

CONCILIO

South Campus Newsletter
October 2019

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



**American Fulbright Specialist
visits UFS to share ODL insights
with South Campus**



American Fulbright Specialist visits UFS to share ODL insights with South Campus

By Eugene Seegers

What brings an accomplished professor all the way from Boone, North Carolina, to the heart of the Free State? None other than our very own (and clearly legendary!) Open Distance Learning (ODL) hub on the UFS South Campus. Prof Barbara Howard from the Appalachian State University (ASU) in the USA took time out from her whirlwind visit to tell Concilio how this all came about.

A perfect match

Fulbright Specialists are appointed by the US State Department for a period of three years after a rigorous application process (see sidebar for more information). The specialist then has a choice of programme or country that has applied for assistance from such a subject-matter expert. According to Dr Lynette Jacobs, who coordinated this visit, the link between Prof Barbara's skillset and experience versus the needs of the South Campus was a "match made in heaven" from the start. Prof Howard likens her visit to that of a gardener: "I'm just planting seeds," she says with a smile, "it's up to them to go ahead and grow the flowers."

Prof Howard is an Open Distance Learning aficionado and an experienced educator and administrator, with over three decades in the sector. She says, "I am a teacher first and foremost. I have always had a curious mind, so I have delved into how to make things better. Curiosity and a desire to make an impact has always motivated me."

She also has immense appreciation for what the South Campus is achieving. "The work that is being done on this campus will make the biggest difference in the future. They are reaching students who otherwise wouldn't make it to university."

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I've been extremely impressed by each of the units here; they are doing phenomenal work, and it's been a pleasure to work with them."

Of her experience with South Campus colleagues, she adds, "I became immersed in South Africa. My hosts ensured that I had a rich view of not only the country's physical landscape, but their history and current educational/social issues as well. In the three weeks I was here, I listened to their voices, and I saw their world. This will form a solid foundation for meaningful collaboration in the years ahead."

Pipeline projects

Although Prof Howard will not be able to visit South Africa again during her time as Fulbright Specialist, this is not the end of the road for her relationship with the UFS. In answer to the question "What next?" she fires off a list of projects she would like to accomplish. She mentions one example, "My visits to the partner schools in Thaba Nchu, and Sterkspruit in the Eastern Cape, entailed talking to the principals and visiting classes. I plan to establish an online network of American and South African principals to share experiences and ideas."

She also hints at yet another project that is still waiting in the wings — one that will engender a love for reading in primary school learners in disadvantaged communities. If this comes to fruition, we may well see a lot more of this earnest adviser and passionate education administrator.

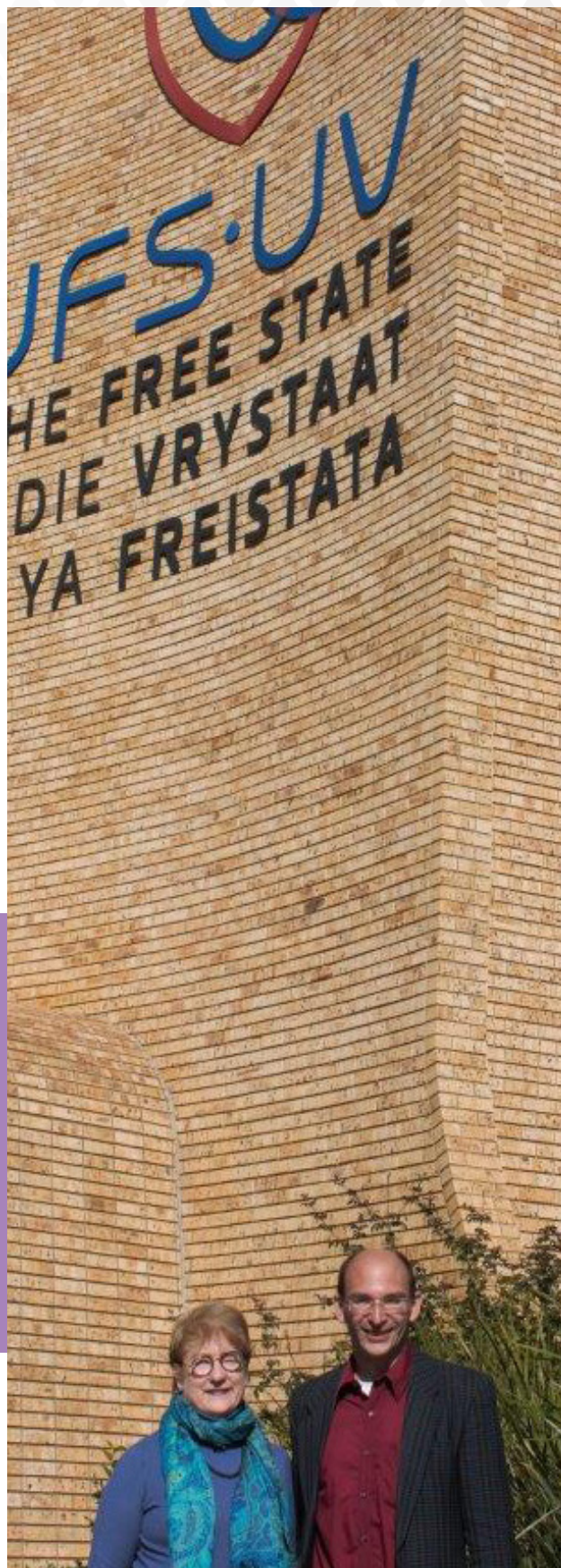
What's the difference between a Fulbright Scholar and a Fulbright Specialist?

