

CONCILIO

UNIVERSITY OF THE
FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE
VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA
FREISTATA
QWAQWA CAMPUS/-KAMPUS



South Campus Newsletter

May 2016



Dr Choice Makhetha Vice Rector Student Affairs & External Relations.

It is with pride and humility that I write this message. When I think of the South Campus, I think of a pathway with endless possibilities giving access to education. I imagine the energy and commitment I have experienced from colleagues with a focus on continuous innovation, to give you the best education and tools to succeed in life.

Over the years, many students started at the South Campus and eventually became engineers, veterinary scientists, teachers and medical doctors, among others. In fact, some completed their qualifications cum laude!

Now this is your turn at South Campus; your opportunity to show the world what you are made of. I know that you are gifted and very intelligent and I hope you believe that as well because it will make all the difference. You have a bright future ahead of you and we wish you all the best.

Your journey to study further, is our journey too. We share the excitement, the challenges, setbacks, as well as the achievements with you. For those on distance education mode, we understand that distance education takes courage and discipline. It is also attractive for the convenience and flexibility it provides, making further higher education accessible.

For this article, allow me to focus a little bit more on teaching as a profession, as many on distance learning are teachers. >>

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South Campus
Newsletter

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Editor

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UFS·UV

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I'm also passionate about teaching as I was brought up by a great teacher, a woman who was selfless and committed to making a difference in the lives of other people.

At the heart of every development, every career and specialisation is a teacher. "Teaching is the Mother of all professions" and that puts a huge responsibility on the quality of teaching and the quality of a teacher. This challenges teachers to achieve their best, to continue to learn and stay abreast of change and development, in order to bring the best knowledge and experience back to the classroom.

A teacher carries the aspirations of so many young people and those of the broader society. There is a silent expectation from communities, for teachers to provide leadership and, therefore, you should not shy away from this challenge. It is a challenge and a journey of self-discovery and growth.

I believe that "teaching is a work of heart".

It's about sharing knowledge openly, honestly and intentionally, giving tools to the next generation to be able to solve complex problems and develop the world to our wildest imagination. It's about caring for and loving other human beings enough to want the best for them; education.

As the University of the Free State, we want to travel this journey with all of you, giving the support and encouragement as well as tools to use, to achieve your best potential.

On this journey, we urge you to aim extremely high because you are capable of achieving excellence. Make it your business

to dream big, to visualise the dream and to work very hard towards making the dream, a reality. Remember, nothing is impossible to achieve!

Going back to the teachers, I want you to understand that being a teacher is not just a job or profession; it's a lifestyle. As a teacher, you do not switch on and off at certain times. It is a conviction, a feeling that is so deep inside. It is a lived experience of each day and night, whether at work or not. It is the daily urge that pushes you to learn and to share knowledge acquired. It is the commitment to read broadly and stay informed, for own benefit and that of the broader society. For this, I believe that teaching is a lifestyle.

The South Campus should be a reminder to all of you that you deserve the best in life. South Campus is the best place to be, enjoy every moment. Whatever you do, remember that it's not just about you; you also carry the dreams and aspirations of many people who did not get the opportunity you have.

Be the hope our country needs and walk with pride for taking this crucial decision to study further and higher. The University of the Free State is honoured to have you as a student. Please use all the support services available, to ensure that your academic journey is smooth and intellectually stimulating.

Always know that you are not alone. Stay engaged in debates and discussions and know that your input counts.

