to address our own health problems."

These research grants make it possible for UCT's researchers to tackle some of Africa's most intractable health problems, such as HIV, tuberculosis (TB) and malnutrition, as well as some areas often neglected by researchers, such as sickle cell anemia and mental illness. Most of the projects are large in scale and many involve collaboration with partner universities elsewhere in Africa. The NIH was asked at a recent international press conference why so many principal investigators in these projects were from South Africa. The answer, they said, was scientific quality.

UCT Associate Professor Nicola Mulder, one of the grant recipients, said of the NIH: "They fund based on excellence... It is an equal, peer-reviewed process, in which reviewers score the proposals, based on scientific excellence."

# minister's passion for nation's health

Speaking at a discussion hosted by UCT's [School of Public Health and Family Medicine](#) on 26 March 2014, Minister of Health Dr Aaron Motsoaledi shed light on his proposal for universal healthcare for all South Africans - National Health Insurance (NHI).

Drawing on global examples that demonstrate a shifting attitude towards the provision of universal healthcare and education, regardless of whether the state defines itself as capitalist or communist, the Minister spoke of how the majority of European countries use a public-funded health system. With this model, most of citizens' healthcare spend comes in the form of mandatory pre-payment - the basis of the NHI - with voluntary pre-payment (medical aid schemes) and cash payments making up relatively nominal proportions of the total. The Minister specifically acknowledged that the data demonstrating this funding model is drawn from [a paper by UCT's Professor Diane McIntyre](#) which guided his policy reform agenda. The NHI also embodies South Africa's commitment to the 2012 UN Declaration on Universal Health Coverage of which it is a signatory.

What South Africa needs to achieve universal healthcare, Motsoaledi explained, is infrastructure, inter-ministerial collaboration, and a robust healthcare financial system - one of six World Health Organisation (WHO)-defined ['building blocks' of a healthy healthcare system](#). He emphasised that health systems financing is one of the most important and often overlooked factors in healthcare provision.

"Health should not be a commodity, it cannot be traded on the stock-market," he said. Health care financing is a significant and complicated issue, as increasing health budgets do not automatically mean better services for citizens. A new financing system must be developed, and this is where the NHI comes in. Dr Motsoaledi explained that there is a move towards NHI type programmes in most countries and that the issue is being raised at the WHO and the United Nations. He then went on to explain why similar plans have failed in recent decades in post-colonial African countries, and assured the audience that his department would learn from those mistakes - not repeat them .

Explaining the implementation of the NHI, Dr Motsoaledi reiterated that "a national health insurance (NHI) system needs to be implemented in phases, complemented by a reduction in the relative cost of private medical care and supported by better human capacity and systems in the public health sector".

Dr Motsoaledi also spoke at length about the NHI pilot sites and minimum standards facilities that will service communities. These 'ideal' clinics have all necessary equipment, even back-up generators and water tanks.

The well-attended event, organised by the School of Public Health and Family Medicine, aimed to create a space for the Faculty community to engage with the Minister. Professors Leslie London, Lucy Gilson and Steve Reid had each briefly raised some important questions regarding the NHI. The Minister took time out to answer these questions, as well as from the audience.

"We are deeply encouraged by Minister Motsoaledi's observation that higher academic institutions have an important role to play in promoting the advancement of the health care dispensation in the country, especially with regard to the research, training and clinical service provision we undertake," said Professor Mohamed Jeebhay, head of Public Health and Family Medicine, at the end of the programme. *Acknowledgement: Yusuf Omar*



Prof Mohamed Jeebhay, Minister Motsoaledi and Dean Prof Wim De Villiers



doctor of science congratulations honorary doctorate fellow kudos  
highest honours president's awards excellence kudos doctor of science  
honorary doctorate congratulations fellow highest honours president's  
awards excellence fellow excellence kudos congratulations awards

### **Student wins Brönte Stewart Research Prize**

Mary-Ann Davies has been awarded the Brönte Stewart Research Prize for the student submitting the most meritorious thesis for the degree of MD or PhD in the Faculty of Health Sciences for 2013. The thesis was entitled: *Outcomes and effectiveness of antiretroviral therapy for HIV-infected children in South African treatment cohorts.*

### **Professor Rayner wins esteemed WHL award**

Professor Brian Rayner has won the prestigious 2014 *World Hypertension League (WHL) Notable Achievement in Hypertension* award. This award confirms our role as global leaders in hypertension.

