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Newsletter of the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice

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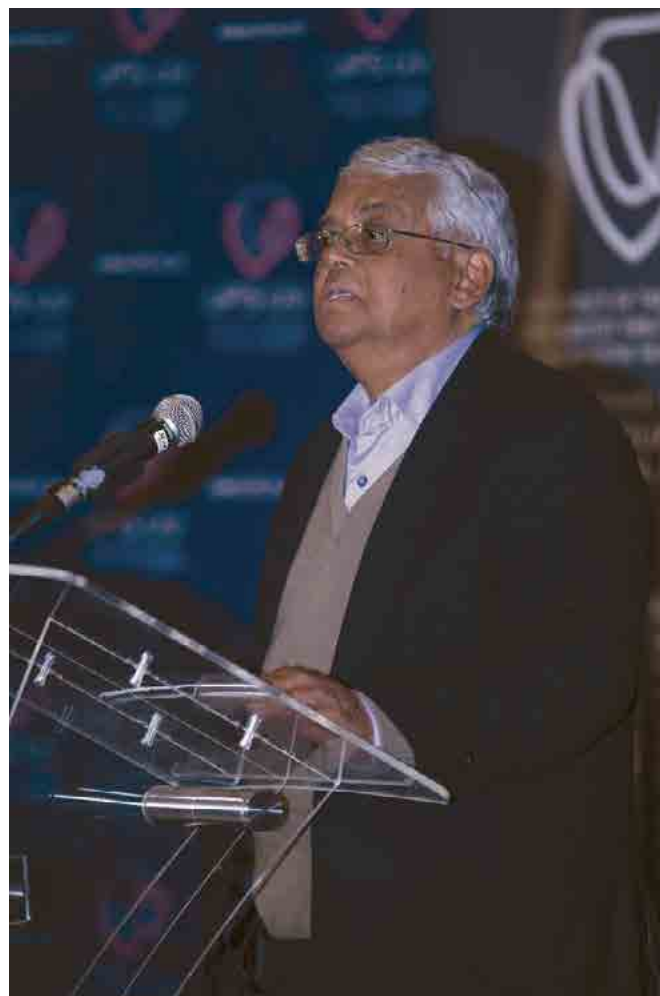
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INSTITUTE FOR
RECONCILIATION
AND SOCIAL JUSTICE
INSTITUUT VIR
VERSOENING EN
SOSIALE GERECHTIGHEID

THE INSTITUTE MARKS ITS **5TH ANNIVERSARY**

The Institute marked its fifth anniversary with a function on 27 July 2016 in the Reitz Hall of the Centenary Complex on the Bloemfontein Campus of the University of the Free State (UFS). In reflecting on how the Institute came into being during her opening remarks, Prof. Lis Lange remarked that the Institute has always been “dedicated to transformation” and that for her, “the greatest success of the Institute, besides publications and local and international networks, is the fact that something that started in the margins is being asked today to come closer to the centre, to play a larger role in the structural transformation of the university”. Dr John Samuel described the growth of the Institute since he was tasked to set it up in 2010, and how it is now an established, important institutional role player with national and international footprints. Earlier that day, the Advisory Board, chaired by Prof. Jonathan Jansen, hosted their annual meeting. A new book was also launched, co-authored by JC van der Merwe and Dionne van Reenen. It is titled *Transformation and Legitimation in Post-Apartheid Universities: Reading Discourses from “Reitz”*. The evening function featured not only reflections on the Institute, but a four-member panel discussion of the book, as well as the function and state of higher education in 2016. Read more about this on page 5.



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Gender matters

The Institute was tasked by the Rectorate to facilitate the establishment of a Gender and Sexual Equity Office (GSE) at the UFS. Once initial discussions were underway with all relevant stakeholders, Zane Thela (Programme Coordinator from the GSE) and Dionne van Reenen (researcher from the Institute) began flagging numerous sex- and gender-related disputes on campus, including women's issues, LGBT+ topics, sexual harassment and problems of misconduct, as well as various operational concerns regarding gender discrimination and equality. The GSE office is now up and running at the Mabaleng building and will be working hand-in-hand with the Institute staff, the Student Discipline and Mediation Unit at the UFS Law Clinic, the Centre for Human Rights, Student Affairs, Human Resources, Student Associations,

Representatives from the SRC, Counselling Services, Security Services, Physical Resources, Health and Wellness and Housing and Residence Affairs. Following initial student meetings, the first and most pressing task involved Zane Thela, Dionne van Reenen and Inez Bezuidenhout from the UFS Law Clinic, working closely on drafting a Sexual Harassment, Misconduct and Violence Policy under the Office of the Dean of Student Affairs. This policy is in the process of being finalised in terms of legal compliance and will go through the usual rounds of public consultation prior to serving before Council. This policy will function in tandem with the Anti-Discrimination Policy being finalized under the Office of the Dean of Student Affairs.

Criminalizing *hate speech*



The South African Human Rights Commission, in partnership with the Institute, hosted a dialogue on racism at the UFS on 26 August 2016. The aim of the dialogue was to explain the work of the Equality Court, discuss the plans to criminalise racism and hate speech and to develop mechanisms and strategies to combat racism. From left to right: Buang Jones (SAHRC) Adv Macloni Seithaeko-Setlogelo (DOJ&CD), JC Van der Merwe, Sikhululekile Lucawa, Melissa Taljaard and Ernst Roets (AfriForum).