All the best for the year! ■

by: Dr Choice Makhetha
Vice Rector Student Affairs &
External Relations

Important dates

| | |
|--------------|--|
| ACE and NPDE | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deadline for payment of registration fees for 2nd semester: 25 June 2016• Graduation: 6 May 2016 (Qwaqwa students) 29 June 2016 (All other centres)• Main Examinations: 16 – 27 May 2016• Additional Examinations: 18 – 22 July 2016 |
| ACT | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applications for new students: 13 May 2016 (block session starts 27 June 2016) 19 August 2016 (block session starts 3 October)• Deadline for payment of registration fees for block session starting on 27 June 2016: 27 May 2016• Deadline for payment of registration fees for block session starting on 3 October: 2 September 2016 |
| UPP | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Main Examinations: 23 May – 11 June 2016• Additional Examinations: 13 June – 4 July 2016• 2nd Semester commences: 18 July 2016 |

The Story of Lucky



The Internet Broadcast Project is an intervention between the Free State Department of Education and the University of the Free State. Subject matter experts present lessons in the ICTISE studio, situated on the South Campus, which are then broadcast live to 70 centres across the Free State.

The project currently reaches all five districts of the Free State, 83 schools and approximately 43 000 learners. All participating schools are equipped with uncapped internet access and a device called the 'Ibox' through which the broadcasting is done. There is a possibility of expanding the project to more provinces in the country, which will allow more learners access to quality education.

In 2013, when Lucky Hlatshwayo was in Grade 11 at Phofung Secondary School in Phuthadijhaba, Qwaqwa – one of the most rural areas in the Free State – he used the IBP mostly on his own. His determination arose from

his deep desire for education in anticipation of a brighter future. Before the IBP, he was struggling in school and barely passing. After completion of his Grade 11 exams he challenged himself to study the Grade 12 Maths topic and asked his Maths teacher if he could test himself against the previous year's Grade 12 Maths final paper. His teacher reminded him that not all the topics had been covered in Grade 11. However, Lucky insisted and he scored 92%.

Needless to say, he was even more determined to use the IBP. He studied on his own in the morning, afternoon and evening, even spending some nights at school. In the end, his hard work paid off and he was among the Top 100 matriculants to obtain a comprehensive bursary from the Free State Department of Education. Lucky cites his motto as being 'if you can't change the situation, make the best of it'. He urges other learners to make use of all the resources available to them and to always remember that anything can be achieved through hard work.

Lucky is the first member of his family to enrol for university and is currently studying an Astrophysics Degree at Kovsies. ■

by: *Thakane Nteko*

Blind student overcomes odds

In 2015, Mr Gama—a blind student—obtained his ACE diploma. We caught up with him and asked him about his experience with the UFS, his remarkable achievement, and what lies ahead for him.

How was your experience of studying with the UFS through – distance learning?

It has never been easy to study through distance learning, as a blind person there were lot of challenges, especially with some materials. So time and again I spoke to the lecturers about the methodology that can help me. The cooperation that I received was golden.

How did the UFS contribute to assisting you achieving your goals and objectives?

It has been a long way; a lot of hard work, dedication and communication helped me to reach my goal. The doors of the faculty were always open to discuss some issues that were not clear for me as a blind person.

What was your highlight moment while you were studying through the UFS?

The highlight was when I completed my ACE, it was a huge achievement because I managed to do it with great success.

What are you currently busy with?

Currently I am an educator at Bartimea School for the Deaf and Blind. About a year ago, I was doing my Diploma majoring in visual impairment and additional disability at Perkins School for the Blind in the USA. I'm also planning on completing my Honours of Policy Design and Governance and getting involved with NGO's that are dealing with blindness and disability in general.

What advice would you give to other students currently busy with the same course or studies in general?

I would advise that hard work pays off; studying requires a lot of time, and dedication is the road to success. ■

by: *Lerato Kale*

Principalship Programme in Mpumalanga



The principal obtained this pot from an old Model C school that no longer needed it.



Built-in pots that are heated with fires from below.

South Africa spends 18.5% of its annual budget on education. Yet, we often read in newspapers about the appalling conditions of education in South Africa in general, and in Mpumalanga Province (MP) in particular.

There is, however, recognition that effective leadership and management are important if schools are to be successful in providing sound learning opportunities for learners. To give coherence to the preparations of school principals, the South African Department of Education introduced a threshold qualification for serving and aspiring principals as part of a strategy to improve educational standards.