- Limited time of tenure as specialist and limited time on visit.
- Intensive application by specialist as well as host institution to be accepted by US State Dept. Once accepted, the specialist has a choice of various applications from hosts.
- Fulbright Scholars visit international institutions to study further.
- Only 7% of those who apply, are awarded Specialist status.

Caption and photo credit:

Prof Barbara Howard (ASU) with Dr Lynette Jacobs, Senior Lecturer and Researcher on the South Campus. The right hand side is Prof Barbara Howard, and Mr Cornelius Hagenmeier Position: Director Department: International Office.

Photo: Supplied



PUBLIC HOLIDAYS 2019

1 January **New Year's Day**
 21 March **Human Rights Day**
 19 April **Good Friday**
 22 April **Family Day**
 27 April **Freedom Day**

1 May **Workers' Day**
 16 June **Youth Day**
 17 June **Public Holiday**
 9 August **National Women's Day**

24 September **Heritage Day**
 16 December **Day of Reconciliation**
 25 December **Christmas Day**
 26 December **Day of Goodwill**



New South Campus SRC Members

By Eugene Seegers

The March SRC elective-portfolio elections on the South Campus were successfully concluded on Friday 29 March 2019. A total of 688 ballots were issued — an increase of 419 compared to the August 2018 South Campus elections. This just goes to show how engaged and involved students are on this campus! The following candidates were elected:

- President: Phehellang Ralejoe
- Treasurer: Sthembiso Khoza
- Policy and Transformation: Casles Phasha
- Commuter Students: Sthembele Kunene

These new members will join the SRC candidates who were elected during the August leg of the South Campus SRC elective-portfolio elections:

- Deputy President: Nomathemba Pakade
- Secretary: Mvuyo Madlala
- Student Development and First-Generation Students: Allistaire Abrahams





Newly elected President, Phehellang Ralejoe, says on behalf of the new SRC structure: “Steady and gradual growth is one of the biggest visions that we have for the South Campus. The campus is relatively small, ... making it a calmer and more conducive environment for teaching and learning. Our vision is to see the campus moving forward, while striving for excellence in all its respective codes.” In addition, he emphasises that adequate facilities on campus “for the convenience of students is also an important goal”.

Phehellang also highlighted that the SRC is working hard as a team, striving to advocate and be a voice for the voiceless in order to acquire much-needed basic facilities for the students. He adds, “We also wish to accomplish a trusted space within the South Campus SRC that will allow students to express academic, financial, personal or any other concerns they may have, with the confidence that such concerns will be given thorough attention and be properly addressed.”