Cultural diplomacy and social cohesion

The Institute collaborated with multiple stakeholders on the Qwaqwa campus to organise a cultural event in line with the Heritage Day celebrations. The event was organised with the theme of cultural diplomacy and social cohesion, in order to challenge cultural barriers and construct bridges of inclusion, tolerance and belonging. To this end, two traditional leaders were invited to participate in a panel discussion, namely Morena Ntsane Mopeli and Prince Afrika Zulu of the Onkwени Royal House. Morena Mopeli told the audience that, "peace starts from within the individual and must be allowed to spread from one individual to the rest of the society". Prince Afrika Zulu reiterated the importance of inclusion, and narrated the history of the Zulu kingdom, placing emphasis on how it was based on inclusion and social cohesion.



Front: Morena Ntsane Mopeli and Prince Afrika Zulu. Back: Dulcie Malimabe (Student Development Officer) and Selloane Phofolo (Social Worker).



Centre for *Global Education*

On 23 August 2016, the Institute once again hosted students from the United States who were participating in the Study Abroad Programme of the Centre for Global Education. These students visited the UFS on their way to Cape Town and Windhoek, where they would spend time studying social justice questions. The day began with a tour of the campus and a visit to the library where the students attended the launch of the late Stephen Ellis's book, *This Present Darkness*, facilitated by Prof. Jonathan Jansen. This was followed by a working lunch at the Institute, discussing shared experiences of racism and the challenges students face concerning matters of social justice.

Human rights in residences

On 7 September 2016 JC Van der Merwe and Leon Wessels addressed the Armentum Prestige Evening in the Centenary Complex. Van der Merwe spoke on "Human rights and its violations in past residence cultures - ideas for new leaders", while Wessels shared his ideas on "Human rights and its violations - a national perspective from the Centre for Human Rights".



Back: Charity Morrison (CUADS: Senior Officer), Thato Block (Occupational Health and Safety from UFS Grounds & Estates), Martie Miranda (Head of CUADS), Qobo Ningiza (Visiting Deaf UCT Law student), Louzanne Coetzee (Institute). Front: Dimpho Litseka (CUADS student), Lize Botha (CUADS: Liaison Officer), Stephenson Khala (CUADS student)

DRAM *dialogue*

In 2016, the Institute and the Centre for Universal Access and Disability Support (CUADS) joined forces in raising awareness and implementing programmes with regards to disability, social justice and transformation on the Bloemfontein campus. Strengthening the existing programmes and support measures for students and staff living with disabilities, within the transformation framework, is a key objective of this partnership. In celebrating Disability Rights Awareness Month (DRAM), a dialogue was hosted by the Institute and CUADS to raise further awareness and to collaborate with the UFS Grounds and Estate Planning Division concerning the need for maintaining continued critical support of disability needs, in terms of infrastructure and in working towards the best possible practice model, which could be submitted to the DHET. JC van der Merwe and Martie Miranda explained how the Institute and CUADS are working together on issues of disability awareness and transformation, after which Louzanne Coetzee facilitated a discussion about the challenges which students and staff with disabilities are still facing on campus, in terms of infrastructure. The dialogue took place on 2 December 2016.

PROTESTS

During the second half of 2016, the UFS continued to experience sporadic student and worker protest actions, with the associated disruptions to both its academic and administrative programmes. The Institute continued to play a significant role during the protests, especially on the Bloemfontein campus. Institute staff were present at all times, monitoring the situation and providing logistical support where necessary. The rectorate was notified of developments and student leaders were constantly engaged. On request of Justice Johann Van der Westhuizen, who headed the investigation into the Shimla Park incident during the February protests, JC Van der Merwe became involved in the work of the commission in an advisory capacity. The independent panel submitted its report, titled "People, Not Stones", to Council in November 2016.



Sun, Dawn and Dusk

The Sun, Dawn and Dusk dance production was staged at the Vrystaat Arts Festival with the support of the Institute. Four performances took place from 11 to 14 July 2016 on the Vryng. The dancers involved were Chakwanda Mahongo, a youth from the !Xun San community outside Kimberley, and Tristan Coetzee-Nel, a young man of Griqua descent. Even as the relatively simple creation story of Dawn and Dusk was translated into an easy-to-follow dance production, the fact that it is a story that had been recorded in the 1870's from !Xam speakers, of whom //Kabbo was the most prolific storyteller, makes it something exceptional. As part of a growing body of appreciative art inspired by the recordings, the dance production remains faithful to the spirit within which the !Xam speakers recorded their tales; a bulwark against extinction. Thanks to Willy Nel (writer and researcher) and Angelo Mockie (choreographer), this specific story is now packaged in an art form, dance, which is a medium through which intergenerational dialogue is easily facilitated, as shown during the Desert Festival, which was hosted by the #Khomani San of the Kalahari in September 2016.

#KnowCulture

The F1 Leadership for Change Programme and the Institute collaborated in the launch of the #KnowCulture campaign, as a mechanism with which to combat ethnicism, homophobia, and similar unfair discriminations among the students on the Qwaqwa campus. On 11 August 2016, 80 guests participated in a dialogue for strategic planning and implementation of an inclusive “Kovsie Q” culture for the Qwaqwa campus. This initiative serves to identify mechanisms with which to eradicate ethnicism and promote solidarity between the diversities in the student populace, which will allow for student interaction and will enable better integration between first year and senior students. A brief history of the campus afforded the audience a sense of background understanding and, in light of such contextual information, the dialogue began with a view to paving a way forward for the Qwaqwa campus and its students.