In 2013 the School of Open Learning (SOL) presented the Advanced Certificate in Education: School Management and Leadership (ACE:SML) programme to 40 principals or aspiring principals from MP. Contact sessions were organised into block sessions of five days each, four times a year in either Bloemfontein or Ermelo. The contact sessions were during the school holidays. The block sessions in Bloemfontein gave the students the opportunity to work in an environment where there was adequate, high speed Wi-Fi internet access.

Three full-time and one retired academic, a retired HOD with years of experience as an English teacher, as well as a retired school principal acted as facilitators. Two members of SOL's administrative staff (Sandra Plekker and Maritsa Joubert) were always available during the contact sessions to assist in the event of any technical or administrative problem or query.

In 2014 we launched a small scale research project to evaluate the MP ACE:SML programme's impact on the students. Sandra and Maritsa interviewed eight of the students.

The research highlighted the positive influence of the programme on the students. Six of the eight students talked about the positive role the programme played in confidence building. Ayana said for example, "I am applying to be principal without any fears or doubts". The students used phrases such as "really empowering" and "I feel so positive [and] I will be able to apply the skills that I have learnt [when appointed as a principal]" when describing their newfound confidence. The ACE:SML brought about change in the way Bheki sees his role as leader: "There was a time when we thought to run a school you leave curriculum monitoring to the deputies and HODs, but it is not that effective. It is effective if you, yourself do it. So I got involved".

A distinct feature of the MP programme presented by SOL is that all students were given laptops. Using a hands-on approach, the ICT facilitator



One of many vegetable gardens.



This principal of a very small farm school near Dullstroom decided to improve the school grounds. He also painted all the bathrooms and repaired broken toilets and basins.

taught the students how to use a computer, and to utilise social media to communicate with her and fellow students. Through innovation and flexibility she tried to accommodate the students' different ICT competency levels. Six of the eight students mentioned the positive impact of the ICT module on their personal (e.g. being able to communicate with family and friends and do internet banking) and professional (e.g. PowerPoint presentations, budgeting and communicate with colleagues and departmental officials) lives.

Four of the students alluded to the fact that the programme enhanced their ability to analyse current management practices and act as agents of change. Fabio made the following comments: "I will be a wonderful principal, because I can see where we are missing the point and what mistakes we are making as managers of the school". Bheki moreover mentioned that he now realises the importance of motivating his staff. Salomae believes the programme motivated him to be more organised. Participants also made mention of better time-management, insights into how to handle stress, the ability to work with others as a team (mentees working together) and how to interpret education policy (specifically with regard to budgeting and school discipline).

The students were full of praise for the fact that the University used knowledgeable and committed people to act as facilitators. Mafa praised an associate professor for setting high standards: "Prof. R set a standard of 'if you want to pass this course then this is what you

need to do; you need to work very, very hard'. It elevated me; it took me up to the next level". Salomae acclaimed the hands-on approach followed in the ICT module, as well as the insightful way the facilitator responsible for the financial management module unpacked the content of the module. According to Salomae this attests to the two facilitators' profound knowledge of their subjects. Not all participants were unanimous in their praise for the facilitators. Fabio said that "most of the lecturers are presenting their modules well. The ... module was the only disappointment". Whilst Fabio gave no reason for his critique against the specific facilitator, it seems from Thabo's interview this facilitator lacked in-depth knowledge: "It was a general presentation ... he was speaking in general about what we were going to do ... when you get the assignment you realise he did not cover everything you needed to know".