In conclusion, Phehellang says: “We envisage a South Campus that is harmonious and consistently working hard to integrate a warm and strong sense of belonging and identity for all the stakeholders involved. We strongly believe that we can succeed together and achieve these accomplishments.”

Caption and photo credit

Four additional representatives were elected to the South Campus SRC on 26 March 2019. From left to right are: Phehellang Ralejoe, Nomathemba Pakade, Mvuyo Madlala, Allistaire Abrahams, Sthembiso Khoza, Casles Phasha, and Sthembele Kunene.

Photo: Johan Roux



“We envisage a South Campus that is harmonious and consistently working hard to integrate a warm and strong sense of belonging and identity for all the stakeholders involved.” — Phehellang Ralejoe, new South Campus SRC President.



South Campus SRC Details

Name	Portfolio	E-mail	Cell
Phehellang Ralejoe	President	ralejoephehellang@gmail.com	078 262 5151
Nomathemba Pakade	Deputy President	PakadeN@ufs.ac.za	081 381 8663
Mvuyo Madlala	Secretary	MadlalaMS@ufs.ac.za	072 436 4596
Sthembiso Khoza	Treasurer	sk.khoza@gmail.com	076 703 8920
Casles Phasha	Policy and Transformation	ndivuhophasha@gmail.com	076 362 8208
Allistaire Abrahams	Student Development and First-Generation Students	AbrahamsAM@ufs.ac.za	073 395 3323
Sthembele Kunene	Commuter Students	Lisaaakuneneh@gmail.com	078 358 7521

New HOD of SC Formal Programmes



By Nelia Oosthuysen | Eugene Seegers

Fred Mudavanhu is a UFS stalwart: He started his career as a computer lab assistant on the Bloemfontein Campus and moved on to become a lecturer on the Qwaqwa Campus in 2006, after obtaining his degree in Information Technology. Fred's ambitions have driven him on, though; from 2009 to 2014, he was Head of the Department of Computer Science, and subsequently Head of the Centre for Teaching on the Qwaqwa Campus (from 2014 to 2019). *Concilio* had a chat with this statuesque, brilliant-minded gentleman to find out what makes him tick.

When were you appointed?

I was appointed as the Head of Formal Programmes for the South Campus on 1 April 2019.

What made this position attractive to you?

When I first saw the advertisement for the post, it was as if it was speaking directly to me. It matched my passion and all my expertise; that is, online learning, teaching and learning, distance learning, and educational technologies. I was excited that I could now put my knowledge of andragogy and heutagogy to the test. I have been training academics on the latter 'gogys' for a long time, and the South Campus Open Distance Learning presented me with the opportunity to infuse it into practice. Furthermore, I saw the post as a growth pathway in my development as a leader, and as a growth pathway in terms of the knowledge directly linked to my doctoral studies. Finally, distance learning offers one the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of a wider audience than with on-campus classes. This made the post a perfect fit, since my life motto is 'Make a difference'.

What is your vision for Formal Programmes on the South Campus?

To be a distance- and online-learning leader among regional dual-mode institutions by 2030.

What do you like to do outside your work environment?

Coming from Qwaqwa, I must say that I am enjoying the city life. Everything you need is a few minutes away, and basic services are provided efficiently. I also like the fact that I will now be able to watch rugby, soccer, and cricket matches at the stadiums—something I have always hoped for. The city opens up your mind, and one never gets bored.

Caption and photo credit

Fred Mudavanhu, the new HOD of Formal Programmes on the South Campus.

Photo: Charl Devenish

Freducare: <http://freducare.co.za/about-2/>

“When I saw the advertisement for the post... it was as if it was speaking directly to me.”

Knitting to keep children warm



By Erika Kruger

Staff members linked to the research division on the South Campus for Open Distance Learning took to needles and wool for the Masikhule NGO's 67 Minutes for Mandela Day project, Cast on 4 Kids.

They have been knitting many multi-coloured squares over the past year. These will be sewn into blankets to keep children, who attend early childhood development centres (such as crèches) in impoverished communities, warm.

One of the members of the South Campus knitting group, Nelia Oosthuysen, said, "We hope to expand the project and involve more colleagues on campus in the coming year."