Brotherhood with no Limits



Tshepang Mahlatsi, Zane Thela, Dionne van Reenen, Thierry Luescher and Galeletsang Soato

On 19 September 2016, House Tswelopele hosted a panel discussion, “Brotherhood with no Limits”, highlighting concerns affecting the LGBT+ community, which has too often been on the receiving end of ignorance, undue criticism, hate speech and bigotry. The panel, which consisted of staff members and students, opened the discussion to everyone on campus. On the panel was Zane Thela, Programme Coordinator: Gender and Sexual Equity Office: Student Affairs; Dionne van Reenen, IRSJ; Dr Thierry Luescher, Assistant Director, Directorate for Institutional Research and Academic Planning, and Tshepang Mahlatsi, former Prime of Tswelopele, who stated: “The message that we were putting across was simple. We as a house cannot allow society to define our own brothers for us. The responsibility of students and student leaders was to stand in solidarity”. He further commented: “It was not fair that in the 21st century people were still fighting to be recognised for who they were and as whom they choose to identify”. The panel discussion also encouraged other residences that still do not allow such talks to take place in a safe environment, to embrace such initiatives. During the course of the afternoon, the LGBT+ flag was raised outside the residence in solidarity.

Reading discourses from “Reitz”

As part of the official programme of the Vrystaat Kunstefees on 12 July 2016, Ruda Landman interviewed authors JC Van der Merwe and Dionne Van Reenen on their book entitled: *Transformation and legitimisation in post-apartheid universities: Reading discourses from “Reitz”* (Sun Press 2016). Van der Merwe joined the discussion from India via Skype].



Gender inclusive bathrooms

The Institute played a central role in the establishment of the first gender inclusive bathrooms at the UFS. Various stakeholders broadly agreed that the current availability of male and female bathrooms only is not serving the needs of individuals who are gendered or identify differently to that binary and, thus, are not comfortable using either facility. The vast majority of stakeholders were in agreement that the university would not want to exclude, discriminate or force such identifications, especially if individuals are not ready or prepared to do so. This initiative would encourage further realisation of constitutional rights for all and respect for the dignity of members concerned. It was agreed that new buildings would continue to be built according to municipal regulations, with “male”, “female” and gender inclusive bathroom options. In existing buildings, where a gender inclusive bathroom can be re-designated, this will be carried out. In existing buildings, where this option is unavailable due to spatial/building constraints, those requiring gender inclusive bathroom facilities (for example,

gender non-conforming individuals) will now enjoy shared access to the bathrooms reserved for persons living with disabilities which are gender inclusive at present. Appropriate signs will be used to demarcate these facilities. In residences and other buildings that have “guest” bathrooms, these will be re-designated as gender inclusive.



Dr Thierry Luescher at the gender inclusive bathroom in the Main Building]

ARNSA launch NC



On 31 August 2016 the Anti-Racism Network of South Africa (ARNSA) had its provincial launch in the Northern Cape. The Institute partnered with ARNSA to host the event in the Mittah Seperepere Convention Centre in Kimberley. JC van der Merwe gave the opening address which was followed by a panel discussion in which representatives from Unions and NGO's and Nokuthula Sithole (Institute), Elize du Toit (DOJ&CD) and Sean Moodley (National coordinator of ARNSA) participated.

5 Year anniversary reflections

The Institute marked its fifth anniversary with a function on 27 July 2016, in the Centenary Complex on the Bloemfontein Campus. Prof André Keet, Director of the Institute, said: "With a flexibility and trust not easily found in the higher education sector, the university management gave us the latitude and support to fashion an outfit that responds to social life within and outside the borders of the university, locally and globally". Prof Jonathan Jansen mentioned three things he finds appealing about the Institute: "It is a space for students in which they can learn how to be, learn how to think, and learn how to contribute, the Institute has become a place where students can learn about things that they might not learn in the classroom. Second, it created, for the first time, a space where members of the LGBT+ community could gather in one place. And third, it speaks to the intellectual life of the university, as evidenced by the research and publications produced over the past few years". Prof Michalinos Zembylas of the Open University of Cyprus and member of the Advisory Board, said: "The works produced by the institute in this short time have been valuable to this community and beyond, because they recognise the complexities of education ... while pushing the boundaries of how to translate theoretical discussions into practical, everyday conditions ... For example, the Institute has not hesitated to be bold and courageous in reforming some traditional policies in this university—remnants of an ambivalent past that reproduced inequality and disadvantage".



Prof André Keet



Prof Jonathan Jansen



As part of the 5 year reflections on the work of the Institute and the launch of the book on Reitz, the Institute invited four scholars to reflect on "Reitz", the work of the Institute, and the higher education landscape in general. Front: Prof Relebohile Moletsane (University of KwaZulu-Natal), Prof Shirley Anne Tate (Leeds University) and Dr Irma du Plessis (University of Pretoria). Back: Jamie Turkington (programme director) JC Van der Merwe, Dionne van Reenen and Prof Michalinos Zembylas (Open University of Cyprus).

