



built

news magazine 2018 #1

*Inspiring excellence. Transforming lives.
Inspireer uitnemendheid. Verander lewens.*

UNIVERSITY OF THE
FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE
VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA
FREISTATA



Dear Bult reader

Our first edition of *Bult* is packed with news events, all reflecting the UFS's pursuit of academic excellence, innovation, and transformation.

Some of the highlights in this edition include the partnership between the Qwaqwa Campus's Afromontane Research Unit (ARU) and two Japanese universities. Read this very interesting article touching on the despondency of migration to the urban areas.

Our social and political analysts are often in the news, providing commentary on daily issues. Do not miss our article profiling Prof Philippe Burger, Dr Sethulego Matebesi, Dr Chitja Twala, and Dr Ina Gouws on their well-founded commentary across various media platforms on subjects relating to their disciplines, which have shaped the South African political landscape over the years.

Two highlights during the first half of the year include the UFS's acquisition of FARMOVS, making us the largest Phase 1 clinical research business in South Africa. The university is also extremely proud of the Mother and Child Academic Hospital Foundation (MACAH), which has been instrumental in building the dream of a state-of-the-art medical facility in Bloemfontein that will provide antenatal care and comprehensive health services for mothers, infants, and children in Central South Africa. More about this on p 8.

COVER: Artwork of artist Janine Allen. Read also an article about her work on p 22.



Engagement with our community is important to us. On this front we have included an article about Elgonda Bekker's Princess project, where teenage pregnancies have been drastically reduced in certain schools. Another of our community projects is the Schools Partnership Project, which recently delivered its first graduate at the April Graduation Ceremonies. Do not miss this heart-warming story.

Our researchers are also doing ground-breaking work on the international front. Read the article on Dr Francois Deacon's work to ensure that the giraffe species is preserved for future generations. Also conducting animal research is Prof Nico Smith, an award-winning nature photographer. He is sharing some of his photos with Bult readers.

Lastly, the university welcomed its Vice-Rector: Institutional Change, Student Affairs, and Community Engagement, who joined us in May this year. Read more about her on p 34.

Warm greetings, Leonie

PS: We are excited to share with you that *Bult* will be available electronically. Should you wish to continue receiving a hard copy, please indicate this on the postcard we sent you.

EDITOR

Leonie Bolleurs
Department of Communication and Brand Management
PO Box 339, Bloemfontein 9300, South Africa
www.ufs.ac.za, bolleursl@ufs.ac.za
Tel: +27 51 401 2707, Cell: +27 73 600 9550

PRODUCTION

DESIGN • Silverrocket Creative

Opinions expressed in the publication are not necessarily those of the university. Bult is sent to alumni, donors, business and government leaders, opinion formers, and Kopsie friends. With the necessary acknowledgement, articles can be published elsewhere. Contact the Editor in this regard.

FLYLEAVES: The artworks on the flyleaves are from Janine Allen. She is a lecturer in the Department of Fine Arts at the UFS.



Index

News

- Schools partnership brings student successes
- UFS acquires 100% shares in clinical research organisation FARMOVS-PAREXEL
- Chemistry, changing the world to create a better future
- Qwaqwa/Japan collaboration intensifies
- Macah Foundation paves way for excellent healthcare for mother and child
- 'Agriculture is placed in the spotlight and it is important'
- Qwaqwa History Department partners with Golden Gate Highlands National Park
- The makings of a political analyst: our experts at a glance
- UFS proud of its five research chairs
- Bring opera back to Bloemfontein

Community

- University part of Vrystaat Arts Festival success story
- Town and Gown keeps university in touch with surrounding communities

Research

- Interdisciplinary art explores the mining psyche in the city of diamonds
- Saving giraffes – a race against time
- Medical researchers finding real solutions to assist with rape convictions
- Flowers and their favourite insects
- The history of those who healed and cared



Staff

- Award-winning photographs bring cutting edge to research
- UFS appoints new Vice-Rector: Institutional Change, Student Affairs and Community Engagement
- Meraka community development project empowers the community
- Faculty of Health Sciences welcomes new Vice-Dean

Students and Sport

- UFS offers extraordinary rendition of varsity life
- Kopsie ACT backs first ever eco-race at Kopsies
- Big things expected from Raynard
- Commonwealth Games appearance for Ts'epang
- Tennis star not done yet, despite work commitments

Alumni

- Your investment creates opportunities for young people
- DJ Castro says TVET colleges crucial for economy
- Centre produces well-equipped game changers for modern-day agriculture



Schools partnership brings student successes

BY EUGENE SEEGER

"If it weren't for the SPP, I wouldn't be graduating this year."

PHOTO: CHARL DEVENISH



Started in 2013, the Schools Partnership Projects (SPP) aims to create better-performing schools in the basic education sector. Since its inception, the SPP has set itself the goal of meaningful change in the communities in which it operates.

The project is housed and managed from the UFS's South Campus in Bloemfontein. It is funded year-to-year by Corporate Social Investment (CSI) initiatives from various organisations. Mentors are appointed to work with teachers, principals, and school management in the Free State and parts of the Eastern Cape, teaching much-needed skills and introducing the use of technology in the classroom.

Despite tangible improvements resulting from school partnerships, many prospective students were still not accessing higher education. In September 2014, the SPP identified this need and assisted 22 first-generation students to be accepted for their studies at UFS and even helped to find funding.

Of this group of students, as with those who have followed, several are studying law, actuarial sciences or medicine, or are in a Bachelor of Science (BSc) programme. The first graduate, Disebo Chaka, received her BSc in Geology at the April 2018 UFS graduations.

Disebo says: "If it weren't for the SPP's help, I wouldn't be graduating this year, let alone be at university. It taught me to believe in myself and made me realise that my background doesn't have to define my future or limit my dreams."

She adds, "Attending a school partnered with UFS introduced us to life outside our community and motivated us to work hard."

Disebo has high praise for HS van der Walt, now head of the SPP. "He has always been there for me. Mr Van der Walt helped us with accommodation and to apply for bursaries. Without his guidance, I don't think my journey in varsity would have been a good one. He always goes the extra mile, and is always willing to help."

The dedicated mentors of the SPP remain hopeful that their efforts will result in more learners from underperforming schools accessing tertiary education, ultimately graduating and entering the job market, where they can plough back their skills and passion into their communities, equipping others to do the same. **b**

HS van der Walt, one of the first mentors in the SPP, with Disebo Chaka, the first graduate from the initial cohort of 22 SPP students at UFS.

UFS acquires 100% shares in clinical research organisation FARMOVS-PAREXEL

BY LACEA LOADER

With the acquisition of FARMOVS, the UFS now owns the largest Phase 1 clinical research business in South Africa.

The university acquired 100% shares in PAREXEL's Bloemfontein-based clinical research business, FARMOVS-PAREXEL, on 7 March 2018.

Rector and Vice-Chancellor Prof Francis Petersen and a team consisting of members of the university's senior leadership concluded a deal with PAREXEL International, a world innovator of biopharmaceutical research services, to acquire all the shares in PAREXEL's locally-based clinical research business, FARMOVS-PAREXEL.

FARMOVS supports the development of important new medicines for a variety of diseases and illnesses.

FARMOVS conducts important clinical research for the global pharmaceutical industry that enables marketing of affordable generic drugs in South Africa and elsewhere in the world.

During the signing of the sale agreement Prof Petersen said he greatly appreciates the spirit in which this deal was carried out. "FARMOVS is an excellent state-of-the-art clinical research facility. This is an exciting new venture for the university. I am extremely proud of what we have achieved, and am especially thankful to the FARMOVS management team for their cooperation as well as taking the FARMOVS staff through the process with enthusiasm," he said.



FARMOVS Managing Director Chris Sutherland with UFS Rector and Vice-Chancellor Prof Francis Petersen and Senior Director of Research Development, Dr Glen Taylor.

FARMOVS is located on the UFS Bloemfontein Campus. It has 148 full-time employees, who are highly skilled and experienced, as is the management team who will remain intact under the leadership of managing director Chris Sutherland.

It is Prof Petersen's vision that the UFS will become actively involved in the South African National Clinical Research Capacity Building Initiative with FARMOVS, becoming a Clinical Research Centre of Excellence. "This is something new for the UFS, the challenge now is to expand with more of an industry impact," said Prof Petersen.

The business will be known as FARMOVS from now on. **b**

PHOTO: JOHAN ROUX



Chemistry, changing the world to create a better future

BY IGNO VAN NIEKERK

Some people have the gift of explaining the most complex concepts in a way that anyone can understand. Combine this gift with passion, energy, and enthusiasm, and you are close to describing a meeting with Prof Andreas Roodt.

Prof Roodt does not only teach Chemistry, he lives it. He has published more than 320 papers, lectured internationally more than 100 times, and has guided 35 PhD and 48 MSc students to complete their degrees. These numbers are likely to conjure up visions of a dusty academic working on pie-in-the-sky theories.

That's until you meet Prof Roodt.

Within minutes you are made aware of the fact that Chemistry is not just a subject restricted to classrooms and labs. It is a means to change the world by using research to create a better future. In academic terms, Prof Roodt and his team are involved in 'Homogeneous Catalysis', 'Radiopharmacy: Theranostics', 'Metal Benefication', and 'Conversion of carbon dioxide and water'. And just when you start remembering how terrifying high-school Chemistry was, Prof Roodt explains the practical nature of what they are doing.

Few of us are aware of the exact processes that produce fuel for our cars, although we probably know that these processes have side effects which are usually detrimental to the environment; but what if the by-products of these processes can be turned into speciality chemicals which could add value in different ways?

Ever wondered how medication knew where it had to go in your body? Well – just imagine highly specialised (clever)

pharmaceutical substances which give off their own 'light', knowing exactly where to go, *show* you where they are going, and know what to do in order to provide information and interact with specific cells in your body to assist in healing cells and fighting disease.

Exciting.

But, as they say in the ads, *that is not all*; imagine better ways to generate power, using the natural processes in plants to increase natural oxygen where needed, and to be able to change oxygen levels in the environment.

These practical applications of Chemistry are part of the relevant and practically applicable research in which Prof Roodt and his research group are involved.

When you leave Prof Roodt's office, you realise that this is what the UFS is all about: Global impact. World-class research. Passionate people. And seizing the opportunity to create the future. **b**

Photo 1: Prof Andreas Roodt and two students busy with separation of photo-active metal complexes in the Synthetic Laboratory. From the left are: Prof Roodt, Dr Ebrahim Botha, Post-doctoral fellow; and Pheelo Nkoe, PhD.

Photo 2: Working on a project to determine, study and optimise the forward and reverse carboxylation reactions in plants. Pictured here are Prof Roodt and Dr Botha.



QWAQWA/JAPAN collaboration intensifies

BY THABO KESSAH

The partnership between the Qwaqwa Campus's Afromontane Research Unit (ARU) and two Japanese universities is growing stronger by the day. This collaboration on sustainability studies was further strengthened with a recent visit by a Japanese delegation to the Qwaqwa Campus.

The delegation was led by Ryu Yanagisawa, Project Manager of the Akita Age Lab in Akita, Japan, who presented a paper focusing on similarities between broader QwaQwa and Gojome, a Japanese town of 6400 inhabitants.