She added that some of the gentlemen on the South Campus are already part of the knitting crew, while others have intrepidly ventured into uncharted waters and learnt basic knitting techniques. "This is not only a community-service project, but also a very effective destressing method," said Oosthuysen.

Caption and photo credit

Colourful blankets knitted by industrious staff on the UFS South Campus in Bloemfontein for the Masikhule Cast on 4 Kids NGO.

Photo: Martin van Niekerk

Self-published author launches her second book in South Campus library

By Eugene Seegers

Self-published author Angelina de Wee does not allow obstacles to stand in her way. When no-one wanted to publish her writings in Sesotho, she took it into her own hands, creating De Wee Productions in order to publish her very first book. Since then, Angelina has written another Sesotho novel, *Ha Ke Batle Mofo Ke Batla Morena* (*I Don't Want A Man, I Want A King*), which she also launched on the UFS South Campus.

Angie often describes herself as "a mother of one, but mentor of many." Through her printing and production



company, she promotes Sesotho writing as well as other local languages. She also made use of the opportunity at this book launch to educate people about the publication process.

Her advice for aspiring writers? "Keep a notebook and pen nearby; you never know when inspiration will come from an everyday happening. Even during traumatic events, jot your thoughts down. Your words or experiences may well be an inspiration to someone."

Caption and photo credit

Author Angelina de Wee at the launch of her second Sesotho book, which deals with issues of abusive relationships and other modern social themes.

Photo: Eugene Seegers



First-year Orientation in the Neville Alexander Library, UFS

By Lianda Coetzer

The University of the Free State Library and Information Services forms an integral part of students' academic success; therefore, it is very important to welcome each first-year student with great enthusiasm. During the library orientation sessions in the Neville Alexander library on the UFS South Campus, we welcome students with a short video on the library's services, explain the library's home page and how to access the electronic resources, followed by a library tour. Each session ends with a short quiz and a goody bag up for grabs!

The quiz creates an exciting vibe among the students, and they leave the orientation session with new knowledge and a realisation that the library will be the hub of knowledge creation and collaboration.

Campus Librarian: Neville Alexander Library, South Campus

World Read Aloud Day



By Lianda Coetzer

World Read Aloud Day is an annual highlight for the Neville Alexander Library. As academic librarians, this day provides us the opportunity to engage with the wider community and share our love for reading. As reading aloud can contribute to building a strong language foundation, the staff of the Neville Alexander Library visited the ABC Nursery School at Free State Care in Action in Bloemfontein. The children were entertained with interactive storytelling where they had to identify different colours in the storybook; they also listened to stories read to them by Ayanda Zulu (student assistant) and Lianda Coetzer (South Campus Librarian). A joyous story hour ended with a lucky packet and promises to return with more stories during the course of the year.

Campus Librarian: Neville Alexander Library

A Love for the Cause



SPP mentors Mary Ntlhabo, Wilma Bester and Monique Duvenhage.

Photo: Charl Devenish

By Eugene Seegers

On a frosty winter morning, a small rented vehicle makes its way from Bloemfontein to Botshabelo, 45 kilometres east of the city. The occupants are mostly older, Afrikaans-speaking teachers and school-management team (SMT) members heading into this sprawling settlement. These extraordinary individuals are the mentors of the Schools Partnership Project (SPP), which operates from the UFS South Campus.

What is the SPP?

The goal of the SPP is to break the cycle of poverty in low-income, previously disadvantaged communities, such as those in Botshabelo and Thaba Nchu. This is accomplished through targeted interventions by mentors who assist teachers and SMT members in under-performing schools to excel at their core functions. In turn, academically deserving students are helped to make sufficient advancement in order to access and complete their tertiary education. Once these graduates enter the workforce, they are able to plough back into their communities, thereby breaking the cycle of poverty.

The initiative is entirely funded by corporate social-

investment initiatives from companies such as Old Mutual and Sasol, to name a few. However, budget cuts in recent years have whittled the number of mentors down to only a handful in the Free State, and just two in the Sterkspruit region of the Eastern Cape.