### **CTU gets National institutes of Health Funding**

The University of Cape Town Clinical Trials Unit has been awarded a grant of \$1, 183,416 from the National Institutes of Health. The Principal Investigator is Prof Linda-Gail Bekker.

### **PhD student wins MRC award**

Dr Goodman Sibeko, a research officer and soon to be PhD student, has won an MRC clinician scientist PhD award. There were around 50 applicants and only 7 awardees.

### **Professor honoured with ASSAf gold medal Shisana**

Prof Olive Shisana, an Honorary Professor in our Dept, for having been awarded the *Science-for-Society Gold Medal of the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf)*. This is arguably the most prestigious award in South African science.

### **Lifetime achievement award for Professor Thomas**

Prof Jenny Thomas who was awarded the Lifetime achievement award by the South African Burn Society in recognition of her outstanding work for children who suffer burns.

### **Students win Paediatric medals**

Julie Copelyn has won the *Leslie Rabinowitz Medal* for the Part I exam and Graeme Spittal has won the *Robert McDonald Medal* for the best performance in the Part II exam.

### **Prof Sliwa-Hahnle wins award for cardiac in pregnancy research**

Prof Karen Sliwa-Hahnle received an award for 'outstanding contribution to cardiac disease in pregnancy' at the recent *Cardiac problems in Pregnancy meeting in Venice.*

### **PIC wins at Inclusive Healthcare Innovation Summit**

The Poisons Information centre and the developers of the AfriTox database received an award as a "health innovator" at the Inclusive Healthcare Innovation Summit. There were about 100 entries and 6 winners – AfriTox was given the award in the category "Transforming the System from the Inside Out".

### **Prof Noakes wins Lifetime Achievement Award**

Prof Noakes was honoured as one of 2013's *National Business Awards Lifetime Achievement Award* recipients. Judges unanimously voted that his commitment and involvement in bringing awareness and change within the areas of empowerment and transformation within the broader business landscape since the first democratic elections, makes his award nomination well-merited.

### **Student submits abstract to World Federation of Occupational Therapy Congress**

Melissa Wilschutt, an undergraduate OT student has successfully submitted an abstract for an oral presentation at the congress in Japan in 2014. This congress attracts a large international audience and is the leading platform for scholarly presentations in Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy.

### **Awards for OpenCourseWare Excellence (ACE)**

Dr Juan Klopper is the recipient of the *OpenCourseWare Consortium's Educator ACE* for his innovative work in sharing teaching materials and inspiring others to do the same. The Educator award recognises an educator who actively develops and/or uses open educational resources in creative and significant ways over a sustained period of time. Dr Klopper calls his online lectures a "labour of love".

### **Dr Stephenson wins Royal Society medal**

Dr Kate Stephenson was awarded the *Royal Society of Medicine* medal for being the top candidate in the Final part of the *Intercollegiate Specialty Examinations in Otolaryngology* held in Glasgow in November 2013.

### **Student wins award for social responsiveness**

Anastasia Koch was recently awarded with the *Wellcome Trust Award for Social Responsiveness*. Anastasia is also the *Principal Investigator on the Wellcome Trust engagement grant.*

# campus welcomes freshers

“O-week is excellent; it gives us a 360’ understanding of campus life and assists us with the most important registration processes so that we can all start full steam when the academic calendar starts”.

1st year student

After celebrating the end of their school careers over the December holidays, students were no doubt well rested and ready to take on the new challenges of university studies when they stepped onto the Health Sciences campus in early February.

UCT students start off their academic careers with ‘O-week’; events planned during this period are aimed to introduce students to their new surroundings and guide them through the registration process.