"Many of our projects at the Akita Age Lab are aimed at keeping young people in their home towns, thus discouraging migration to the urban cities. This can be done through developing sustainable strategies for community development, an enhanced sense of ownership, and developing entrepreneurship skills. In Gojome, we have turned a school into an incubator for entrepreneurship where we host local competitions and youth and women entrepreneurship competitions," he said.

According to Yanagisawa, the key factor in reaching a high level of sustainability is to invest in the next generation of leaders in the community and in business.

The collaboration between the ARU, the United Nations University, and the University of Tokyo, is aimed at developing the Qwaqwa Campus to be a "sustainability hub of research and education focusing on mountain and rural regions in South Africa," said Dr Melissa Hansen from the UFS Department of Geography, who was part of a delegation that visited Japan in December 2017. She was accompanied by Drs Samuel Adelabu from the Department of Geography and Dr Jared McDonald from the Department of History.

In Japan, the Qwaqwa delegates had discussions with Prof Takashi Mino and Dr Motoharu Onuki of the Graduate Programme in Sustainability Science-Global Leadership Initiative at the Graduate School of Frontier Sciences at the University of Tokyo.

"We learned particularly about the personal experiences of Prof Mino and Dr Onuki in establishing and operating an educational




PHOTOS: CHARL DEVENISH

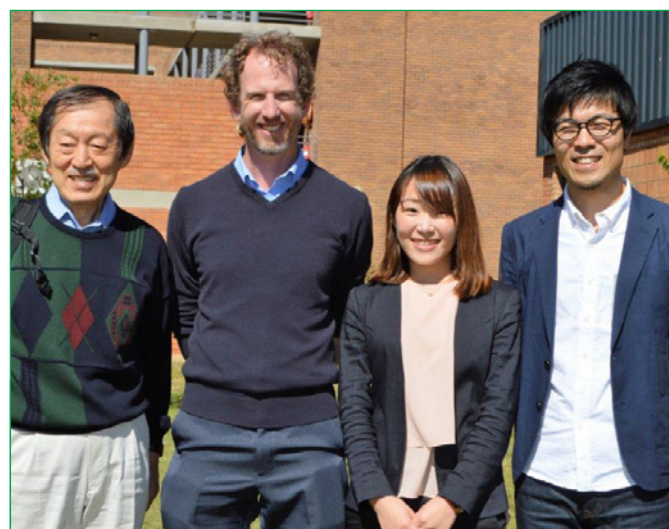
programme in sustainability science in higher education. They highlighted that they started the programme from what they had already. For example, they asked other graduate programmes within the same graduate school to offer one course that could fit in with the sustainability theme," Dr McDonald said.

The UFS academics also visited Gojome where they observed challenges that were a result of an aging population as well as depopulation in the rural regions.

"These two factors led to abandonment of assets, difficulty in accessing services and a declining economy," said Dr Adelabu.

"Our experience will come in handy as we have already agreed to jointly conduct our field work on these topics both in QwaQwa and Akita," Adelabu said. 

The key factor in reaching a high level of sustainability is to invest in the next generation of leaders in the communities and in business.



ARU Director Dr Vincent Clark, second from left, welcomes the Japanese delegation to the Qwaqwa Campus.

PHOTO: THABO KESSAH



Macah Foundation paves way for excellent healthcare for mother and child



BY MAMOSA MAKAYA

The Mother and Child Academic Hospital Foundation (Macah) has been seminal in the project to establish a state-of-the-art medical facility in Bloemfontein that will provide antenatal care and comprehensive health services for mothers, infants and children in central South Africa.

The privately owned hospital will be developed under a project in a partnership between the UFS, Afrisky Holdings, and the Free State Department of Health, and will be located on the university's Bloemfontein Campus.

At the launch event of the Macah Foundation were officials from the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality; Deputy Director General of the Free State Department of Health Sekhothe Polelo; members of the UFS rectorate; senior academics in the Faculty of Health Sciences; Dr Rolene Strauss, former Miss World and patron of the Macah Foundation; Kesa Molotsane, international athlete and Champion of the Macah Foundation; as well as Oupa Mohoje, also a Champion of the Macah Foundation and Springbok rugby player.

Prof Gert van Zyl, Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences, said the university had a pivotal role to play in shaping the future of children who are the future generation. "If we fail our children, we fail our future, our culture and our being," he said.

Prof Francis Petersen, UFS Rector and Vice-Chancellor, said this high-level partnership was a demonstration of the power of working together to implement innovation and development and promoting research and academic excellence while serving communities that are most in need.



From the left: Prof Gert van Zyl, founding director and chairman of the Macah Foundation; Khumo Selebano, newly appointed director; Dr Riana van Zyl, founding director; and Prof André Venter, founding director and project leader.

PHOTOS: JOHAN ROUX

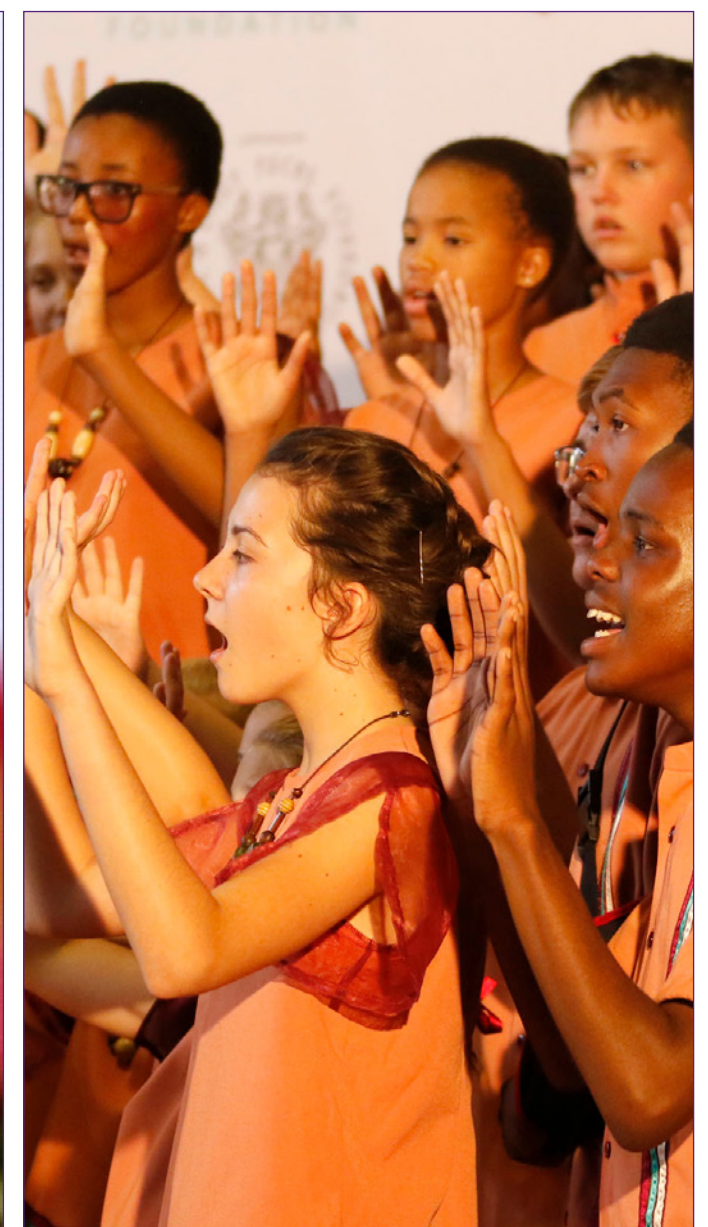
The Macah Foundation's "Make the first 1000 Days Count" programme emphasises the importance of childcare in the first 1000 days. By the age of five, almost 90% of a child's brain will be developed. Therefore, it is vital that this period is well-monitored to ensure the child grows to be a vigorous and happy individual. As nurturer, a mother's health is just as significant from conception to birth and beyond.

Prof André Venter, one of the founding directors of Macah, and Head of Paediatrics and Child Health at the UFS Faculty of Health, said: "It is a privilege for me to work with children, but more so when we can combine so many skills and expertise in developing a world-class facility that will help members of our communities to thrive."

To find out more about the foundation and pledge your support, visit www.macahfoundation.org.za or send an email to Tertia De Bruin at debruintr@ufs.ac.za or foundation@macahfoundation.org.za



Dr Rolene Strauss, Patron of the Macah Foundation; Oupa Mohoje, Champion of the Macah Foundation; and Kesa Molotsane, Champion of the Macah Foundation.



'Agriculture is placed in the spotlight and it is important,' says recipient of Chancellor's Medal

BY LEONIE BOLLEURS

“Everything about agriculture excites me! I hope that through this award I can take agriculture to a next level.” These were the words of Joyene Isaacs, who was honoured with the Chancellor's Medal in 2017. This medal is one of the highest honours bestowed by the university.

“Agriculture is one of those areas people take for granted. With this medal, agriculture can come to the fore. Agriculture is placed in the spotlight and it is important for this country, but also globally, because we look after the food supply. For me, agriculture has been a sustainable livelihood but also a career,” said Isaacs.

Doing much more than what is expected

The UFS Centre for Sustainable Agriculture, Rural Development and Extension nominated Isaacs for the medal. According to Dr Johan van Niekerk, head of the centre, two main concepts can be used to describe Isaac's life and career. “The first is overcoming the odds – from her childhood years into her years as a respected HOD and specialist. Secondly, beating expectations and doing much more than what is expected. Her work is characterised by a passion for development, empowerment and upliftment, but most of all, by helping people to help themselves.

“We value our relationships with her. Isaacs advises the UFS on

trends in agriculture which assist us to not only be prepared but also to position ourselves to stay part of the mainstream discussion about agriculture,” Dr Van Niekerk said.

A passion for making it better

With her interest in human capacity development, together with the empowerment and elevation of farmers, Isaacs has throughout her career focused on “making it better”. With passion and vigour, her work of more than 20 years in the field of agricultural development has aided thousands of people.

From her position at the Kirstenbosch National Botanical Institute until June 1990 to her position of Assistant Director for the Resource-Limited Farmers' Programme in 1998, Isaacs strived to develop farmers with pride and excellence. Today in her current position as HOD of the Western Cape Department of Agriculture, she gets the opportunity to do this. A cause of hers, in line with her department's vision, is to foster agricultural development in the Western Cape.

Under her leadership the department consistently showed clean audits and has been nominated by the South African Institute of Government Auditors (SAIGA) as the consistently best government department in South Africa.

Isaacs is a pioneer in her field: a visionary with passion and vigour. **b**

“I hope that through this award I can take agriculture to the next level.”

Joyene Isaacs attended the Summer Graduation Ceremony in 2017 where she received the Chancellor's Medal from the UFS.



PHOTO: JOHAN ROUX

Qwaqwa History Department partners with Golden Gate Highlands National Park

BY THABO KESSAH

For the past three years, the Department of History at the UFS Qwaqwa Campus has been partnering with the Golden Gate Highlands National Park to record, monitor and better preserve the park's rock art.

While the Ukhahlamba/Drakensberg World Heritage Site is renowned for its vast array of rock art sites, the rock art of the Golden Gate Highlands National Park is less well known, even though there are several remarkable images, including a lion hunting scene, another of San hunters pursuing rhebok, and an image of a crab trap, which to date, is the only one of its kind in South Africa.