SPP mentors make the trip to either Botshabelo or Thaba Nchu every Monday through Thursday during school terms, visiting nine schools and travelling an average of around 400 kilometres each week. In recent months, the SPP has sought additional funding to obtain proper 4x4s or SUVs, since some of the rutted tracks over which they must rattle in their rental vehicle are virtually impassable. On Fridays and during school holidays, the mentors set up new classroom content and create teaching resources to be used in project schools and beyond.

Challenges in and challenging the system

This is by no means a cushy job. There are a myriad challenges, from physical hurdles to those less tangible, such as the sense of defeat many learners have come to adopt, or the lack of discipline in classrooms that gets teachers down, or even the uncertainty the mentors themselves experience due to the fickle nature of their year-to-year employment.

One example cited as a case study, is that of Ms M*. Despite her best efforts at positivity, learners in her class did not deem education to be a vital part of a successful life. The negative outlook of these Grade 8 and 9 learners has made the teaching and learning environment quite unbearable.

Yet Ms M, and the mentor assigned to her, did not lose hope. In fact, their approach centred around this key characteristic. Firstly, they focused on good classroom-management principles; second, on learners who took good notes and completed their homework; third, to speak only in a positive way, even when addressing negative behaviour; and finally, to reward good behaviour while removing focus from troublemakers.

The first Maths lesson was spent on dealing with issues and laying down the new rules. Every time the mentor returned to the school, she would tell the learners a motivational story. Each term, Ms M rewarded the top learners with a gift pack that included a calculator, pens, and other special gifts. Learners who were able to improve their marks by 20% were not left out, also receiving rewards and recognition. In time, the morale of the students started to change; they were smiling, ready to learn, completed their homework, addressed the teacher with respect, and exhibited a sense of pride in their work.

The why behind it all

Why do these educators choose to be mentors? What is their motivation to surpass insurmountable odds with courage and perseverance? We spoke to three of the indefatigable women who make up the team of mentors to find out.

Monique Duvenhage, the youngest mentor at 32, says: "I believe it is a calling (as clichéd as that might sound). I started my journey studying Chemical Engineering, but towards the end of my studies, I realised that my heart beats for the education of South Africa; I knew I had what it takes to make a difference in the lives of young children and teachers. So, I completed a PGCE (Postgraduate Certificate in Education) and started my teaching career in Cape Town. I loved every second of teaching, but I knew I needed to do something more to impact a greater audience, specifically in underprivileged communities. I started working on a proposal to pitch at universities, where I would run programmes to uplift

people and positively impact on the dire situation of education in South Africa (without knowing about the work the SPP does). The aforementioned 'coincidence' was confirmation that the Lord had planted the seed of mentoring in my heart long before I became a mentor.

Wilma Bester, a veteran teacher and mentor who started coaching fellow learners in Maths while still in high school, says: "Since I can remember, I wanted to become a Mathematics teacher. I soon realised that not everyone is born mathematically inclined, but that Maths can be made easy. It all depends on the one who explains it. I went to the University of Pretoria and completed my BAEd degree, with Mathematics as one of my teaching subjects. When I started with a family, I stopped teaching, but did my BEd (Hons) and continued taking in learners for extra Maths tuition. When my children started school, I returned to teach FET Maths. In total, I taught Maths for 30 years and gave extra Maths lessons to learners struggling with the subject for 17 years.

I believe that all my years of teaching allowed me to develop methods to help others with this wonderful subject and prepared me for the mentoring position I now occupy. Although it gives me so much joy to be able to help teachers and learners to love, enjoy, and really understand the subject, I receive much more out of the SPP than I ever put into it. The gratitude and growth of individual teachers who I support, means more than I could have foreseen!

Mary Ntlhabo, subject-matter specialist in English and reading advocate, had this to say: "While I was a teacher in Qwaqwa, I had a learning facilitator who made me feel comfortable to talk or ask about content-related matters. Having someone I could talk to, meant that I would go to class thoroughly prepared. Secondly, being a mentor gives me the opportunity to share my experience and support many teachers according to their actual needs, not simply what I think they need. We develop a friendly and trustworthy relationship with teachers and are able to share working strategies with other schools. Lastly, we are able to expose learners and teachers to opportunities at the university. For example, we had 20 learners that attended the 'Take A Child to Work' initiative in collaboration with the Sasol Library on the Bloemfontein Campus."