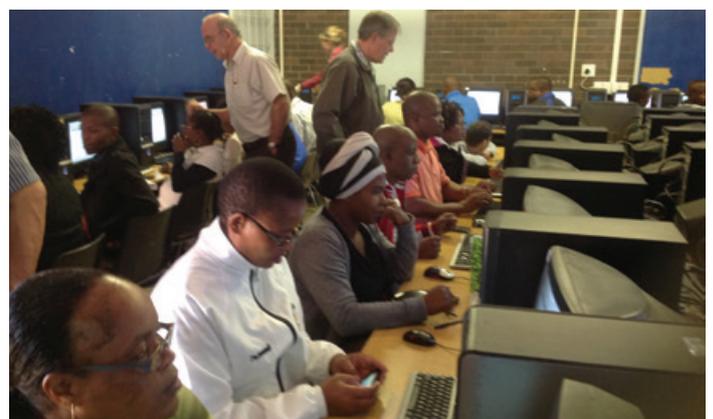
Mafa highlighted the importance of good administrative support for students. He told Sandra "Just keep up with the hard work that you are doing ... the energy that you show as administrators; the love of the work".

The study has shown us that the ACE: SML programme in MP played an important role in empowering education leaders in the province. Whilst most of the students were full of praise for the work done by the facilitators and administrative staff, the study has also shown us that we must not rest on our laurels: there is always room for improvement! ■

by: Corene de Wet



This principal cleaned out and painted an unused storeroom at their school, which they now store the school's food in.



Students are taught the basics of computers, right before they receive their laptops. The mentors are continually part of the process.

South Campus Academic Head, Ms Jean Grundling, sheds some light on open and distance learning

The South Campus is known as the open and distance learning (ODL) campus of the UFS.

What does open distance learning (ODL) mean?

The South Campus is a dual-mode institution. This implies that the South Campus offers different methods to deliver learning programmes to its students, e.g. open, distance and e-learning.

- **Open learning** is a combination of educational principles such as learner-centredness, lifelong learning, flexibility of learning provision, access to learning opportunities, the recognition of prior learning, the provision of learner support, the development of learner-friendly learning programmes, materials and student support systems. Open learning is a set of principles that should apply to any learning programme (Adapted from DHET 2014:48).
- **Distance learning** aims to offer students a conducive learning environment that consists of an appropriate combination of media, quality learning material and tutorial support that students can use at their own place, pace and time. Thus, distance learning as a mode of delivery should take the distance out of the distance.
- **E-learning** is a mode of provision in which the learning programme is facilitated primarily through the use of digital education technology.

So distance learning is based on the principles of open learning, which is organised for use by learners at different times, in different ways and for different purposes at various stages of their lives and careers.

Who can benefit from ODL?

In most cases ODL programmes are suitable for people who are employed and want to improve and/or develop their skills and qualifications and work practice. Employers often benefit from this method as people who participate in ODL programmes often have a need to be able to apply the new skills and knowledge in practice/workplace.

Furthermore, people, who participate in ODL programmes are regarded as adult learners, who are independent, self-motivated and self-directed.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of ODL?

Advantages of ODL:

- Convenient as it removes geographic-based barriers
- It can increase learning effectiveness as students can engage in virtual discussions at their own time, pace and place.
- The virtual conversations can assist students to reflect on issues and respond appropriately at their own pace.
- It can assist students to develop additional critical and soft skills that are often neglected in face-to-face interventions.

Disadvantages of ODL:

- Students are expected to function as adult learners, who are independent, self-motivated and goal-oriented. Some students might not be ready to function at this level of maturity.
- Some students might be less mature and motivated and may find it difficult to work self-directedly. This can lead to poor planning, poor performance and demotivation.
- Students may feel isolated in the learning journey.
- Facilitators might experience teaching via ODL as more time consuming than other modes of delivery.

UPP alumnus obtains PhD in Chemistry

One exceptional UPP success story is that of Dr Ebrahiem Botha. Dr Botha started out in 2001 in the UPP and, thanks to the successful completion of his UPP year, was admitted to degree studies at the UFS and obtained his B.Sc. degree in 2007, his B.Sc. Honours in 2008, his M.Sc. in Chemistry (with distinction) in 2010 and,

finally, his Ph.D. in Chemistry in 2014. He is currently busy with a post-doctoral fellowship at the UFS.