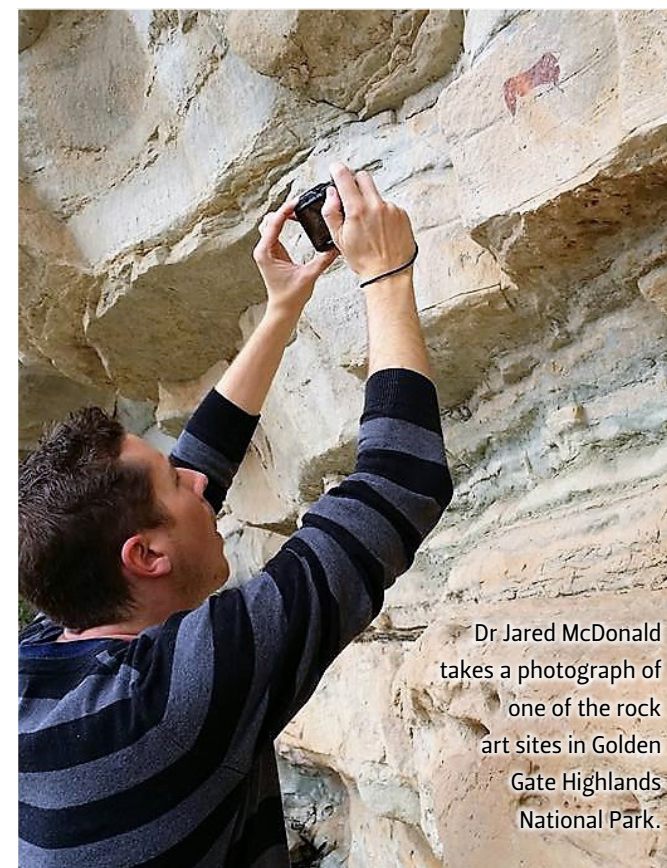
Sites across Southern Africa

“Rock art is one of the best-known surviving cultural artefacts of the San, the original aboriginal peoples of Southern Africa. There are thousands of sites across Southern Africa where the San have left behind traces of their historical presence in the form of rock art.” According to Dr Jared McDonald, newly appointed Assistant Dean of the Faculty of the Humanities, some rock art dates back 10 000 years or earlier. Much of the recorded rock art of the Ukhahlamba/Drakensberg and Maluti is in the range of 300 to 500 years old.

Meaning and symbolism of the art

“There is still much debate among scholars with regard to what the rock art means. Rock painting and engraving is no longer practised by the San. For the most part, the tradition came to an end in Southern Africa during the nineteenth century. For this reason, knowledge of the meaning of the art and why it was created has been lost or forgotten, even among San descendants. Nonetheless, over the past few decades, rock art research has made significant strides and we now have better insight into the meaning and symbolism of the art. We now recognise that the rock art reveals a complicated belief system, or cosmology,” Dr McDonald said.

The Qwaqwa Campus' Department of History, along with rangers from the Golden Gate Highlands National Park, have identified seven rock art sites that face preservation challenges. Apart from removing rock art and placing it in museums, which is not considered desirable by most scholars, the only way to preserve the art *in situ* is to educate visitors about its heritage and cultural value, and to preserve it for posterity out of respect for its creators. **b**



Dr Jared McDonald takes a photograph of one of the rock art sites in Golden Gate Highlands National Park.



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

The makings of a political analyst: our experts at a glance

BY VALENTINO NDABA

UFS lecturers Prof Philippe Burger, Dr Sethulego Matebesi, Dr Chitja Twala, and Dr Ina Gouws have over the years helped to shape the South African political landscape by providing well-founded commentary across various media platforms on subjects relating to their disciplines.

What led to Prof Burger's current status as analyst?

"I am a trained economist so when you talk about the economics of the country, you refer to political issues as they are relevant with respect to the economy. And I work particularly with policies, which means that I have to get my hands dirty in the outside world. I'm not just limited to economic theory. I believe there needs to be a close relationship between the academic theory part of one's work and the real practical and political world," said Prof Burger, Acting Dean of the Faculty of Economic and Management Science.

His key research areas are macroeconomics, especially the relationship between economic growth and unemployment, public economics and fiscal policy, with a focus on issues pertaining to public debt and deficits, fiscal sustainability, as well as public private partnerships.

The media's role in Dr Matebesi's career

Dr Matebesi's research concentrates on community protests, local, provincial and participatory governance as well as mining-

community conflict. The Sociology lecturer was introduced to political analysis and social commentary in 2006 when he was involved in a project about community protests in cities. "Based on that study I was approached by the *City Press* for a brief article. Thereafter, I received several invitations from radio stations, newspapers, and SABC television for interviews," Dr Matebesi said.

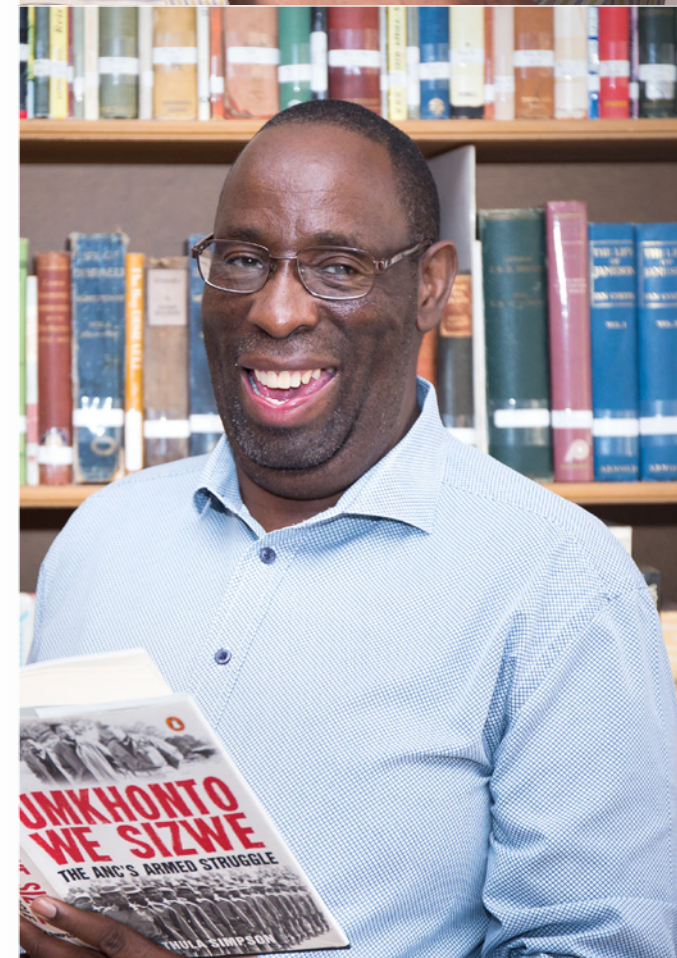
From struggling maths pupil to historian

"I became a historian by default," said Dr Twala, the Head of the Department of History, who as a high school pupil struggled with mathematics and so he switched to history. He then proceeded to pursue his undergraduate studies, honours, master's, and PhD in History. In January 2003 Dr Twala was appointed as a lecturer at the UFS where he began to specialise in Liberation History with the ANC as a focal point. He has extensive publications in this field.

Going beyond academics

"Availability was the starting point particularly with Radio Sonder Grense," Dr Gouws said. "It would seem that they always seek new voices and new perspectives, and not all academics, especially in politics, are open to that sort of exposure."

Moving forward, the Political Studies and Governance lecturer aims to shift her research focus to the vilification of civil society by the democratic government. **b**



Clockwise from top left: UFS's lecturers Prof Philippe Burger, Dr Sethulego Matebesi, Dr Ina Gouws and Dr Chitja Twala.

UFS proud of its five research chairs

BY ANDRÉ GROBLER

The UFS is home to five national Research Chairs sanctioned by the National Research Foundation (NRF). Its Research Chairs Initiative (SARChi) uses, among others, funding that will ultimately contribute to the advancement of all South Africans.

The Research Chair in Solid State Luminescent and Advanced Materials sits in the Department of Physics. It looks into low-energy lighting using phosphor materials for light-emitting diodes (LEDs). The research into solar cells has shown that phosphors can also increase their efficiency by expanding the range of light frequencies, which convert into electricity. It also entails that glow-in-the-dark coatings absorb light during the day and emit it at night.

The Research Chair in Higher Education and Human Development reside in the Centre for Research on Higher Education and Development (CRHED). The research focuses on higher education, inequalities and social justice, and how or if universities foster the human capabilities and aspirations of students. In essence, the research studies whether higher education makes a difference in the lives of students, their families, and communities.

The Research Chair in Pathogenic Yeasts continues with existing studies and contributes towards understanding pathobiology of medically-significant pathogenic yeasts belonging to the genera *Candida* and *Cryptococcus*. It is the only research in South Africa focusing on understanding the role of bioactive lipids in host-

pathogen interaction, as well as in the search for novel drug targets. Infections by pathogenic yeasts affect a wide variety of patients.

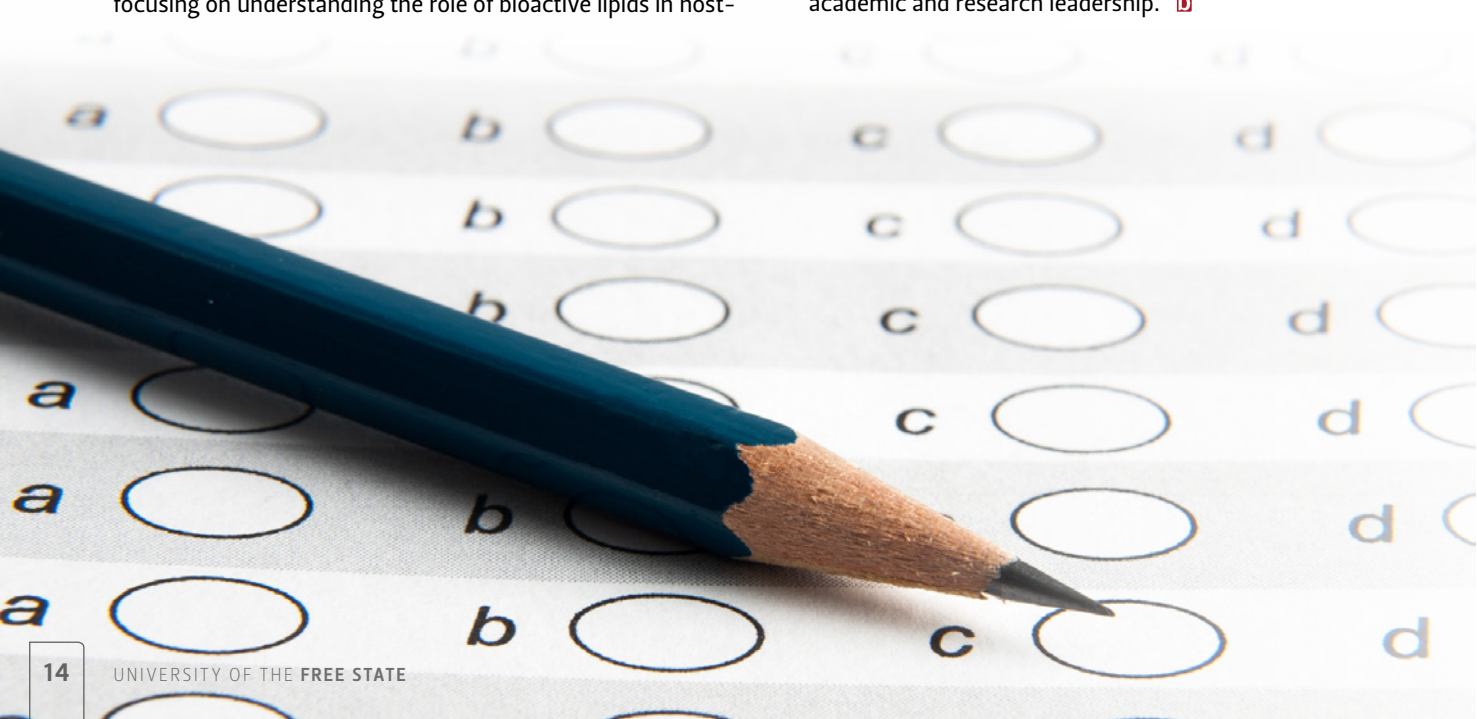
The Research Chair Initiative for Vector-borne and Zoonotic Diseases investigates medically significant vector-borne and zoonotic viruses currently in circulation. The research looks at viruses transmitted by mosquitos and ticks, and viruses transmitted from animals to humans. Because vector-borne viruses can spread to new areas, surveillance and awareness are essential. The researchers are establishing surveillance programmes and are looking at developing next-generation vaccines that are effective, but without risk.