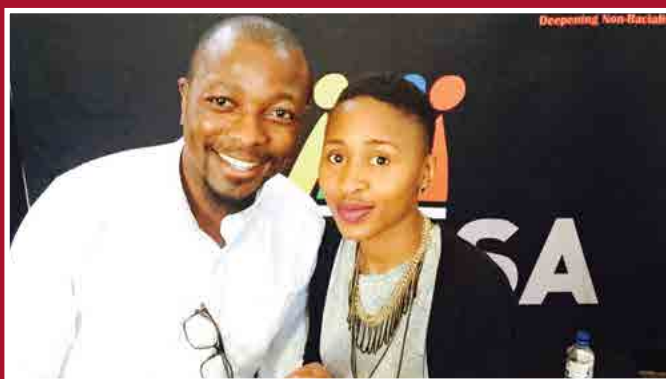
Transformation and Legitimation in Post-apartheid Universities: Reading Discourses from "Reitz", co-authored by JC Van der Merwe and Dionne Van Reenen, was launched during the anniversary reflections. This is the first book in a series on critical studies in higher education transformation from the Institute. In his introduction to this series, Prof André Keet, highlighted why a scholarly work of this nature was necessary: "Acts of resistance against structurally-anchored forms of exclusion within universities in both South Africa and elsewhere suggest that, despite our best efforts, the social structure of the academy ... has remained more or less intact over the past several decades". At the launch, Prof Jonathan Jansen said of the authors: "The courage of their convictions is reflected in this book. They have played, and will continue to play, an amazing role in shaping the discourse surrounding transformation." Jamie Turkington, former editor of the *IRAWA Post* during the time of the "Reitz" incident, and facilitator during the five-year anniversary function, said: "This book will be beneficial for every student and every person involved in the University of the Free State since 1980 till now to read and absorb the valuable points therein. If you thought Reitz was over, it shouldn't be; it is as relevant today as ever".



Advisory board meeting

The annual meeting of the Advisory board of the Institute formed part of the 5 year anniversary reflections. The board members are from left to right in the front: Shirley Tate, Relebohile Moletsane, Jonathan Jansen (Chairperson) and John Samuel. Back: Katinka De Wet, Sechaba Mahlomaholo, JC Van der Merwe, Lucius Botes, Andre Keet and Michalinos Zembylas. Absent: Fanie Snyman and Caroline Nicholson.

Be challenged



Phiwe Mathe and Nokuthula Sithole represented the Institute at the ARNSA conference

The Anti-Racism Network of South Africa (ARNSA) held its second annual conference from 25-27 October 2016, at the iconic Women's Jail on Constitutional Hill under the theme "Be Challenged". As a follow-up from the first conference which launched the network, this conference was intended as a way for organisations and individuals involved in anti-racism work to share ideas through a series of workshop activities. In his opening address, Sello Hatang, the CEO of Nelson Mandela Foundation, gave a sobering outlook on the currently fragile state of race relations in South Africa.

The conference undoubtedly lived up to its theme as presenters tackled cross-cutting topics, including the role of churches, public art and education at a basic level as significant tools for anti-racism in various workshops. The Free State province was represented by the Institute as well as the United Reformed Churches of South Africa. Part of the conference's agenda was also the Annual General Meeting (AGM), which took place on the final day to decide on, among other things, the structure and programme of action for the upcoming year, particularly during national Anti-Racism Week.

In terms of the 2017 programme of action for Anti-Racism Week, which is a campaign to popularise and expand the anti-racism struggle, it was agreed that the theme "Becoming" would be used throughout the week and the year, as it conceptually enables inclusion of diverse and multiple philosophies and practices of fighting racism, and working on becoming a more just and equal society. On the final night, a panel discussion with ex-political prisoners of Constitutional Hill, Barbra Hogan, Prema Naidoo and Winnie Mandela, was followed by a gala dinner. The conference marked a turning point in ARNSA's work as it strengthened its capacity and clarity of purpose programmatically. It set the tone for the upcoming year and demonstrated how much interest organised anti-racism work has garnered among individuals and organisations.



From the left, front: Prof Nhlanhla Mathonsi, President of the NSSA, and Prof Thenjiwe Meyiwa, Registrar at DUT. Left, back: Prof Peter Raper, Research Fellow at the ULFE, Prof Theodorus du Plessis, Director of ULFE and JC van der Merwe who delivered the welcoming address.

What's in a name?

The 19th Names Society of Southern Africa (NSSA) international conference took place from 20 to 22 September 2016 and was organised by the Unit for Language Facilitation and Empowerment (ULFE) at the UFS. The topic of this year's conference was "Symbolism and Instrumentality in Naming", with categories of research including anthroponyms, geographical names, names in history, literary onomastics, brand names, and the politics of naming in a public sphere.

CONVERSING THE RESEARCH PROJECT

What are statues good for?

The Institute co-hosted a seminar with the Department of Anthropology, entitled: “What are statues good for? Winning the battle or losing the battleground?” The seminar was presented on 29 August 2016 by Andre Goodrich from the Northwest University who visited the UFS with his colleague, Pia Bombardella, who co-authored the paper. They argued that statues have the potential to stand as monuments to the inescapable troubles of our interdependent existences, and, by transforming them from metaphor to metonymy, they can become the maps of those interdependencies that might guide our curiosity, so that at the end of the day, we know more about our mutual dependencies than we did at the beginning. Statues and memorials can be sites that gather up and map the interdependencies of contemporary concerns and that can, perhaps, provoke public engagement with those concerns if their solidity is troubled enough to provoke the question: “Whom and what do I touch when I touch this statue?”