In an interview held with Dr Botha a week before his Ph.D. graduation in 2015, he stated that he would not have reached this highlight in his academic career and personal life had it not been for the opportunity granted to him by his successful completion of the UPP in 2002. ■

The University Preparation Programme

The University Preparation Programme (UPP) began in the Bloemfontein region of the Free State in January 1993 as the NEED Programme (Need for Education and Elevation). The necessity for this programme arose due to imbalances in the school system, which resulted in many deserving students not being able to meet the entrance requirements of universities, universities of technology (then called technikons), and vocational colleges. The UPP has evolved over the years from a lecture-based to a resource-based learning curriculum, i.e. the students are provided with all the resources they need on their first day of studying; they do not need to go to shops off-site to purchase text books, for example. The

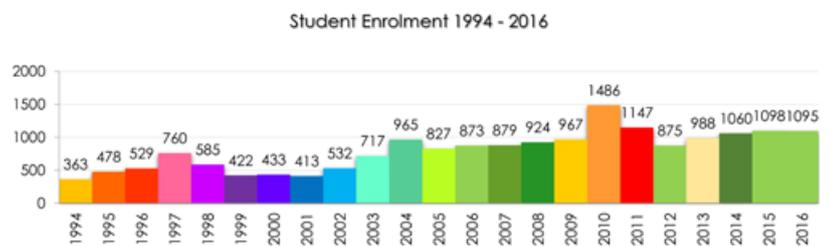
programme (then called the Career Preparation Programme or CPP) was expanded to Bethlehem in 1998, to Kimberley in 1999, to Welkom and Sasolburg in 2000, to Oudtshoorn in 2001 and to the QwaQwa campus of the University of the Free State (UFS) in 2003.

Students attend classes on the South Campus of the UFS in Bloemfontein, the Bethlehem Campus of the Maluti Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) College, the Welkom Campus of the Goldfields TVET College in Welkom, the Sasolburg Campus of the Flavius Mareka TVET College in Sasolburg, the Oudtshoorn Campus of the South Cape TVET College, and the Qwaqwa Campus of the UFS.

Enrolment

The programme began in Bloemfontein in January 1993 with 73 students (2 courses, 10 subjects). Enrolment has increased steadily over the years (see following graph) to 1486 in 2010. There was a decline in the 2011 and 2013 numbers due to limited space on the South Campus of the UFS on account of the implementation of two extended undergraduate degree programmes on the South Campus in 2011 (Natural Science) and 2012 (Economic and Management Sciences). Since the inception of the UPP, 17 509 students have made use of the opportunity it offers.

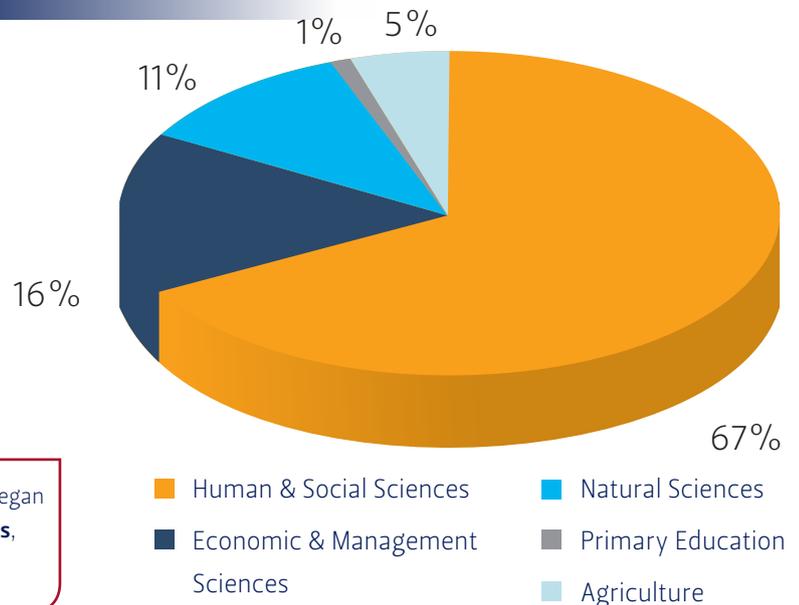
Student Enrolment 1994 - 2016



Course Enrolment

The University-credited courses are structured according to a ten-subject strategic programme in four directions:

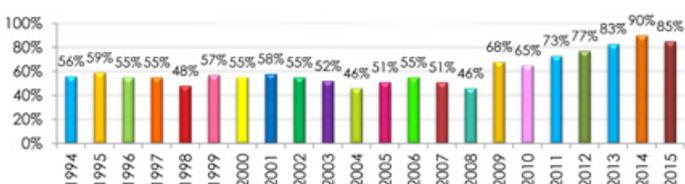
- Economic & Management Sciences;
- Human & Social Sciences;
- Education; and
- Natural & Agricultural Sciences.



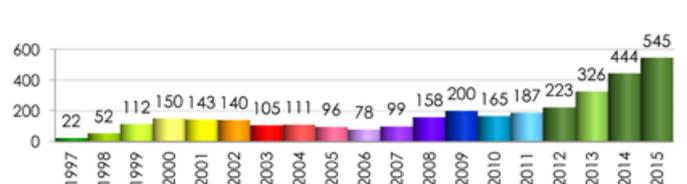
Since 1996, **3,630 degrees** have been awarded to students who began their studies in the Programme (including **312 Honours**, **38 Masters**, and **9 M.B.Ch.B. degrees**).

Success Rate

Success Rate 1994-2015



Graduates 1997-2015



“To demystify **Mathematics and Science** in **the early school years**”



The **Science-for-the-Future** unit of the University of the Free State (UFS) is situated at the Faculty of Education but operates under the auspices of one of the South Campus' core areas of activity, namely **Social responsibility enterprises**. The different projects within the unit are funded from outside the University and primarily through Corporate Social Investment (CSI) funding from several institutions.

The **Family Math & Family Science programme** intends to demystify Mathematics and Science by raising learners' levels of understanding and changing their attitudes towards Mathematics and Science. This is done by exposing learners in the early school years to *Family Math & Family Science* activities in the classroom. In addition to the latter, the learners' parents and guardians are also trained in the respective activities to empower them to be involved in their children's Mathematics and Science learning.

During the “triangular” project strategy, teachers are trained at the University of the Free State, and apart from integrating the project activities into the curriculum, it is also expected of them to conduct parents' training sessions in the *Family Math* activities at their respective schools in the local community.

Since the launch of the project in 2009, more than 150 primary schools from predominately rural communities in the Free State, Northern Cape, Eastern Cape and Gauteng Provinces were actively involved in doing *Family Math* and *Family Science* activities on a regular basis in the classroom. This amounts to 255 teachers, 12 942 learners and 7512 parents that benefit from the project activities.

One of the key elements of the success of the project is the fact that the Science-for-the-



Future material centre also manufactures and issues the participating teachers with sufficient activity material like manipulatives and other activity material to be utilised in the classroom and during parents' training sessions.

As part of the service-learning component of their ENC (Elementary Natural Sciences), DNU (Numeracy Education), DLS (Life Skills), MTBI (Intermediate Basic Mathematics) and ECM (Early Childhood Numeracy) modules, student educators from the Faculty of Education (Bloemfontein and Qwaqwa campuses) are being exposed to non-formal *Family Math & Family Science* training sessions

and then expected to facilitate Maths and Science activities with learners at schools in the community as part of Service Learning. They are accompanied and assessed by the facilitators from *Science-for-the-Future*. ■

NEW APPOINTMENTS

A warm welcome to all the new members of the South Campus team!



Ms DM Pietersen
Material Centre



Ms RI Sesing
IDEAS LAB



Ms C Schrader
Operations and Support



Ms C Jansen
Operations and Support



Mr LM Mathe
Material Centre



Ms LB Britz
Curriculum Design and Development



Ms N Oosthuysen
Operations and Support: IT



Ms Jean Grundling
Academic Head



Ms E van Staden
Access with Success