The Chair on Disease Resistance and Quality in Field Crops resides in the Department of Plant Sciences. Researchers look at crop-quality breeding and disease resistance in field crops. The quality breeding will focus on crop protein quantity and quality as well as iron, zinc, and beta-carotene biofortification of staple crops such as wheat, maize, and cassava. Food security is one of the critical factors for stability and prosperity on the continent. The research focuses on the genetic improvement of food security crops in Africa.

The university considers the current SARChi Chairs and the possibility of future chairs as an integral and strategic initiative to increase its national and international standing through excellent academic and research leadership. **b**



- | 1 | Prof Hendrik Swart. | 2 | Prof Felicity Burt. | 3 | Prof Maryke Labuschagne. | 4 | Prof Melanie Walker. | 5 | Prof Carlien Pohl-Albertyn. |
|--|---------------------|---|---------------------|---|--------------------------|---|----------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| 1. The Research Chair of Prof Hendrik Swart in the Department of Physics in Solid State Luminescent and Advanced Materials looks into low-energy lighting using phosphor materials for light-emitting diodes (LEDs). | | | | | | | | | |
| 2. The Chair Initiative for Vector-borne and Zoonotic Diseases, of Prof Felicity Burt, investigates medically significant vector-borne and zoonotic viruses. | | | | | | | | | |
| 3. The Chair on Disease Resistance and Quality in Field Crops of Prof Maryke Labuschagne resides in the Department of Plant Sciences at the UFS. | | | | | | | | | |
| 4. The Chair in Higher Education and Human Development of Prof Melanie Walker focuses on higher education, inequalities, and social justice. | | | | | | | | | |
| 5. Current projects of the Chair in Pathogenic Yeasts, of Prof Carlien Pohl-Albertyn, include finding novel targets for antifungal drugs and the interaction between the yeasts and different hosts using a variety of infection models. | | | | | | | | | |



PHOTOS: SUPPLIED



Bring opera back to Bloemfontein

BY RULANZEN MARTIN

The Free State Symphony Orchestra (FSSO), based at the Odeion School of Music (OSM) at the UFS has been training and sculpting the musical talents of the youth for more than 40 years.

The orchestra always had a unique position in Bloemfontein and the close relationship between FSSO, the OSM and the University of the Free State has made this youth orchestra a force to be reckoned with.

"Our latest, most exciting project is the collaboration to bring opera back to the Free State," said Alexander Fokkens, conductor of the FSSO.

"There is no way we can make sure of a future for music and musicians, if we all don't work together."

In 2017 the OSM and FSSO combined efforts to put on a production of *Cavalleria Rusticana*, which was the first opera performance in Bloemfontein for years! In 2018 the orchestral duo is in the works to produce *The Merry Window*.

According to him, as the Odeion grows in numbers, they will work to give the students the best possible learning opportunities



Extract from:
Cavalleria rusticana (opera) – Intermezzo Sinfonico

to hone their craft and learn the skills they need to go out and try to find or create work for themselves.

The FSSO, together with the OSM, has created the Free State Youth Orchestra (FSYO) which acts as the main credit ensemble for the OSM. "Our most exciting latest project is the collaboration to bring opera back to the Free State," Fokkens said.

The FSSO is a semi-professional community-based orchestra. "The orchestra has an enormous youth development element, but we strive to produce concerts that are as high a level as possible.

"The aspect that sets this orchestra apart is the diversity, not only in its members, but in the concerts it performs and the groups it collaborates with.

"Through the Youth Orchestra and band the FSSO and OSM Camerata gives students the opportunity to learn to play in ensembles, take auditions, orchestral etiquette and many of the skills necessary for a career in music. As the students develop, they are invited to play as a cadet in the FSSO, where they receive some remuneration for their work. There the students are mentored in greater detail by the more experienced professional players. From this system, we can rebuild a strong orchestral ethic and excitement in the central Free State," said Fokkens. **b**

The Odeion School of Music Camerata under conductor Xavier Cloete.



PHOTO: CHARL DEVINISH



Portal (Boekhuis, Richmond) 2015. Photograph. Janine Allen.

Community

University part of Vrystaat Arts Festival success story

BY ILSE SMALLBERGER

The UFS, as a joint main sponsor with *Volksblad*, has been an integral part of the Vrystaat Arts Festival for many years. Since its inception, the festival has had its home on the UFS Bloemfontein Campus.

According to the director of the festival, Dr Ricardo Peach, the university has always been a natural choice to host the event.

“The Bloemfontein Campus is brilliantly equipped to put on professional music and theatre productions. This means we don't have to present our productions in school and church halls, which are not really outfitted for these events. In addition, the Arts and Crafts Market, which is the heart of the festival, is conveniently located on campus and surrounded by venues where theatre productions take place. People eat, drink, browse the markets, get together with friends and watch top-class productions, all in one place.”

According to research done last year, the total economic impact of the festival on the host economy was R208 million.

Dr Peach says the success of the festival lies in the fact that it celebrates community.

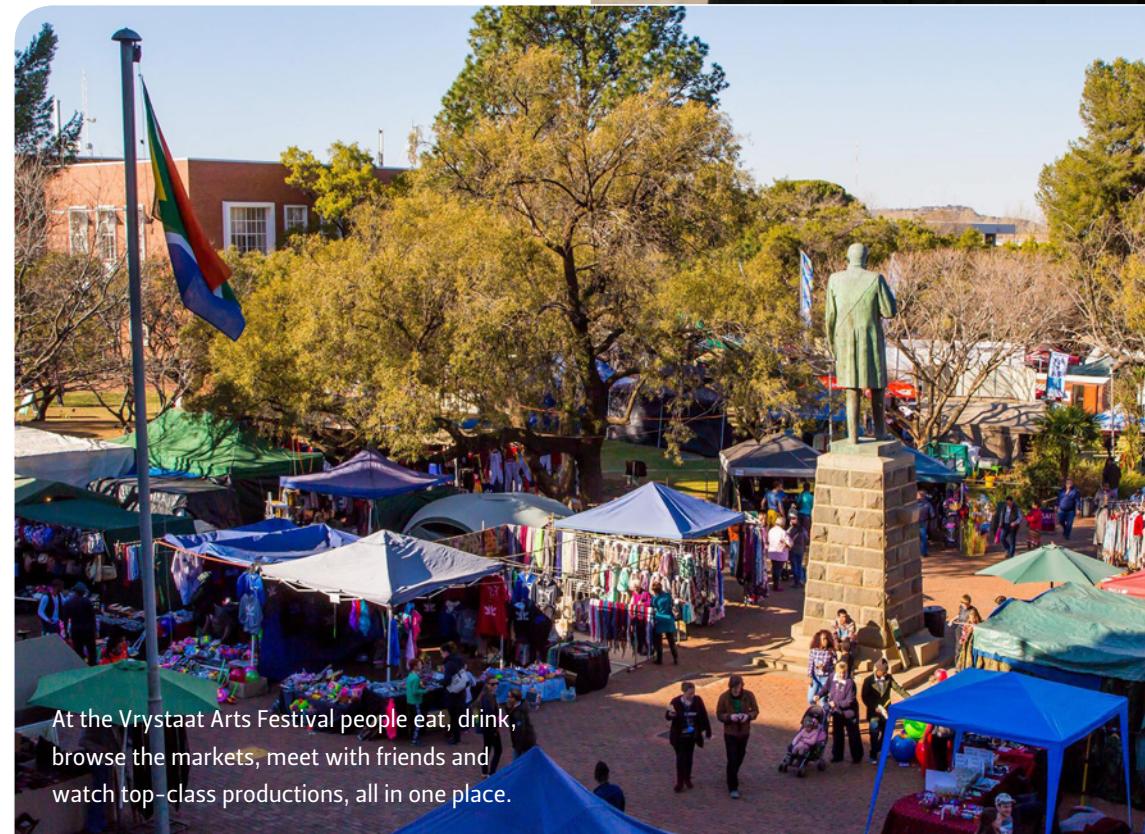
“The Vrystaat Arts Festival belongs to everyone. Organisers, artists, exhibitors and those who attend it loyally are all passionate about its continued success.”

Finally, Dr Peach feels strongly that of all the festivals in South Africa, the Vrystaat Arts Festival is the most strategically placed to become one of the key international arts festivals on the African continent.

“Mangaung has some of the best theatre and accommodation infrastructure of any secondary city in South Africa. Consequently, the festival has begun to function as a creative industry hub, not only for Afrikaans cultures, but also for other language groups. With continued core operational support, such a vision will be achieved.” **b**



Dr Ricardo Peach,
Vrystaat Arts
Festival Director.



At the Vrystaat Arts Festival people eat, drink, browse the markets, meet with friends and watch top-class productions, all in one place.



The Vrystaat Arts Festival acknowledges and respects the Khoe-San of the Free State and the deep spiritual attachment to their ancestors and relationships they have to this country and its people.

Town and Gown keeps university in touch with surrounding communities

BY MAMOSA MAKAYA

The UFS, through its Office for Community Engagement, launched the Town and Gown programme on 13 March 2018 at the Bloemfontein Campus. The programme demonstrates the university's commitment to being in touch with the communities and towns which surround its campuses.

It furthermore aims to impart the wealth of academic and innovative development capabilities it has to strengthen social cohesion, working together with stakeholders to improve socioeconomic conditions of the people of the Free State.

UFS strategic objectives to be far reaching

As the UFS is an integral part of its community, the university's Integrated Transformation Plan (ITP) has community engagement feeding into its various objectives, specifically increasing its contribution to local, regional, and global knowledge and that of engaged scholarship. The ITP defines areas that require increased transformation in and across the core support functions of the university. "It is the road map and a key driver of the UFS vision for the next five years," said Prof Francis Petersen, Rector and Vice-Chancellor.