Womxn

As part of Women's Month celebrations, the Institute co-sponsored a conference hosted by Embrace a Sister on 20 August 2016. Embrace a Sister is an association on campus that focuses on womxn's topics, upliftment of womxn, forming platforms where womxn can come together to tackle various problems that they may be confronting, and uniting for change in realising the rights of womxn everywhere. Student activists formed various panels and spoke on matters such as solidarity between men

and womxn concerning womxn's issues, exclusion of black womxn from student movements, rights to determine sexuality, intersectionality and patriarchy, as well as the current state of affairs, policy developments and changes in higher education. The conference was a much needed initiative, offering a safe space for an honest discussion to be had regarding how the student movement was dealing with the concerns of womxn on various campuses, and at the UFS.

Advance democracy and respond to societal needs

In an attempt to promote common understanding on governance, leadership, and management processes at the UFS, the Institute hosted a critical conversation on the Qwaqwa Campus with Prof Lis Lange on 30 August 2016. Prof Lange firstly focused on the role that universities play, and the expectations thereof. “From ancient history, universities have always had a critical role to play in the broader society,” she said. “They have always been characterised by the circulation of knowledge and ideas at a global level. They have always ensured that students’ skills and knowledge are properly certified”. Prof Lange then described the changes that universities underwent over the centuries: “Historically, universities used to cater for the chosen few, but they now allow multitudes to have access as well. In the early 20th century, women and foreigners, for example, were excluded. How they relate to the society has also changed. They also used to create certain types of knowledge – at one stage this knowledge was influenced by the church. Research is now produced across a large spectrum of human and scientific knowledge,” she said. Prof Lange also added that universities now even have a responsibility to advance democracy and to respond to societal needs: “Despite the various tensions and contradictions between management and academic staff, between management and students, and between academic staff and students, universities are now public spaces to exercise citizenship. They provide space for all to have the right to speak and to be heard. They provide space for all to have similar rights and responsibilities”.



Snapshots from Central America and Mexico

The Institute partnered with the Faculty of Education in presenting a three part seminar series called 'Snapshots from Central America and Mexico: Educating During and After Armed Conflict'. Dr Rachel Hatcher, a post-doctoral fellow at the Institute presented these seminars during August 2016. The theme of the first seminar was 'A Scaffolding Built from Words: How Discursive Frameworks Determine the Shape of the Past in Contemporary El Salvador and Guatemala', and was followed a week later by one on 'Graffiti Artists as Historians and Educators in Guatemala (and South Africa)'. The title of the third seminar which was held on 19 August was 'Social Justice and the Threat of Education in Guatemala and Mexico'.

"Africa's Many Liberations" **Seminar Series**



The Institute partnered with the International Studies Group (ISG) in presenting the "Africa's Many Liberations" (AFL) seminar series for students across all faculties. The series was conceived to deepen student and staff knowledge of African (including South African) and other regional (Asian, Caribbean, European, Latin American, North American, and Oceanic) histories, and to encourage them to engage with ideas from the diaspora and anti-colonial struggles elsewhere.

On 4 August 2016, Dr Sahar Sattarzadeh presented a seminar on "Counting the Faces of 'Liberation' and 'Resistance': Unmasking and Unveiling the Pluralisms of 'Decolonisation'".

She argued that "decolonisation" has recently become an ever-trending phenomenon, particularly within the interconnected spheres of academe, media and social activism, and highlighted the history of decolonisation as a process, introduced and accounted for various global interpretations of the term, and too evaluated both the theoretical and practical significance of diverse understandings of "decolonisation".

Dr Rachel Hatcher, presented a seminar on "Neo-colonialism in Disguise: Neo-liberalism and its Critics in Latin America" (18 August 2016). Years before the United States government, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank began insisting on structural adjustment programs as a condition of loans to "undeveloped" countries, a critique of this new form of colonialism was formulated. Dependency theorists argued that the workings of the world capitalist system prompted Latin American poverty and "underdevelopment". After first exploring the key features of what is now known as neo-liberalism, Hatcher discussed key aspects of neo-colonialism and dependency theory in greater depth.

The 1 September 2016 seminar addressed the dynamics of marriage and coercion among adolescent girls in the Congo.

Dr Maroyi Mulumeoderwha titled his presentation "'A Girl Who Gets Pregnant or Spends the Night with a Man is No Longer Girl': Forced Marriage in the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo". He explained that research on violence against girls is important and key to identifying the drivers and possible solutions to the crises facing young women in different parts of the world. This ethnographic investigation is part of a wider project in trying to understand South Kivu males' attitudes and behaviours toward females, with an in-depth focus on how males use the institutionalisation of "forced marriage" that, at times, can result in legitimising marriage, too often is used to manipulate women into entering into a sexual relationship that does not result in marriage and, thus, women are overwhelmingly often made the object of condemnation.

Ms Busisiwe Ntsele argued that sixty years have passed since approximately 20 000 women marched to the Union Buildings in Pretoria, yet feminist discourses have not been fully embraced in South Africa. African sceptics and critics of feminism have always associated feminism with the "Western" world, emphasising that black women have more pressing needs and priorities, such as the struggle for basic survival. However, Africa still has an account of courageous women, including Prof Pumla Gqola and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, who raise pertinent questions on gender roles, and most importantly, on the relevance of feminism in Africa. This session was aimed at reopening a dialogue on the role of society in ending gender-based oppression and thinking, reshaping, and reconstructing a just and fair South Africa that is unapologetically accommodating to all South Africans, irrespective of gender. The title of this seminar was "Patriarchy as a 'Colonial Machine' & the Relevance of 'Decolonising' Feminism in South Africa", and took place on 15 September 2016.