Conclusion:

It is clear that these hardworking mentor teachers are not only proud of what they do, but proud of 'their' teachers and learners. As we moved from school to school, they were all eager to point out the great strides that a particular teacher, or in some cases an entire school, has achieved. With continued funding, and most importantly — hope — this initiative will continue to make a significant impact in the communities it serves.

***Not her real name; withheld in accordance with POPIA.**

What is the Schools Partnership Project (SPP)?

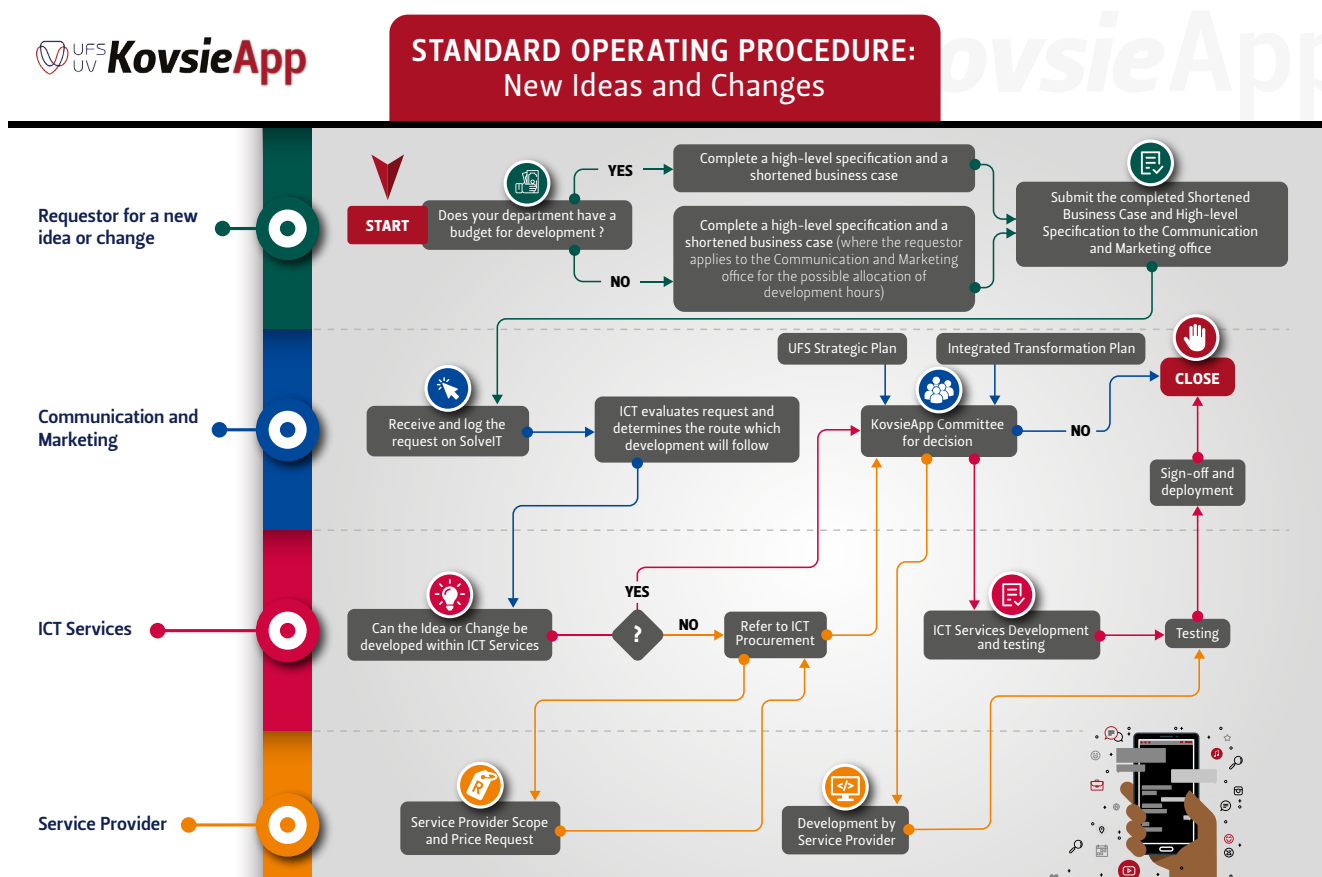
Initiated in 2012, the Schools Partnership Project (SPP) aims to contribute to better-performing schools in the basic education sector. Since its inception, the SPP has set itself the goal of meaningful change in the communities where it operates. The project is housed on and managed from our South Campus in Bloemfontein and is funded year-to-year by Corporate Social Investment (CSI). Mentors are appointed to work with teachers, principals, and other members of the school management team (SMT) in specific schools in the Free State and parts of the Eastern Cape. Mentors, for instance, work with teachers to strengthen their teaching skills and support them in the introduction of technology in the classroom.