The launch of Town and Gown marked the strengthening of long-standing ties between the university and communities



Prof Francis Petersen, UFS Rector and Vice-Chancellor signed a MOU with Phillip Lekotloane of Thaba Nchu Wealth Creation Centre.

PHOTO: CHARL DEVENISH


in the Free State which span many years, during which time various collaborative projects have been established with NGOs, faith-based organisations and traditional leaders. To date, the UFS has supported projects in education, health, law, and rural development through service-learning programmes involving students and academics.

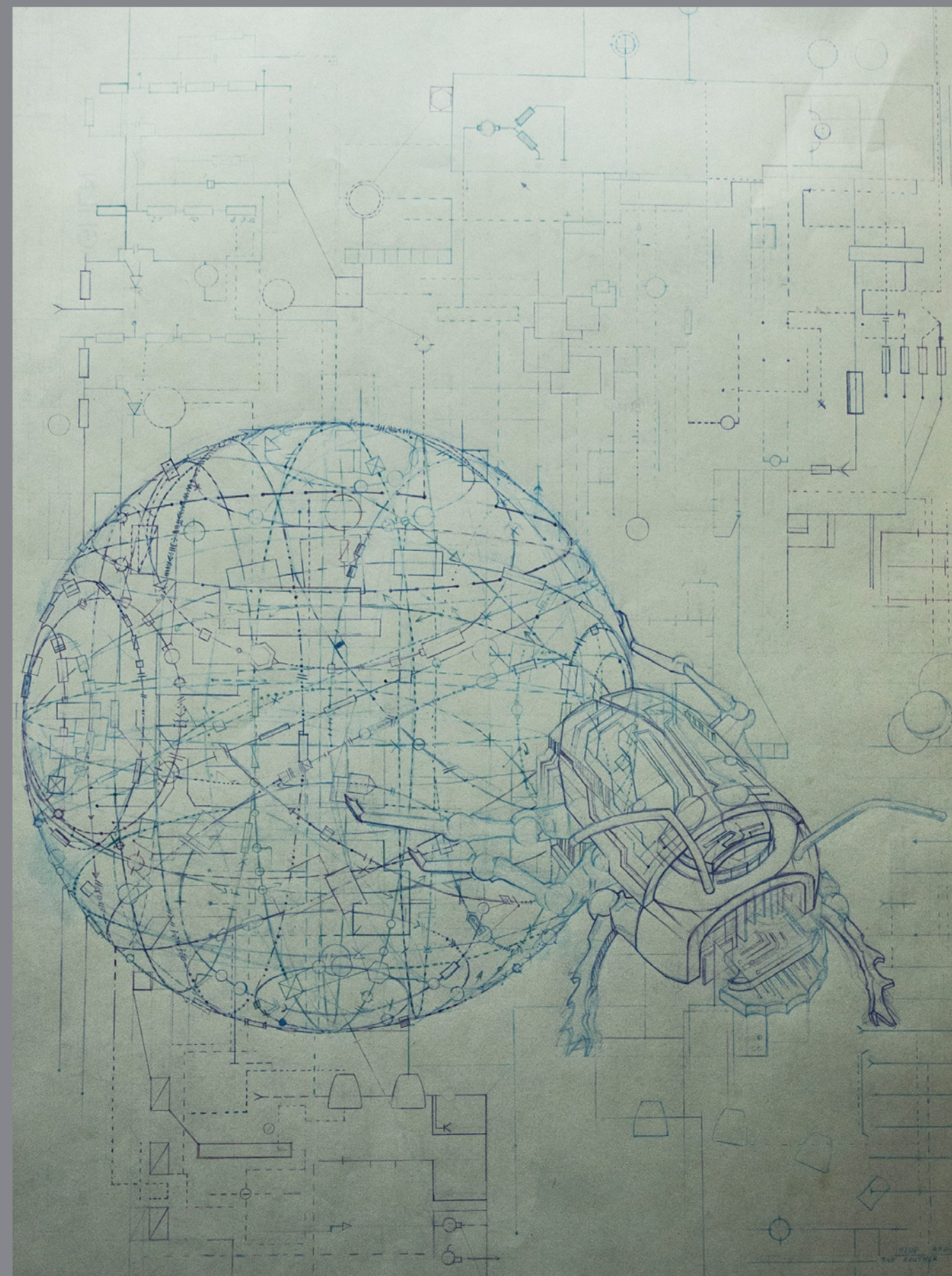
Paving the way for future growth

According to Prof Petersen, the university ought to articulate community engagement differently from other organisations, by showcasing engaged scholarship using teaching and research to make a difference in communities.

During the launch, he signed four memoranda of understanding with partner organisations, including the Thaba Nchu Wealth Creation Centre, Bloemshelter, Princess Gabo Foundation and Reach our Community (ROC).

Bishop Billyboy Ramahlele, Director: Community Engagement, said this momentous occasion and renewal of ties between the university and its partners would strengthen community research, service learning and community service learning.

The Town and Gown initiative is a firm step in re-affirming the university's commitment to partnering with stakeholders in capacity building of surrounding towns, metros and the Free State region as a whole. 



Scarab II (2014). Colour pencils on paper, 57 x 42,5cm. Janine Allen.

Research



Interdisciplinary art explores the mining psyche in the city of diamonds

BY RULANZEN MARTIN

On the outskirts of Kimberley in the Northern Cape a booming business is in operation; the illegal business of harvesting diamonds from the earth that had been dug up from kilometres below the surface in this once-glittering city.

The illegal harvesting of diamonds in Kimberley has attracted the attention of artists Dr Janine Allen, a senior lecturer in the Department of Fine Arts at the UFS, and Dr André Rose, affiliated lecturer in the Department of Community Health.

Dr Rose, a Kimberley native, is an artist, but by profession a community health practitioner. Together with Dr Allen they collaborated on an art project to depict the mining psyche of Kimberley. “We received funding from the Vice-Rector: Research at the UFS for this interdisciplinary research project,” said Dr Allen.

Their artists’ eyes examined the dusty landscapes where thousands of illegal miners, many of whom were once in the formal employ of mining companies, scoured the barren earth in search of that shiny gem.

The art project is a collection of various arts forms including paintings, photos, plays, and installation art. The initial concept was to focus on migration factors of the miners, or rather ex-miners, of a declining mining community in Kimberley.

“The art depicts the everyday circumstances of the illegal mining activities. It is a rough and honest look into the clandestine lives of the illegal miners in Kimberley.”

“We visited local museums that showcase the historical mining operations.”

The project then shifted to how the mining psyche had been shaped by the history of mining companies and how these withdrew from the city, leaving behind a society in decay.

Their photos are from different vantage points. Dr Allen’s photos depict the content artistically, while Dr Rose’s are from a community health perspective, capturing the living standards of the illegal miners. Their art also portrays the everyday circumstances of the illegal miners’ activities. It is a rough and honest look into their clandestine lives.

Drs Rose and Allen also visited the mines to document stories of the miners who suffer from mining-related illnesses. “We made a shift from the industry to those on the outside of the ‘legal mining industry’, who go against the grain of what is perceived as legal mining,” said Dr Allen.

The miners in Kimberly differ from the so-called zama zamas in Gauteng. The illegal mine workers are mostly locals and instead of begging they will mine heaps of left-over soil from previous mining activities. These miners use equipment used through the ages, making it a form of recycling.

An exhibition is possibly in the pipeline for the second half of 2018. **b**



Dr Janine Allen, senior lecturer in the Department of Fine Arts, and Dr André Rose, affiliated lecturer in the Department of Community Health at the UFS.



...wielding the lantern ...the price of loss, Dr Janine Allen.



Tjailaty, André Rose.



Miner hand sifting.



The hole with boy. Art work: Dr Janine Allen.

PHOTO: ANJA AUCAMP

Saving giraffes – a race against time

BY ILSE SMALLBERGER

Dr Francois Deacon is a wildlife habitat expert at the UFS focusing on the spatial ecology of wild animals. His main research focus is to understand the ecological and biological factors that regulate giraffe in their natural habitat.

He and a documentary film crew have just released the second in a trilogy of documentaries regarding giraffes and their natural habitat. The first, *Last of the Longnecks*, focused on the fact that giraffes are in danger of extinction. The second documentary, *Catching Giants*, which was released last year, deals with how the UFS is leading the fight against giraffe extinction and how it assembled the largest research team in the world to manage, coordinate and address this issue. The third documentary will revolve around how the slow decline in giraffe numbers can be actively stopped and even turned around. It will be filmed next year.


So far, the first documentary has achieved tremendous success and Dr Deacon has high hopes for the sequel.

"*Last of the Longnecks* was shown in 51 countries and at 11 film festivals. It won numerous awards and brought home the stark reality that giraffes are dying out faster than elephants. People honestly did not know that the giraffe is becoming extinct," he says.

Catching Giants premiered in Washington last year and Deacon says he was humbled by the standing ovation of 30 000 people.

He says the UFS is now the leading authority in the race against giraffe extinction.

"The UFS is working with international researchers and institutions. In October 2017, we hosted a workshop on the Bloemfontein Campus, attended by 30 researchers from 11 countries to talk about this issue and devise solutions to the problem."

Deacon has been recognised for his work on giraffe conservation nationally and internationally. He has a saying: "If we can save the habitat wildlife need, then the animals will be just fine." 

"People honestly did not know that the giraffe is becoming extinct."



Dr Deacon from the Department of Animal, Wildlife and Grassland Sciences at the UFS, lead a multispecialist research group to catch and collar giraffe to collect data that will contribute to the conservation of these animals.

PHOTOS: PROF NICO SMIT



PHOTO: CHARL DEVENISH

Medical researchers finding real solutions to assist with rape convictions

BY OTENG MPETE

The South African Police Service has recorded 39 828 cases of rape in 2016/17. That is an average of 109 rapes recorded each day. However, according to Dr Marianne Kotze and Prof Hanneke Brits from the UFS Faculty of Health Sciences, Department of Family Medicine, the prosecution of rape cases is difficult due to the absence of eyewitnesses.

Challenges facing rape victims

They say that proof of injuries consistent with sexual penetration adds significantly to the evidentiary value of the medico-legal testimony. If a complete examination, including the use of Toluidine blue, is not used, a rapist may walk away to rape again, while the victims remain with the stigma that they may have made a false allegation.

Do we miss rape injuries because we cannot see them?

The researchers have a solution. They suggest the use of Toluidine blue, which is a basic thiazine metachromatic dye. It has a high affinity for acidic tissue components, thereby staining tissues rich in DNA and RNA. Where the epithelium is damaged and the underlying nucleated cells are exposed, the nuclei stain blue.

Visibility of the nature of injuries and number of injuries can be vastly improved utilising a nuclear tissue stain to highlight epithelial damage.

The importance of victim protection and conviction

The presence of anogenital injuries in rape cases is of major importance in court hearings. If a rape has caused injuries, the use of Toluidine blue will easily demonstrate these.

Researchers finding real solutions to pressing issues

According to Dr Kotze and Prof Brits, the Toluidine blue stain is available, easy and safe to use. It's inexpensive and does not interfere with other medico-legal evidence. Therefore, it is recommended to be used in the examination of all cases of alleged rape. **b**

"Injuries are demonstrated in more rape victims with the use of Toluidine blue."



Dr Marianne Kotze,
UFS, Department
of Family Medicine.