LGBT+ chapter on Qwaqwa

The Institute partnered with the LGBT+ community on the Qwaqwa campus in an effort to demystify stereotypes and debunk myths regarding homosexuality. A series of difficult dialogues were held at the residences over a three-day period to de-marginalise the LGBT+ community on campus. The dialogues centred on the following three themes: Religion and Sexuality, presented by Rev Ncqayisa, Homosexuality and Feminist theories, facilitated by Dr Tom Okello and Ms Carrie-Lee Timlin and Queer Sexualities, introduced by Ms Thobeka Ndlebe-September. Students took this opportunity to challenge the notion of homosexuality using various cultural arguments, and also to understand same-sex relationships, which demonstrated the need for more dialogues on sexuality. The three day event also resulted in the formation of an LGBT+ chapter on campus that has brought visibility to the LGBT+ community and the problems affecting it.



Rev Ncqayisa



Ms Carrie-Lee Timlin

Women's bodies are NOT sites of violence.

The Qwaqwa campus hosted a Rape Awareness Dialogue on 13 August, which was a collaborative initiative by the Gender Forum, the Institute, Student Affairs, Housing and Residential Affairs and the Compass Catering Group. The event was opened by the Dean of students, Mr Mgolombane, who reminded the students that: *"In order to fight any kind of social injustice, we need to change the language and discourses we have internalized"*. This captured the essence of his speech as he also told the students to create discursive opportunities to engage in pedagogies of

discomfort. The event soon turned into dialogical format, where a staff member and a student each narrated their ordeals of being raped. This opened up the opportunity for students who were in the audience to share their experiences and it provided a cathartic opportunity for everyone as it converted the dialogical space into an empowerment platform. In closing, Mrs Lebitsa, the District Coordinator for sexual crimes and violence, informed students about the protocol they should follow if they must fall victims to rape.

Wellbeing in Higher Education

On 1 August 2016, Residence Life, a division of Housing and Residence Affairs hosted the second Academic Conversations with the top academic achievers in the respective colleges of the Bloemfontein Campus. The topic of discussion was: Wellbeing in Higher Education. Students had the opportunity to engage with renowned scholar Prof Shirley Anne Tate from the University of Leeds and who is also a research associate at the Institute. From left to right: Prof Shirley Anne Tate, Eddie de Wet and Emme-Lancia Faro, both from Student Communities; Pura Mgolombane, Dean of Student Affairs; and Dr WP Wahl, Assistant Director of Student Communities. Photo: Qhamani Tshazi



Vital Voices

The Vital Voices Global Partnership invited Amanda Charles, a student assistant at the Institute, to participate in the Justice Institute on Gender-based Violence programme from 1-3 November 2016 in Pretoria. Participants engaged on developing strategies and action plans to overcome the challenges facing the prosecution of domestic violence in South Africa. The programme seeks to improve victim protection efforts and the criminal justice response to domestic violence.

Research

“How could universities work with issues of Social Justice raised by students?”

Launched in July 2016 on both the Bloemfontein and Qwaqwa campuses, and focused on enabling collaboration between students, staff and management in finding answers to the question of how universities could work with social justice issues raised by students, this programme located the growth of the Arts and Social Justice and Volunteer Programmes into the broader transformation space across South African universities.

Working with the Institute's volunteers, as well as with specific student interest groups and stakeholders at the UFS, the programme identified and defined the Social Justice conceptual framework into five areas for research and development in the higher education space. This included economic justice, education justice, non-discrimination and social cohesion, health justice, as well as constitution and democracy development. Teams were formed and tasked with researching the social justice questions they had raised under each of these subjects in the capacity building workshops in July and August 2016, and in identifying how they would engage with the university in terms of these problems.

On the Bloemfontein campus, in the week of 12 to 17 September, a range of dialogues and interventions took place. These included the two groups of firstly, education and secondly, constitution and democracy development joining to engage with the Law Faculty, DIRAP, Student Affairs and the Centre for Human Rights, amongst others. The purpose of this engagement was for this joint group to discuss matters of education transformation, including that of where the South African higher education sector currently was, in terms of the broader transformation objectives and how issues of curriculum development and the further opening up of linkages between universities, the workplace and economic opportunities could be worked with, going forward.



The non-discrimination and social cohesion group worked with artists, the Centre for Universal Access for Disabilities (CUADS) as well as representation from Housing and Residence Affairs in discussing matters concerning challenges students and staff with disabilities faced on campus, and on problems with institutional culture, as well as discrimination within residences.



The economic justice group hosted dialogues with students and student groups who were interested in, or who were working towards goals of economic self-empowerment. Key ideas on how innovation and self-empowerment of the student community could be undertaken, and how this could impact on institutional culture was looked into. The health justice group hosted a dialogue with the UFS Health and Wellness Centre, with discussions centring on the challenges students experienced in terms of health and wellness, and how students and the centre could collaborate on interventions, moving forward.

Another group, focusing on understanding questions of student agency development was convened, under the leadership of Student Leadership Development Unit in Student Affairs. Calling together various partners, including the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL), various student structures and leaders, as well as support organisations and initiatives – a dialogue was held to understand the needs and demands of student agency at the UFS.