On 4 February students were welcomed by Dean Prof Wim De Villiers and UCT Vice-Chancellor Dr Max Price at Groote Schuur Hospital. Prof De Villiers congratulated students on being accepted into the top- ranked Health Sciences faculty in Africa. Dr Price reiterated that students must focus on their academic work right from the start, as to ensure they do not fall behind.

UCT and faculty-based societies also extended a warm welcome to new students in the Barnard-Fuller plaza during lunch times and encouraged them to join and serve in their ranks.

A student remarked: “it is also a lot of fun, you get to meet new people from all parts of the country!”





## Pesticide Risk Management programme supports Afropolitanism vision



A/Prof Andrea Rother, Mr Mark Davis and Deputy Dean Prof Tania Douglas with students

**“The only comprehensive pesticide risk management programme globally”**

Pesticides are used extensively in all countries for agriculture, public health, domestic use, in buildings (hospitals, shops, offices, hotels), places (eg parks, airplanes, airports, golf courses, sports fields). As a result, pesticide poisoning and contamination is a major problem.

In its 4<sup>th</sup> year, the School of Public Health and Family Medicine’s Postgraduate Diploma in

Pesticide Risk Management continues to build capacity for managing pesticides around a United Nations Code of Conduct on Pesticide Management.

The programme is unique in that it covers all aspects of pesticide risk management including toxicology, pesticide epidemiology, ecotoxicology, alternatives, policy, and public health pesticides. As the programme convenor, A/Prof Andrea Rother, points out, UCT offers the only comprehensive pesticide risk management programme globally and is meeting an under-resourced need.

Students, predominately professionals working for government, are from Africa and other developing countries. This year’s students - from Fiji, Guyana, Malawi, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, Swaziland, Uganda and Zimbabwe – represent the health, environment, agriculture and academic sectors. At a recent function, Prof Tania Douglas, FHS Deputy Dean for Research, highlighted how this programme not only is meeting UCT’s Afropolitan mission, but is also serving University and Faculty aspirations to do interdisciplinary teaching and translational research that delivers social value.

The FAO continues to actively support this programme and have provided just over a million rand to cover student fees for 2014 and 2015. Mr Mark Davis, Senior Officer for Pesticides Management at the FAO, participated in the contact-time teaching of this blended learning programme. FAO staff and other international experts teach on this programme through the distance-learning component via Vula, thus exposing students to global experts.

## physiotherapy students take oath



The Division of Physiotherapy held its annual oath-taking ceremony for 2nd year students in mid-February; students take the oath before they begin with clinical practice.

Guest speaker Professor Amosun emphasised that the start of their clinical training was “an important step” in their careers. Quoting University of the Free State Vice-Chancellor Prof Jonathan Jansen and Anette Kolodny, Prof Amosun made students aware of their responsibility in society as university graduands and future healthcare practitioners.

Students stood up and read the oath out loud, declaring that they will look after the total well-being of their patients and promote the good health of all citizens.

## new course in medical ultrasound makes noise



Vice Chancellor Dr Max Price in conversation with Prof Erik Sloth and Dr Rachel Weiss

The Department of Anaesthesia has established a hands-on course programme in medical ultrasound with the aim of training departmental staff members as teachers and trainers, as well as other delegates from other departments, academic centres and the private sector.

The series of educational hands-on courses (focused point of care echocardiography FATE, transoesophageal echocardiography FAST, regional anaesthesia ultrasound techniques, vascular access and more) are all very useful skills in the day-to-day clinical practice of any clinician dealing with patients during the peri-operative period.

These courses do not exist in South Africa on a regular basis and the department is establishing this as an ongoing educational programme which will eventually affect service, not only in our hospital and the rest of the country, but also throughout the rest of Africa. "We have already had delegates from other African countries on our recent courses," says Prof Swanevelder. His team demonstrated how these FATE courses are run to a number of people, including Vice-Chancellor Dr Max Price and the Dean.

## postgraduate common room a great facility for students

The Department of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences celebrated the opening of its Postgraduate Common Room, which was funded by the Faculty. It is well equipped with workstations, comfortable sofas, a microwave and fridge - the Health and Rehabilitation postgraduate students at last have a place that they can call their own!