PHOTO: ANJA AUCAMP



PHOTO: CAROLINA.COM

Flowers and their favourite insects

BY ANDRÉ GROBBELAAR

How plants diversify, adapt to environmental changes and how their flowers evolve to keep attracting insects to pollinate them for survival is the interesting field of a young UFS researcher, Dr Lize Joubert.

She is a lecturer in the Department of Plant Sciences at the University of the Free State and her research field is plant systematics and pollination biology. Dr Joubert obtained her PhD in plant systematics in 2013 and was subsequently awarded the EM van Zinderen-Bakker Prize for an outstanding PhD dissertation in Botany.

She is also the curator of the Geo Potts Herbarium in Bloemfontein, the internationally accredited herbarium housing over 30 000 plant specimens, mainly representing the flora of central South Africa and several special collections from Marion Island, the Okavango Delta, and KwaZulu-Natal.

Her research focuses on how plant diversity comes about through evolution and what role flower structure plays in the plant's interaction with pollinators. Dr Joubert's research not only helps to understand the interaction between insects and flowers but also has lots of implications in real-world problems.

Crop production is, in many cases, dependent on pollination. About 75% of the world's major crops are to some extent dependent on pollination. "Pollination is really important for us as human beings, but it is also important to maintain diversity in our natural ecosystem and to maintain ecosystem health."

As a young researcher, Dr Joubert became part of the Prestige Scholars Programme (PSP) at the UFS, which led her to Cambridge University where she became part of a research group for nearly two years under an expert in her field, Prof Beverley Glover. The PSP at the UFS identifies and promotes promising

young academics at the university to become full professors with excellent research accomplishments.

Dr Joubert views the PSP Programme to a large extent as her academic home. She is proud to be part of the programme that has brought her closer to other experts in her field. It resulted in collaborations in cutting-edge research in which she is involved. **b**

"Pollination is really important for us as human beings, but it is also important to maintain diversity in our natural ecosystem and to maintain ecosystem health."



Dr Lize Joubert of the UFS Department of Plant Sciences is a leading researcher in pollination biology.

PHOTO: ANJA AUCAMP

The history of those who healed and cared

BY ANDRÉ GROBLER

The stories, motivation and actions of men and women who healed those in need during difficult times are the research focus of Dr Clement Masakure. He is a lecturer in the Department of History at the UFS, and also part of the Vice-Chancellor's Prestige Scholars Programme.

Dr Masakure's work in this field for his PhD has culminated in a book deal signed at the beginning of this year. It focuses on nurses and other healthworkers in Zimbabwean hospitals during the 20th century.

It further includes work done by male nurses, who were called orderlies. At a particular time the orderlies did the nursing, yet they were not seen as registered nurses.

The book covers the early part of the colonial period looking at the experiences of male and female nurses who worked in hospitals until 1996.

Future research projects Dr Masakure would like to be involved in is what he calls humanitarian medicine. It entails the study of people who provided medical services during a humanitarian crisis.

It would include people who worked for the Red Cross and other humanitarian organisations during the Zimbabwean liberation war of the 1970s. Dr Masakure says very little is known about those who alleviated the suffering of people affected by the war. The focus would be people who worked in areas of medical services where the government could not provide the service.

"The government could not get access to many areas due to the war. We need to document the experiences of these men and women during the war."

Dr Masakure also plans to look at people and sicknesses outside Zimbabwe and feels more research is needed into the early leprosy situation of Lesotho and the eastern Free State.

He says there were several campaigns by the British, with the help of South Africa, to eradicate leprosy in the region. "I would like to look at such projects, about the movement of sickness, people and ideas on the best way to deal with them."

Dr Masakure says these situations disrupted the earlier political boundaries and forced governments to work together. **b**

Dr Clement Masakure, a lecturer in the UFS Department of History.

PHOTO: ANJA AUCAMP



Old dog (2015). Colour pencils on Fabriano paper, 112 x 164 cm. Oliewenhuis Art Museum Permanent Collection. Janine Allen.

Staff

Award-winning photographs bring cutting edge to research

BY IGNO VAN NIEKERK

“My goal in life is to unite my avocation with my vocation, As my two eyes make one in sight.” – Robert Frost.

Some lecturers bring information into the classroom, others bring passion, and then there are those who bring passion, information, as well as the gift of their avocation. Prof Nico Smit is not only an award-winning photographer; he is also a respected lecturer who brings the natural world into the classroom through his photographs.

Imagine a lecture where theoretical information on bulleted slides are replaced with real-world information illustrated with stunning photographs, and you will have some idea of the eye-candy Prof Smit's students experience when attending classes in Grassland Science and Wildlife Management.

He has been a keen photographer since his school days at Sasolburg High School, and his love for the natural environment was an early compass that led him to the Department of Natural and Agricultural Sciences. His camera was initially a faithful companion, keeping him alert to changes in light and ensuring that he remained keenly aware of what was happening around him. Eventually it became a trusted partner in recording real-life examples, stories and anecdotes that he could share with students.

“In both education and photography new technologies should be embraced.”

Prof Smit's students will confirm that he does not only focus when behind the camera, but because of the effort he puts into preparing lectures, he is not easily distracted or fooled into random conversations. As is fitting for a good photographer, the content is framed to adhere to the timespan of the class; the



PHOTO: IGNO VAN NIEKERK

Prof Nico Smit, lecturer in the Department of Grassland Science and Wildlife Management.

lecture is focused on the outcome; and the information is edited into exposing the bigger picture.

In both education and photography new technologies should be embraced, and, once again Prof Smit found that the synergy of his vocation and avocation could lead to a distinctive advantage in doing cutting-edge research when he introduced drone photography into fieldwork with postgraduate students. Guesswork was taken out of plant patterns and features of the landscape. The drone produced an alternative view, better information, and a different angle – exactly what Prof Smit's photographs have been doing since he started using them in lectures. **b**

**Prof Smit's honours awards include four Associateships (APSSA) (colour slides, colour prints, AV, digital), two Fellowships (PFSSA) (colour slides, colour prints), Expert (EPSSA) and the highest award of Master (MPSSA). All of these were awarded on the first application. He has participated in national and international salons and has received numerous acceptances and awards, which culminated in his winning the PSSA (Photographic Society of Southern Africa) Impala Trophy for the most points overall no less than seven times (three times in the colour slide division and four times in the digital section).*



WILDLIFE PHOTOS: PROF NICO SMIT



UFS appoints new Vice-Rector: Institutional Change, Student Affairs and Community Engagement

BY XOLISA MNUKWA

Prof Puleng LenkaBula is passionate about higher education as a foundational resource for the progressive development of individuals, communities and countries.

She was appointed as the new Vice-Rector for Institutional Change, Student Affairs and Community Engagement, at the UFS and started working at the university on 1 May 2018.

Prof LenkaBula says her vision for the UFS is to ensure there is synchronicity between the university vision, the Rector's vision, and the vision of the broad internal and external stakeholders of the UFS as a public institution in service of South Africa and the world at large.

Before accepting the position Prof LenkaBula was the Dean of Student Affairs at the University of the Witwatersrand from 2016 to 2018. From 2014 to 2016 she was the Dean of Students at the University of South Africa (Unisa). She was also a Visiting Professor at the University of Toronto's Emmanuel College in 2009.

“My passion in life is the promotion of education and knowledge as sites of excellence, development and the cultivation of human potential in service of humanity and our ecological systems.”

She obtained her Master's Degree with specialisation in Social Ethics from St Andrews College, affiliated with the University of Saskatchewan, in Saskatoon, Canada. Her doctoral degree was conferred by Unisa in 2006/2007, and in 2010, the university promoted her to Associate Professor of Ethics. She further acquired her doctorate in Ethics with specialisation in Ethics of Economy, Ecology and Politics, and also studied in countries including South Africa, Lesotho and Canada.

The UFS can look forward to an ethicist, a scholar, a leader, and an executive who aspires to and is committed towards steering the ship to become a centre of excellence and a resource for South Africa, the entire African continent and the world. **b**

PHOTO: BAREND NAGEL



Prof Puleng LenkaBula, new Vice-Rector: Institutional Change, Student Affairs and Community Engagement.

Meraka community development project empowers the community

BY MAMOSA MAKAYA

Cultural heritage preservation and revival has been a passion for Sebatso Mofama, a former Human Resources manager. She left the corporate world to follow her dream of creating a multi-purpose cultural village on a smallholding in Bloemfontein.

In 2007 the village began operation with facilities to support an African cultural hub for manufacturing and selling arts and crafts, a shared communal space where story-telling, traditional music and indigenous foods and recipes could be shared. She named it the Meraka project.

Multi-purpose project supports self-reliance

The village is supported by the UFS through a joint enterprise with the Start Living Green initiative managed by Dr Anita Venter. Start Living Green advocates the use of innovative and indigenous building methods to create regenerative livelihoods to benefit disadvantaged communities living in informal settlements and in rural areas.

Empowering stigmatised communities

According to Mofama the concept of Meraka under which the Lesedi project was developed, has grown from strength to strength over the years. “More youth programmes are under way including drama, motivational talks as well as discussions on drug abuse and gangsterism in local communities. I am very excited as I see this cultural centre to be a place that can help to heal our people,” she said.

She continues: “The Lesedi multi-purpose community development village Non-Profit Organisation (NPO), a project under the Meraka Foundation, recently signed a memorandum of

understanding (MOU) with the Department of Correctional Services to collaborate on rehabilitating ex-law offenders. Marginalised communities such as ex-law offenders are already involved in arts and crafts projects to generate an income, and the MOU will help grow our collaboration.”

Smaller projects include innovative low- to no-cost, low-skilled and environmentally sound building and permaculture methods. Learners gain practical building experience, which they in turn can use to better their livelihoods through self-help building activities in informal settlements, while using green building technologies that have been proven to act as a catalyst for social change in creating climate change resilient communities.

Developing the youth to mould their futures

Lesedi was established in 2015 and has developed a fully functional hub focusing on hosting events around significant cultural days such as Youth Day, Mandela Day, the Free State Arts Festival and Heritage Day among others. The success of the Meraka project displays the concept of action learning as community empowerment and most importantly the potential to create change among the youth who are community leaders of the future. **b**



Arts and crafts made by members of the Lesedi project.

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Vice-Dean Health Sciences to make a positive impact

BY DR CINDÉ GREYLING

“At a scholarship interview with the British Council in 1987, they asked me what job I’d like after studying. I told the interview panel that I planned to work at the university!”

These were the words of the new Vice-Dean for Research, Transformation, and Marketing in the Faculty of Health Sciences, Prof Joyce Tsoka-Gwegweni.

Prof Tsoka-Gwegweni joined the UFS on 1 February 2018.

This born academic has 24 years of health science research experience and holds a PhD (University of KwaZulu-Natal), two master’s degrees (MSc from the University of Natal; MPH from the University of the Western Cape), two honours degrees (BSc Hons from the University of Reading; BA Hons from the University of South Africa) and management diplomas and certificates from reputable local and international institutions (University of Durham, University of Stellenbosch, UKZN and Unisa). She has also published more than 50 papers and held various high-profile leadership positions.

Big plans for Health Science research

Prof Tsoka-Gwegweni hopes for an adequate health workforce for South Africa, which is competent, committed and caring. In the Faculty of Health Sciences she hopes to drive research by providing research leadership. “I would like to encourage the staff to enjoy research and not see it as a burden. My ambition is to improve our research profile towards a top research faculty.”