As part of the Arts and Social Justice Programme, the Institute worked with student organisations registered on campus within the Arts, as well as other student start-ups working in the Arts in and around the UFS. Over a period of three days, various interventions, ranging from the spoken word, to music, to visual arts, to film took place across campus. RadioActive, under the leadership of Thuthukani Ndlovu, a third year BCom. Marketing student, organised and implemented a range of pop-up, spoken word interventions around campus, focusing on raising a broader understanding and platform for students to engage in matters of discrimination, with students with disabilities participating in many of these events through assistance from CUADS. All of these engagements took place near or around campus public art sculptural installations. In addition, RadioActive also organised a dialogue series between different students, aimed at capturing their understandings of “Difference and Stereotyping”. These dialogues were recorded and podcasts made available.



“UFS Mufs_[United Free State of Mind_University of the Free State]”, an organisation under the direction of Lesego Motsiri, a third year fine arts student, organised a visual arts project titled, “Kovsie Make Your Mark”. The objective of this project was to create dialogue amongst members of the student community in terms of race, gender and sex, through allowing students to paint their thoughts on canvases that had been set up near the Thakaneng Bridge.



“The University of Self Expression (USE)”, an organisation consisting of seven students who originated in different geographical areas of South Africa, and who use visual arts in an attempt to develop a shared identity amongst students in Bloemfontein, worked on audio-visual documentation and productions over the Arts and Social Justice interventions. One of the art pieces that had been made, featured Louzanne Coetzee being recorded delivering one of the poems she wrote, and which was later broadcast across various social media platforms.

Three musicians from, or associated with UFS Mufs, including Osiiris, who is studying Political Governance and Transformation at the UFS and MC Knowledge – a profound lyricist from the University of the Free State, as well as Jax06Lenyora, entertained students in the Amphitheatre with hip hop focused on engaging students further on issues of social justice.



Lastly, Xolile Sizephe, working on Arts and Social Justice from the Institute, organised platforms for the sharing of digital art pieces, which students from the UFS had written and developed. These included, amongst others, two digital pieces done by Emily Ho, a UFS student who had previously studied in Cuba before coming to the UFS, and who dissected notions of culture and belonging in her work, through to Tshepo Makatsa, a student studying towards his honours degree in Film at the UFS, focusing on music that had been banned in South Africa. These and other digital pieces were shown at the Thakaneng Bridge and in other spaces around campus.

The dialogues and the above-mentioned arts interventions took place on the Bloemfontein campus in the week before the renewed student protests in September. Hence, while plans for a joint conference between the Qwaqwa and Bloemfontein students working on this programme had been promoted, this, together with the research undertaken by these and the Qwaqwa students had to be put on hold in 2016.

Structured MA in Reconciliation and Social Cohesion

At the beginning of 2016, the Institute welcomed the first cohort of students that enrolled for the new MA degree in Reconciliation and Social Cohesion. In this postgraduate qualification, students will develop, through well-designed modules and research projects, conceptual understandings and competencies that will advance praxes in these fields. This programme responds to various challenges facing contemporary societies internationally, regionally, and nationally – as expressed in the South African National Development Plan (NDP). The aim of the qualification is to educate and train students as researchers, scholars and practitioners in the specialist knowledge required for reconciliation and social cohesion praxes in the contemporary world. It will provide students with a solid foundation for understanding and

researching Reconciliation and Social Cohesion from a variety of disciplinary perspectives as well as developing practices to advance social justice within professions, communities, organisations, institutions, movements and the different branches and levels of government.

This programme is ideally suited for persons working in public and private institutions, community and non-governmental organisations, social movements, regional and transnational structures and those pursuing careers across a variety of social-justice related fields. For more information on admission requirements, the structure of the degree, costs and how to apply, please visit <http://institute.ufs.ac.za>, or contact Joe Besigye at besigyejb@ufs.ac.za.

The Shift of Emancipation

On 30 July 2016, Giselle Baillie (Social Cohesion Project Lead and Researcher, IRSJ), Mary Duker (Principal Lecturer, Department of Art and Design, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University School of Music and Design) and Zamansele Nsele (Lecturer, Rhodes University Fine Arts Department), delivered a joint presentation at the 31st Annual South African Visual Arts Historians Conference held in Johannesburg at the University of Johannesburg. The theme of this year's conference was Rethinking Art History and Visual Culture in a Contemporary Context: The Shift of Emancipation: Visual Arts, Cohesion, Transformation, South Africa. With national and international participation from artists, educators and art historians at the conference, the presentation focused on discussing the implementation of the National Flagship Project in Social Cohesion and the Arts, the challenges of the arts and transformation in South Africa within the higher education space, and how the joint project between the three universities was attempting to enable broader discussion and developments with universities, students, artists and communities involving curriculum change, non-racism, social justice and democracy development. Questions and comments from the audience ranged from those wanting to know how social change could be dealt with, especially within the contested terrain of higher education, and what role the arts could or could not play in this; to how it was agreed that the arts curricula in South Africa needed to be viewed in a broader light of change, providing arts students with more scope into and understanding of social justice in order to broaden their language for social change purposes.