"The department expects great ideas to emerge"



Deputy Dean Prof Denver Hendricks with Health and Rehabilitation staff and students at the opening of the postgraduate room



# new flexible classroom environment unveiled

While staff and students were off enjoying the holidays, a range of dedicated teams were busy upgrading classrooms around campus - preparing a flexible classroom environment that will become the new standard at UCT.

The work forms part of UCT's Classroom Renewal Project, which began more than a year ago and aims to bring all centrally bookable classrooms up to an agreed standard in terms of physical facilities and audio-visual / information technology. The teams - led by ICTS - have worked with a number of partners to upgrade 15 classrooms at the medical, upper and middle campuses.

While the work included physical refurbishment - such as painting, carpeting and replacement of chairs - the most exciting developments focused on improving the teaching and learning experience. Document cameras and new data projectors were installed, teaching walls were reconfigured to provide flexible teaching options and a brand new, motorised UCT lectern was conceptualised and commissioned.

Major renovations and installations are scheduled for the mid-year and year-end vacations, in order to minimise disruptions to teaching during the term.

“We wanted to create classrooms conducive to as many different pedagogical approaches as possible”



## faculty raises funds to establish Solly Marks Visiting Professorship

The Faculty of Health Sciences is in the process of establishing a Visiting Professorship in Gastroenterology, in the name of the late Professor Solly Marks. Professor Marks was the founder of the UCT Gastrointestinal Clinic at Groote Schuur Hospital (the first of its kind in South Africa), and in 1962 established the South African Gastroenterology Society. He was a very wise mentor to young doctors and an extraordinary man who made an enormous contribution to Groote Schuur Hospital and the field of gastroenterology in general.

The professorship will allow us to annually host an internationally prominent Professor of Gastroenterology at UCT, enabling advanced research, knowledge and skills transfer, and international collaboration in the field.

Please [click here](#) for more information about this project and its funding needs. I hope that you will consider [making a gift](#) to the Solly Marks Visiting Professorship in Gastroenterology.





# multi-million-rand drug and vaccine partnership announced

UCT and the South African Medical Research Council (MRC) recently announced a R370 million biotechnology partnership to develop new medicines, vaccines and other biotechnologies to combat HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria, Africa's big killers. The funding and support partners are the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Departments of Science and Technology (DST) and Health.

The announcement was made at the MRC's Tygerberg offices and the development will provide a significant fillip to local health innovation and the bio-economy. The partnership integrates existing role players – government, academia, industry - into a co-ordinated system, each with specific roles in drug and vaccine discovery. It will support two distinct programmes, one involving UCT directly.

In the first programme, researchers from across South Africa will compete for funding from the MRC's Strategic Health Innovation Partnerships (SHIP) earmarked for AIDS and TB vaccine development. This initiative has received R125 million from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, R130 million from the DST and R60 million from the Department of Health.

The second programme is a partnership between the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, SHIP and UCT, through the Drug Discovery & Development Centre (H3-D), with its Director, Professor Kelly Chibale, as Principal Investigator and Project Director. H3-D is Africa's first integrated modern drug discovery and development centre whose objective is to deliver drug candidates for clinical development. In addition to R50 million funding from SHIP and the Technology Innovation Agency, H3-D will receive R55 million from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation over five years for this work.

The partnership also harnesses the collective skills and research networks in and outside South Africa and will be led by local scientists, backed by the South African government's Departments of Science and Technology (DST), and Health.

*Story by Helen Swingler. Image by Michael Hammond.*

## Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation president upbeat about world health

President of Global Policy and Advocacy at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Mark Suzman, recently gave a public lecture in the Wolfson Memorial Lecture Theatre entitled: "The World Is Getting Better (Faster Than You Think)". The lecture was well attended and staff and students engaged Mr Suzman on a number of issues after the presentation.