At peace in the City of Roses


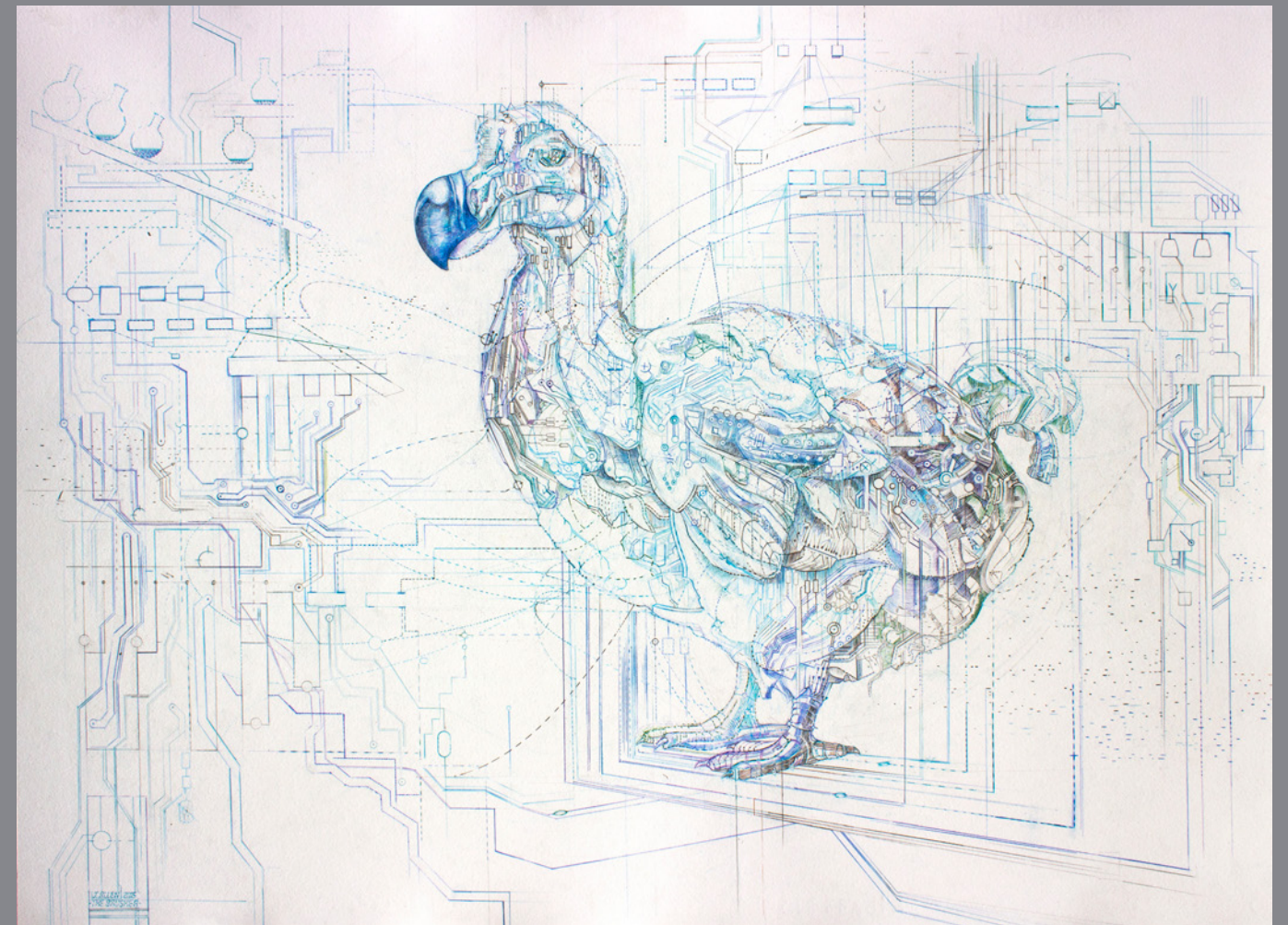
Off campus, Prof Tsoka-Gwegweni enjoys going to church, listening to gospel music and going to concerts, reading, travelling, and being in nature. “I’m looking forward to having a great and rewarding time in Bloemfontein. But more importantly, to make a positive impact,” she says, “no matter how small. I think I am at the right place, at the right time, for the right reasons. I do not regret choosing the UFS.” 



PHOTO: JOHAN ROUX

Prof Joyce Tsoka-Gwegweni, new Vice-Dean for Research, Transformation, and Marketing.

“I think I am at the right place, at the right time, for the right reasons. I do not regret choosing the UFS.”



Bird (2015). Colour pencils on Fabriano paper, 70,5 x 95,5cm. Janine Allen.

Students & Sport

UFS offers extraordinary rendition of varsity life

The UFS aims to ensure that students enjoy and effectively engage in student life, to make them relate with the statement: “Only a Kowsie knows the feeling.”

BY XOLISA MNUKWA

‘Only a Kowsie knows the feeling’. This is what most UFS students will tell you at their graduation. The university initiates many opportunities for its students in an effort to effectively shape the character of these students to equip them for the working world.

According to the Rector and Vice-Chancellor, Prof Francis Peterson: “To know the UFS is to understand the heart of its core and its particular set of values, where those values inform our decisions and govern our behaviour.”

With this in mind, the UFS has operationalised a number of activities to not only make our students feel welcome, but to also aid and support them in their adjustment to varsity life. Among these initiatives is the *Annual Gateway First-years’ College*, a programme developed with activities surrounding student life and learning events that – with mentoring and support – assists our students to settle into university life.

On the sports and cultural front, our students had the opportunity to not only compete against each other in a fun

environment, but also to get to know each other at events such as an athletics evening, a swimming gala, and Stagedoor.

At the sports evening, students cheered the presence of Tannie Ans Botha, the coach of South African World and Olympic champion Wayde van Niekerk. With 15 newly recruited athletes – who have accumulated a number of medals at South African junior competitions in 2017 – a year of victories still awaits the UFS.

“Our first-years’ swimming gala is about seeing students come alive. We witnessed students being humanised through sports, and at the end of the day the healthy competition among them aids the emergence of humanity,” said Pura Mgolombane, Dean of Student Affairs.

At the annual Stagedoor sing competition our students were exposed to modern-day issues such as infrastructure, economic inequality, land reform, and other subjects related to education. The event was aimed at scrutinising and highlighting the pressures that come with university life, and many other issues faced by South Africans, but more specifically by the youth. **b**



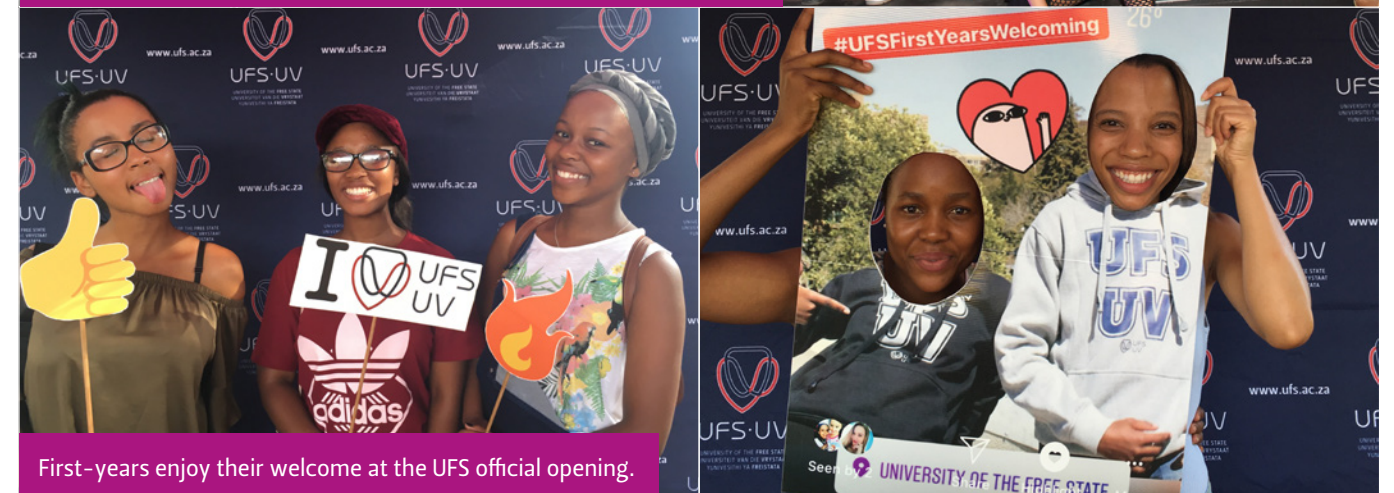
PHOTOS: ANJA AUCAMP



Students encourage their favourites at the swimming gala.



First-years wrote and performed their own scripts for Stagedoor 2018.



First-years enjoy their welcome at the UFS official opening.



Spirited first-years compete at the athletics evening.

Kovsie ACT backs first ever eco-race at Kofsies

BY XOLISA MNUKWA

Kovsie ACT (Active Civic Teaching), formally known as "Rag", is an initiative that was historically formulated by students as a dynamic fund-raising effort for charities.

Karen Scheepers: Assistant Director Student Affairs and Head of Kovsie ACT said: "The projects' main objectives revolve around collaborative learning for students in the co-curricular social and civic responsibility space. It also affords the student population the opportunity to informally connect with one another and the community."

Projects include the Schools project for first-year students, the Community Gardens project, the Eco-vehicle project for senior students, and the Community Celebration project.

The Global Citizenship Short Learning Programme (GCSLP), together with Gateway, the orientation programme for first-years, introduces collaborative learning for first-year students during their first semester. They are assigned to participate in local school projects where they learn to solve problems and work in a joint effort to assist primary or secondary schools in

need of help. In these projects they are mentored by a group of senior students. First-years will continue with the Schools project throughout the course of the year.

A highlight on the Kovsie ACT calendar was the construction of eco-vehicles as a build-up to the eco-vehicle race and evening music festival. An excited audience of students, staff and members of the community saw the very first eco-vehicle race taking place on 16 March 2018. Joining in the excitement and behind the wheel of one of the eco-vehicles, was the UFS Rector and Vice-Chancellor, Prof Francis Petersen.

The intent of the eco-vehicle race is to showcase that e-mobility and electric vehicles are part of our future, with both providing insight into an e-mobility structured prospect of life. Also important is the social cohesion that takes place between students.

Kovsie ACT is gradually achieving its objective, which is to unite students and the community. In the pipeline is the Community Gardens project that will assist in putting food on the tables of many students. **b**



UFS Rector and Vice-Chancellor Prof Francis Peterson test-drives an eco-vehicle.

PHOTOS: ANJA AUCAMP



Senior students build their artworks at the UFS Rag Farm.



Students showcase the final products of their artworks.



First-years cheer seniors on as they participate in the official eco-vehicle race.



A Community Garden project (still in process) also forms part of the Kovsie ACT initiative.



Big things expected from Raynard

BY RUAN BRUWER

“Stay in the process that will give you the best chance of reaching your full potential.” So said one of the most talented young cricketers in the country. And with possibilities aplenty, Raynard van Tonder doesn’t look too far into the future.