The goal of the SPP is to contribute to breaking the cycle of poverty in low-income, previously-disadvantaged communities, such as those in Botshabelo and Thaba 'Nchu. This is accomplished through targeted interventions by mentors, who mentor and support teachers and SMT members

in under-performing schools to excel at their core functions. In turn, academically deserving students are helped to make sufficient progress in order to access and complete their tertiary education. Once these graduates enter the workforce, they are able to plough back into their communities. We have seen a significant growth in the number of students entering the UFS from schools in this project.

The initiative is entirely funded by Corporate Social Investment initiatives, including companies such as Old Mutual and Sasol, to name a few. Without these supportive partners, the project would not be possible.

SPP mentors make the trip to the different school clusters every Monday through Thursday during school terms, visiting schools and travelling an average of around 400 km each week. On Fridays and during school holidays, the mentors draw up new classroom content and create teaching resources to be used in project schools and beyond.



By Eugene Seegers

So, you've downloaded the new KovsieApp and played around with it on your mobile device. But what can you do if you have a suggestion for a change or new functionality?

The Department of Communication and Marketing, in collaboration with ICT Services, has developed a Standard Operating Procedure document to guide staff through this process. View the details in this

infographic

Refer to this document when you need to find out how to submit suggestions for new functionality or changes to the KovsieApp.

Former learners from SPP schools graduate

By Coretha van den Heever

The aim of the Schools Partnership Project (SPP) is to turn ineffective schools into schools with excellent matric pass rates, especially in Mathematics and Physical Science. In this way, the UFS also strives to increase the number and quality of first-year bachelor's students from these schools. Seventy-eight primary, intermediate, and secondary township schools formed part of the UFS SPP between 2012 and 2018.

The success of the project in terms of hope, confidence, self-esteem, discipline, and responsibility cannot always be measured in statistics. Some of the township learners from the project schools seized the opportunities created for them with both hands. They realised that they don't have to be bound to the life of a second-rate citizen of this country. Because of the involvement of the SPP in the project schools, 789 former township learners studied at the UFS in 2018.

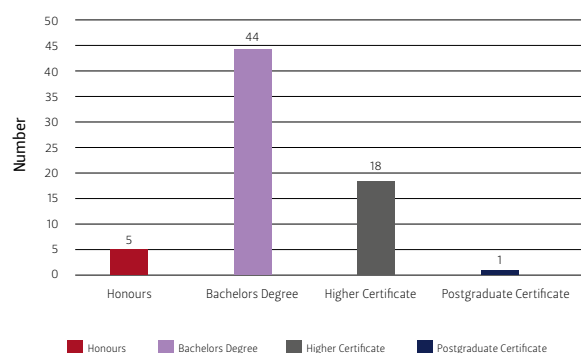
During the April 2019 graduation ceremonies, 68 former learners of project schools received their degrees or certificates. France Motheo, a former learner at Senakangwedi Secondary School, obtained a Bachelor of Science majoring in Genetics and Physiology. "I'll remain forever grateful for the opportunities that the programme opened up for me," he said.