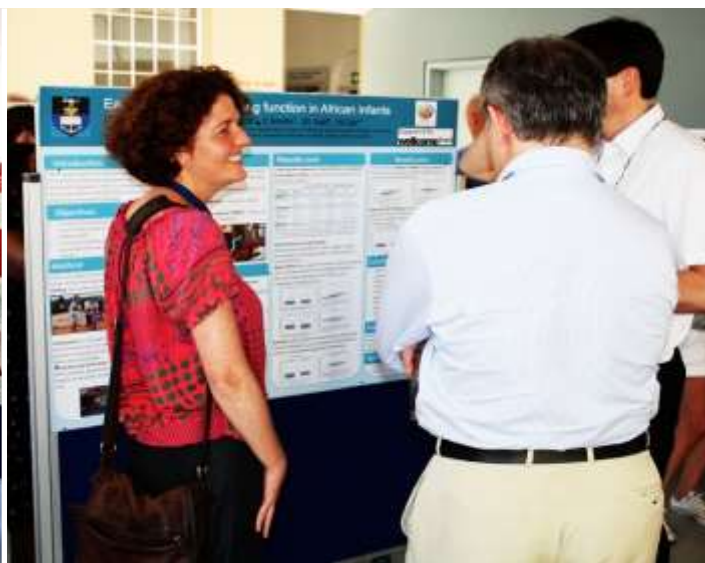
Dean Prof Wim De Villiers, Prof Quentin Eichbaum, Prof Valerie Mizrahi and Mark Suzman (far right).

An on-screen slide during the lecture

# Wellcome Trust visits UCT



Dr Yolanda Harley, Prof Rob Wilkinson, the director of the Wellcome Trust, Jeremy Farrar, and Dean Prof Wlm De Villiers



Delegates discuss a poster presentation

The Wellcome Trust, a UK-based independent global charitable foundation that invests in health research, recently visited UCT on 12-13 February 2014.

Professor Robert Wilkinson, Director of the Clinical Infectious Diseases Research Initiative (CIDRI), hosted the Board of Governors and senior staff of the Trust. The meeting, which also involved a number of delegates from academia and the health sector in other parts of Africa, included talks and discussions around health research and capacity building in South Africa and beyond. A number of academics from the Faculty presented and both the Vice-Chancellor and the Dean participated. The Trust and members of UCT also met with representatives of the Western Cape Government Department of Health.

The Trust's 2010/11 charitable funding commitment was over £600m (including biomedical research, technology transfer, medical humanities and public engagement). UCT has benefited from funding from the Trust for many years.

## faculty signs agreement with Netcare



Lieselle Shield, Prof Dion du Plessis, Ian Goble, Deputy Dean Prof Denver Hendricks and Dean Prof Wim De Villiers

The Faculty of Health Sciences recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Netcare Hospital Group to strengthen an already well-established relationship with the medical group. It is anticipated that this will lead to the development of future initiatives, which include training and development of students and academics.

# human rights day lessons from the Wouter Basson verdict

The recent Human Rights Day event titled "Health and Human Rights: What can the Wouter Basson trial judgement teach us?" was organised by the Faculty of Health Sciences in association with Stellenbosch University.

It discussed the lessons of the Wouter Basson judgment for universities in teaching professionalism and preparing graduates to practice at the highest ethical standards in situations where the pressures on health professionals are often severe.

The HSPCA found Dr Wouter Basson, former head of the Chemical and Biological Warfare Programme in the South African Defence Force under apartheid, guilty of unprofessional conduct.

The panelists and audience discussed the various defences offered by Basson in terms of post-conflict narratives. Basson claimed he was inexperienced and unaware of medical ethics and also that a lot of time had passed since the events and that he just wanted to get on with his life.

Prof Keymanthri Moodley, from the Bioethics Centre at Stellenbosch University, told the audience of her experience of teaching ethics and human rights to medical students and said it should be an integral part to every medical student's education.



Prof Keymanthri Moodley

## who cares for healthcare workers?

**"It's all work... Forget all those fancy words they tell us about health and wellbeing. There just isn't time for that."**

While healthcare providers are indispensable for the delivery of healthcare, there is growing recognition that their own wellbeing and social needs are often overlooked. This was the background against which a seminar on the challenges and opportunities for building a culture of care for healthcare workers, hosted by UCT's School of Public Health and Family Medicine on 13 March 2014.