Van Tonder, a first-year Kopsie Bachelor of Social Sciences student was rewarded for an outstanding U19 World Cup in New Zealand in January 2018 when he was named the captain of the Team of the Tournament.

He captained the South African team to fifth place and ended with the third-most number of runs in the tournament: 348 in six matches at an impressive average of 69.6. Van Tonder scored two centuries and one 50.

“I would like to play for the (VKB) Knights, but for the time being I want to do well for whatever team I’m playing with.”

The rest will look after itself. The most valuable advice I’ve received is not to focus on the things you don’t have control over and to stay in the process which will give you the best chance of reaching your full potential,” Van Tonder said.

Towards the end of March, he did not have a Knights contract yet, but rumour had it it was just a matter of time. Van Tonder had been piling up the runs for the Free State semi-professional team for whom he made his debut just a couple of days after his 18th birthday in his matric year in 2016.

From 21 May until 27 July he will be a member of the national academy programme of Cricket South Africa that prepares youngsters for the demands of professional cricket. **b**

PHOTO: ANJA AUCAMP



Raynard van Tonder scored two centuries and one 50 at the U19 Cricket World Cup in New Zealand to finish with the third-highest number of runs.

Commonwealth Games appearance for Ts’epang

BY RUAN BRUWER

Although the UFS did not have any members in the South African athletics team at the Commonwealth Games in Australia in April this year, a Kopsie competed there in the colours of Lesotho.

Ts’epang Sello (21) qualified for the Games in the 800m, adding to her appearance at the Olympic Games in 2016, also for Lesotho.

She was hoping to make up for 2016 when her 2:10.22 in the heats was not good enough for a place in the semi-finals at the Olympics.

“I hope I can reach the final. For that I’ll have to run a personal best. I am very satisfied with how the year has been going so far. I’ve been clocking consistent times,” Sello said shortly before the Games.

She already brought her personal best time down from 2:09.18 by the start of 2018 to 2:06.40 which she achieved early in March at the first Grand Prix meeting in Johannesburg. Just the following day she won the 800m at the first Varsity meetings in a time of 2:07.15. She defended her title at the second student meeting later in March. “I hope to eventually run a time of two minutes. I believe it is something I can achieve.”

“I hope to eventually run a time of two minutes. I believe it is something I can achieve.”

Being a Lesotho citizen, Sello cannot participate at the South African Championship. If she had been permitted, her 2:06.40 would have earned her a third place.

The middle-distance athlete is studying a BA Extended Curriculum and is coached by Derek van Rensburg, who acted as Lesotho’s national middle-distance coach at the Olympics. **b**

Ts’epang Sello, a middle-distance Kopsie athlete, is making her mark at international level competing for her country, Lesotho.



PHOTO: VARSITY SPORTS

Tennis star not done yet, despite work commitments

BY RUAN BRUWER



Arne Nel has a record that takes some beating. Since 2014 he hasn't lost a tennis match in the singles at the annual USSA (University Sport South Africa) tournament.

From 2 to 6 July 2018 he will attempt to maintain that record when the event takes place at the UFS.

Arne (24) is a final-year BCom (Accounting) student who started working this year on his articles.

He has been playing for the first tennis team since 2013 and has held the No 1 position for Kovsie men since 2014.

"I have signed a contract with my employer until 2020," said Arne. "I am planning to continue studying next year and I'll still be playing tennis."

Arne, who has won the Free State singles title several times, played a major role in the dominance of the UFS at student level. Kovsies have been winning the USSA tournament since it started in 2010.

"Perhaps I was lucky to win the big matches at the right time."

In 2016 we started with a high-performance programme that made a difference with our conditioning."

Arne said he was privileged to be a member of the USSA team at the World Student Games in Taipei last year. "We were lucky to go, as they don't always send a tennis team. It was a nice reward because playing opportunities for students are very limited." **b**

Arne Nel has been a force for the Kovsies on the tennis court since 2014.



Deliverance I (2011). Drawing for projection, pastel on black paper, 99 x 120 cm . Janine Allen.

Alumni

Your investment creates opportunities for young people



Prof Francis Petersen, the Rector and Vice-Chancellor of the UFS, values the support the university has received from Kovsie Alumni Trust (KAT) donors. He sees this support as an investment in the lives of young people.

In a letter to KAT donors about the criteria for bursaries from the Kovsie Alumni Trust Bursary Fund, he writes: “The UFS greatly values the loyal support it has received from Kovsie Alumni Trust (KAT) donors over the past 21 years, enabling students to study at the UFS. There is no better investment than creating opportunities for talented young people to access quality higher education. Thank you for making this investment.”

During the past few months, the university and KAT trustees have reviewed the policies and procedures related to the Kovsie Alumni Bursary Fund. Such reviews are necessary from time to time to ensure compliance with UFS policies as well as relevant legislative requirements. The review has resulted in refining the criteria for students to be considered for bursaries from the Kovsie Alumni Trust Bursary Fund.


In the future, undergraduate and honours students at the UFS are eligible to apply for support from the Kovsie Alumni Trust. Awards are subject to the availability of funding, and are based on criteria

and points as set out below. The minimum points required will be determined from year to year. The minimum required to be considered for the 2018 academic year is 70 points as indicated in the table below.

Eligible students can apply by end February (for semester 1) or end August (for semester 2). Awards are confirmed by the UFS Bursary Fund Committee and are conditional on satisfactory results and admission to the proposed year of study. Application forms are available on the UFS website at www.ufs.ac.za

Donors themselves are not eligible to apply for bursaries. They may, of course, encourage students or prospective students to apply and support applications with testimonials. The new criteria will ensure that donors to the Kovsie Alumni Trust continue to receive tax benefits under South African income tax legislation.

Thank you again for the contribution you are making to the development of talented students and, therefore, to the development of our country. We hope that you will continue to support the KAT and the UFS.

Please feel free to contact Alzena Brink of the Kovsie Alumni Trust if you need any further information: brinkat@ufs.ac.za, tel +27 51 401 2043. 

The minimum criteria are	Points
• Enrolment at the UFS for at least 120 credits in the current year in any field of study which leads to an undergraduate degree or acceptance into an honours programme	15
• Academic results	50
• 100% of modules passed with an average of 60% in two consecutive semesters	45
• 100% of modules passed in two consecutive semesters	50
• In the case of first-year applicants, an AP score of at least 36	
Additional criteria	
• Applicant is in his/her final year of study	10
• Parent, grandparent or legal guardian has been a donor for at least 12 months and donated at least R3 000 to the UFS, or to the Kovsie Alumni Trust	5 to 25 points
• If the donor is not directly related to the student, the application must be accompanied by a testimonial confirming the connection between the donor and the student	(≥R3 000 = 5 points; ≥R6 000 = 10 points; ≥R15 000 = 25 points)
Total points	100



DJ Castro says TVET colleges crucial for economy

BY THABO KESSAH

Moeketsi Nell Castro Sempe, known as DJ Castro, is a popular figure in the education and entertainment fields in the Qwaqwa area. He is the Campus Manager of Motheo TVET College in Thaba Nchu and a former principal of Bluegumbosch Secondary which he left in 2017 having achieved a 97% pass rate and 78% Bachelor passes for his learners.

He is a proud alumnus of the Qwaqwa Campus of the UFS.

Sempe was an only child born to Pati Mosia 48 years ago. "My mother never had a good educational background and as result, I developed so much passion for education in order to fight the battles she could not. I enrolled for a Bachelor of Arts (Education) degree with the former University of the North (Qwaqwa branch), after which I later did an honours degree under the supervision of Drs Winston and Tshele Moloi. Then came a master's degree in Leadership, Management and Policy with the University of KwaZulu-Natal," said the proud husband and father of two.

"I was also fortunate to play football professionally for Qwaqwa Stars (now Free State Stars), did radio work with Qwaqwa Radio and I continue to do a bit of DJing. My CD will be coming out soon."

Sempe comes from what he calls 'a small community with limited options'. "I started taking pride in my education when I became the second-best performer of 322 learners in Grade 11 back at Tiisetsang in Bethlehem."

His current roles include improving performance by over 60% certification rate. "In the main, I have to turn the campus around and make it an institution of choice. Performance on its own is not enough in this sector as students need help to create their own employment opportunities and sustainability in their trade."

He strongly believes that the TVET sector needs more support to eradicate the scourge of unskilled labour in South Africa. "TVET colleges can play a defining role in improving our economy," he added.

Looking back at what he considers to be the best lessons from the Qwaqwa Campus, Sempe said he learnt to ask and seek clarity when in doubt. "I also learnt to welcome opinions that would form part of an informed decision." **b**

"I learnt to consider everyone as an important piece of the puzzle."



Moeketsi Nell Castro Sempe, Campus Manager of Motheo TVET College in Thaba Nchu.

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Centre produces well-equipped game changers for modern-day agriculture

BY LEONIE BOLLEURS

Dr Johan van Niekerk, Head of the Centre for Sustainable Agriculture, Rural Development and Extension at the UFS, works hard to establish the centre as an institution of choice for policymakers and key roleplayers in the agricultural sector.

He believes, that by doing this, the UFS can positively contribute to the change in the agriculture sector in Southern Africa.

One of the students, currently enrolled for a PhD at the centre is Tozamile Lukhalo, Director: National Extension Reform in the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF).

His strategic management and policy formulation skills have led to the successful development of the National Policy on Extension and Advisory Services, (approved by the cabinet of South Africa on 19 October 2016). This policy is envisaged to enhance the welfare of many actors in the respective agri-food value chains. The goal of the policy is to ensure that all actors enjoy equitable and optimum access to knowledge and skills, and have the capacity to explore opportunities for the advancement of their enterprises and livelihoods. This policy commits South Africa to deliver and maintain a pluralistic, harmonised and coordinated extension service that operates on a common set of principles and values, which responds to the needs, aspirations, opportunities and other circumstances of the many actors in the respective value chains.

According to Act No.27 of 2003, agricultural extension officers need to register with the South African Council for Natural Scientific Professions (SACNASP) to practise as extension practitioners. This serves the interests of the people of South Africa by promoting competent, efficient, accessible and needs-driven service delivery in extension services. The key objective of spearheading registrations with a professional body (SACNASP) is to establish a professional, accessible, reliable, relevant and accountable national extension and advisory service that is results oriented.



Mr Tozamile Lukhalo, Director: National Extension Reform in the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

"I believe the knowledge gained from this university will strategically empower us to add value in nation-building and assist to improve the quality of life in the rest of Africa."

In order to keep their status as registered extension practitioners, people in this profession need to empower themselves through continuous professional development (CPD). This includes participation in research projects, publication and presentation of papers on topical agricultural extension issues as well as undergoing training on short relevant courses to keep their status as accredited extension practitioners. The Centre for Sustainable Agriculture, Rural Development and Extension at the UFS is currently in the process of development of such short courses and/or core competencies of agricultural extension.

Lukhalo's current PhD project is focusing on the evaluation of the processes in policy development and analysis. He said: "I'm very excited to be one of the students of this great institution, more specifically, the Centre for Sustainable Agriculture, Rural Development and Extension, that has been a key partner with the government in the reform of extension and advisory services." **b**



The Department of Communication and Brand Management commissioned drone footage of all three university campuses. Pictured here is a photograph of the South Campus in Bloemfontein.



University of the Free State
PO Box 339 | Bloemfontein 9300
South Africa
www.ufs.ac.za