Another 96 first-year students from project schools where the SPP was involved in 2018, registered at the UFS in 2019. It is hoped that many more of these students will obtain qualifications to escape their legacy of past inequalities and to contribute to the creation of a better South Africa.

Lehlohonolo Makoloane, who completed a BSc majoring in Physics and Engineering, with HS van der Walt, Head of the UFS Schools Partnership Project.



The number of former learners from project schools obtaining honours or bachelor's degrees, higher certificates, and postgraduate certificates in April 2019



Higher Certificate graduation data

2017 Cohort			2018 Cohort		
Option	Number	Distinction	Option	Number	Distinction
Humanities	411	73	Humanities	413	38
EMS: Commerce route	32	7	EMS: Commerce route	31	3
EMS: Administration route	52	4	EMS: Administration route	77	2
	495	84		521	43



South Campus Cafeteria is where the 'Buzz' happens



By Rudi Maartens

We at Buzz cafeteria have ten years' experience in the catering and decor industry. It feels unfair to single myself out as the spokesperson or representative of Buzz Cafeteria, (although I am that person) since Buzz really is a conglomeration of many decent, hardworking, and passionate Free Staters. And we have worked extremely, extremely hard to reach this point in our lives.

This may sound cliché, as you have heard it all before, but we really are committed to providing an exceptional service to the South Campus staff and students. Hopefully some of you have already noticed some of the positive changes that have already been made to the Cafeteria, or perhaps you have experienced the quality of our cooked meals.

Pretty soon, our convenience store will also be up and running, where we will strive to provide supermarket items and goods at cheaper prices than some well-known retailers!

Our dream is that we will not be seen as an alternative to other take-away shops and supermarkets, but that they will be an alternative to us. We want to make Buzz Cafeteria and Convenience Store part of **your** daily routine.

Lastly, a huge thanks to my *alma mater*, the University of the Free State, in particular Quintin Koetaan, for giving us this opportunity. Mr Koetaan and his team went out of their way and applied themselves in a truly unique manner to make sure that students will be the overall winners in the end.

We hope that in the future, students and staff will have fond memories of their awesome times on campus while studying, priding themselves in being associated with the University of the Free State.

Students and staff members are very welcome to send any suggestions via email to slightlynutty@gmail.com or to speak to any of our friendly employees.

Photo credit
Clifford Mokhoke



First academic book launch on South Campus



By Eugene Seegers

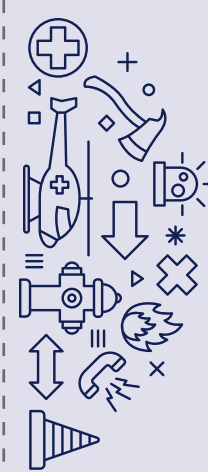
The South Campus recently celebrated a unique milestone: the campus's first academic book launch – and a double book launch at that! Prof Corene de Wet wrote a chapter for an international publication, *International Perspectives on Maladministration in Education: Theories, Research, and Critiques*. She says the book deals with issues that are experienced at every toxic institution, not only education-related ones. Her chapter is titled 'Workplace bullying in schools: An ecological perspective sheds light on the bullying of schoolteachers by their principals'.

The second book was compiled and edited by Prof Charl Wolhuter (NWU), titled *Raising the Impact of Education Research in Africa*. Several South Campus colleagues contributed chapters to this book.

Caption and photo credit

Dr Lynette Jacobs, Prof Charl Wolhuter, and Prof Corene de Wet on the South Campus before the dual book launch.

Photo: Eugene Seegers



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Qwaqwa Campus
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Latest innovation at South Campus IDEAS Lab...

By Isabella du Preez

A recent collaboration between UFS and CUT resulted in an exciting opportunity for non-native Sesotho speaking staff to learn how to speak this indigenous language. With the help of dedicated personnel at each institution, IDEAS Lab designed and developed a tailor-made artefact to teach and learn Sesotho. It is unique in that it uses both auditory and visual components as well as offer a great deal of interaction with the student. It is also very authentic as it makes use of everyday situations where one would find oneself in, for example, at a petrol station; on campus and at the doctor. Remember to look out for the exciting launch and enrol!