Healthcare workers laid bare some of these many challenges, from long hours and low salaries to safety concerns when travelling to and from work and an infrastructure that is struggling to cope with rising numbers of patients. Barbara Ruiters, chair of the labour caucus at Groote Schuur Hospital (GSH), shared some of the experiences of her constituency: "The big issue in the public sector ... is the shortage of staff. We can't fulfil [the level of care that we are supposed to] because we don't have the necessary capacity."

Colleen Sampson, a psychiatric nurse at GSH, said the high patient-load, high patient acuity (the severity of someone's illness) and a shortage of nurses made it virtually impossible to keep up with demand. "There is no work-life balance," said Sampson, explaining how the job took its toll on family life.

Susan Cleary of UCT's Health Economics Unit suggested some courses of action to improve conditions in the healthcare service. "Firstly, grappling with the issues of unreasonable workloads. It's a really tough one given the high burden of disease, patient demands and limited budgets. But we need to realise that there is no way that health workers are going to be able to look after themselves if, as we've heard, the workloads are completely over the top. It's just not possible for people to overcome that and be all shiny and happy and fine."

Cleary also emphasised the need for sound leadership and investing in leadership building and developing capacity, as well as for leaders to be role models and "make it easier for people to help themselves". *Story by Yusuf Omar*



# Dean's Open Forum –should we have a Health Sciences Education Department?



*“I recently started teaching and I would really have valued some training in regards to teacher education”*

Staff recently attended the Dean's Open Forum to discuss whether there is a need for the establishment of a Health Sciences Education Department.

There was lively debate around the issue; some staff felt strongly that education was a separate discipline and that health sciences education teaching was not essential for a health professional to be a good teacher and instructor. In contrast to this, a staff member who recently started teaching said he would have really valued receiving training on teaching practice.

Professor Ben Van Heerden, director of Stellenbosch University's Centre for Health Professions Education spoke of his experience in setting up that centre in Stellenbosch; he spoke of the centre's growth and development over the past few years and listed some of its successes.

Other discussants highlighted that Health Sciences Education is still a relatively young discipline and that its growth will highlight its importance over time.



Deputy Dean Ass Prof Gonda Perez answers questions posed by discussants

## “hamba kahle, Madiba!”

Faculty staff and students mourned the passing of Madiba late last year; the national memorial event was live-streamed in the Frances Ames Room for staff and students. A tribute book placed in the foyer for staff and students allowed many to share their thoughts. These are some of the touching messages:



Madiba's portrait on display during memorial proceedings

*“Your legacy will live on in our hearts. You are a great man, a legend! You will forever be remembered, the standard you set for us. May your soul rest in peace”*

*“You made great changes in this country. I am proud to be South African. RIP Tata”*

*“Thank you for making our future brighter. Your memories will forever be with us. You inspired a nation and gave hope to all humanity”*

*“I was able to graduate yesterday because of the efforts of Mr Mandela! Equal education for all. Thank you!”*

## World Cancer Day aims to 'debunk the myths'



World Cancer Day is a chance to raise awareness of the global impact of cancer and increase understanding of prevention, detection, treatment and care. The theme for 2014 is Debunk the Myths. Four myths are being highlighted – one of which is “there is nothing I can do about cancer.”

The Cancer Research Initiative hosted a lunch-time seminar on HPV vaccination on World Cancer Day to highlight the progress made by scientists, clinicians, policy-makers and health-care providers to prevent cervical cancer, the leading cause of cancer deaths among South African women.

A representative from the Western Cape Health Department was in attendance and outlined the province's HPV vaccination programme for young girls. The vaccination programme has been welcomed and is currently being rolled out to grade 4 girls nationally.

## faculty CANSA Shavathon



The annual Shavathon in the student plaza was again well-supported by staff and students, who willingly contributed to raising awareness about cancer by subjecting themselves to rather quirky patterns sprayed onto, or shaving their heads. The Director of the Faculty's Cancer Research In initiative, Prof Moodley, looks on in amusement.



# alumni reconnect at reunions

The Faculty's reunion season was once again a resounding success. Held at the end of 2013 under the tight stewardship of Alumni officer Joan Tuff, the season kicked off when the MBChB Class of 1998 celebrated its 15th year since graduation from UCT with a cocktail party in the foyer of the IDM building.

Other reunions that took place are the 25th, 40th and 50th reunions. The three-day programmes include a tour of medical school and the Heart of Cape Town Museum, a Dean's welcoming cocktail party and an academic meeting. The highlight of the weekend is always the gala dinner in Smuts Hall on Saturday evenings. The reunions culminate in a picnic at Kirstenbosch Gardens on Sundays.

The highlight of the season was the Class of 1963's regraduation ceremony to celebrate their golden jubilee. Of the 97 who graduated that year, 46 (47% - just under half of the original class) came back to the medical campus for the event, with 22 of them travelling from abroad, many with family members to celebrate the milestone. Joan worked tirelessly with class member Dr Ashley Robins to organise the event in the Wolfson Pavilion. Hosted by the Dean, special ceremonial guests were former VC Emeritus Professor Stuart Saunders, Vice-Chancellor Dr Max Price, and former Dean Prof Marian Jacobs.



Dean Prof Wim De Villiers and Vice Chancellor Dr Max Price at the regraduation ceremony



Members of the class of 1973

## poisons info centre given sting by alumnus

A chance meeting at a UCT medical school class reunion at the end of November last year led to an extraordinary bit of luck for the Poisons Information Centre (PIC). Dr Selig Leyser, one of the doctors who attended his class reunion, had trained in pathology in the United States. He later developed an interest in systematic reporting of pathology specimens, and wrote programmes to do this. Dr Leyser then went on to design programmes for the real-time recording of information, which the parents of patients gave by telephone to paediatric nurses.

Dr Leyser was very keen to use his expertise for the benefit of people here at UCT, where he had received his medical training. He went to visit the PIC, and has spent the last few months designing and perfecting a programme which is now almost up and running in the PIC. It allows the PIC to record information from callers, real-time, on a laptop. It analyses the data instantly, so that when the call-centre operator finishes a call, the information is immediately part of the database. As a result, the PIC will now be able to analyse its data immediately and results can be audited in seconds.

With this new database, the PIC will be able to supply real-time data about the results of calls to medical personnel team at Red Cross, immediately. Dr Leyser also personally paid the cost of buying the part of the programme, which needed a commercial license, and covered the costs of converting it from the Apple operating system to Windows.

Dr J. Clare Roberts, Director of the Poisons Information Centre, says of the new programme: "We have been using the trial form of the programme for about three weeks. We expect to have it in routine use by the end of the month. Up to now, we have been using a pencil, a notebook and a calculator! What a change!"






**SKM FAMILY FUN WALK/RUN**

**Please join us in support of the Psoriasis Sufferers !!**


**DATE: Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2014**

**WHERE : WESTGATE Mall (Start/Finish) TIME: 8am**

**DONATION/REGISTRATION: R30 per ADULT  
CHILDREN FREE  
(if accompanied by an adult)**

**REGISTERED NURSES / DOCTORS ON CALL FOR ADVISE & INFORMATION  
ON PSORIASIS AND ECZEMA**

**FREE GIFT BAG WITH PSORIASIS RELATED ITEMS**  
For more info contact: Allister inc. 076 879 3924




**RUN FOR RURAL 2014**

A 7km run/walk to raise funds for Rural Placements

**1 May 2014 8:00 am**  
UCT Medical School

**R30** UCT students  
**R50** UCT staff/non UCT  
Pay R25 only if registering before 4 April or in groups of five!  
(sign up on Mon/Wed/Fri from 13:00-14:00)



**R N** A Rural Support Network Initiative  
For the rural communities that raised us and for the ones we are helping to raise



**Third Global Symposium  
on Health Systems Research**  
Science and practice of people-centred health systems  
Cape Town - 30 September – 3 October 2014

For more information on the symposium click [here](#)

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