#MustFall

The #MustFall: Understanding the Moment colloquium was jointly organised and funded by Thinking Africa (Rhodes University), the University of Pretoria and the UFS with additional support from the Johannesburg Institute for Advanced Study (JIAS). It comprised of a three-day inter-institutional conversation from 4 – 6 October 2016 on the Bloemfontein campus with scholars and students from various South African universities. The objective of the three-day colloquium was to pause and reflect on what, by October 2016, would have been almost 18 months of radical turmoil for higher education institutions in South Africa. The Institute was represented by André Keet, Dionne Van Reenen, JC Van der Merwe and Trevor Shaku, all of whom presented papers.

International Engagements

Summer School in India



The Kosmopolis Platform/Department of Globalisation and Dialogue Studies of the University of Humanistic Studies (the Netherlands), in cooperation with HIVOS (Humanist Institute for Cooperation with Developing Countries), Azim Premji University, (India), PUSAD-Paramadina and The Centre for Religious and Cross-Cultural Studies of Gadjah Mada University (Indonesia), and the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice of the University of the Free State (South Africa), partnered to host the 2016 International Summer School on Pluralism, Development and Social Change. The Summer school took place between 7 July and 24 July 2016 and was hosted by Azim Premji University in Bangalore, India. It involved an 18 day full time program of lectures, excursions, seminars, literature study, discussion, guided individual – and small group work and assignments. Upon successful completion, participants will receive a Kosmopolis/University of Humanistic Studies Certificate in Pluralism, Development and Social Change

The programme consisted of daily interactive discussions, as well as lectures on the four main themes, namely Identity, Ecology, Democracy and Reconciliation and how they relate to pluralism and development. The programme also included a visit to a local public school and an excursion into a nearby city called Mysore. Here students and staff visited a majestic palace of the previous royal family in that area. There was a guided tour about the history of the palace as well as the city of Mysore; granting all participants better understanding into the development of contemporary India and her people. The excursion also included a trip to one of the three Buddhist Temples in India. Embellishments of mustard and burgundy where everywhere, accompanied with genuine heartfelt smiles. The grounds were painted with luscious gardens and exquisite gold temples; beauty that is as rare as the serenity that escorted it. Entering the temple was one of those moments that are assured to never disappear from your memory. All were invited into the temple to meditate, a moment in which this diverse group of new friends sat there in solitude. The excursion ended with a trip to the Royal Gardens surrounding a dam, as the building of dams is currently a major policy issue in India.

The Summer School, in itself, could be seen as a social experiment of Pluralism and all knowledge and wisdom gained throughout the school in India will be taken back to the home countries, to be shared in forms of dialogues and programmes run by the students themselves. This year, Anne Munene, Melissa Taljaard, Anna Molatudi (Qwaqwa) and Siyasanga Dabulawas were selected to participate in the summer school, and traveled to India with JC Van der Merwe, who has been a staff member of the Summer school for the last 5 years.

Social Cohesion in Sweden

Prof Keet was invited to accompany the Deputy Minister of Art and Culture, Honourable Mabudafhasi to Sweden, from 11 to 16 September 2016, in his capacity as a social cohesion advocate of the department, and a special advisor. He delivered a keynote input at the Bridging Ages Conference in Kalmar, Sweden. The conference explored how to use cultural heritage to achieve social change and to contribute to social cohesion. Prof Keet also accompanied the Deputy-Minister to high level talks such as those with the Olof Palme International Center and the Nordic Africa Institute.

University of South Florida



Dionne and Theresa at the LGBT Resource Center at University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

In the second semester, Dionne van Reenen was invited by the Chair of Communications, Prof David Payne, University of South Florida, Tampa, as a visiting scholar to do a faculty presentation on the recently published monograph *Transformation and Legitimation in Post-apartheid Universities: Reading Discourses from "Reitz"* (2016), which she co-wrote with JC van der Merwe. The talk raised some fascinating discussions, underlining many points of connection across borders and between institutions. Dionne also presented a paper, entitled *Divisive Policy, Divisive Practice* (co-written with Dr Munene Mwaniki) to the postgraduates in Communications, as well as four undergraduate talks on "Gender Identity, Body Politics and Media", and the "Culture and Politics of Social Movements". The link for student and staff exchanges between the University of Florida, University of Wisconsin and the University of the Free State is in the planning stages at the internationalisation offices of both universities, following some extensive pilot work between Dionne and Dr Billy Huff. Prof Ambar Basu has joined the academic exchange initiative, and the Institute looks forward to hosting student cohorts from 2017. Apart from campus presentations, Dionne also visited the LGBT+, Pride and Women's resource centres of the USF and UW, who have excellent records in gender equality, to share information and experiences concerning resources, possibilities and policies with which to enhance inclusive campus climates, specifically in regard to gender and sexual equity. Dionne also attended a conference involving her work in popular culture. All in all, the trip was a busy but extremely productive one, and formed a solid base from which to extend the Gender Project at the Institute. The informative nature of these institutional visits will feed into the Institute's close collaboration with the newly established office of Gender and Sexual Equality of the UFS, as well as the various movements and associations concerned with Gender and Women's subjects, relating to social justice.

Mindfulness on the Rise in Kenya



Joe Bazirake presented a paper on "How can youth nurture a culture of peace in Africa and the rest of the world?" at the inaugural Africa Peace Summit, hosted at Kenyatta university, Kenya in October 2016. Pointing out the role that volunteerism could play in advancing the causes that the youth cared about, "finger pointing" was challenged as the different summit speakers and facilitators also highlighted the role of meditation and the possibilities that exist in looking "within", to initiate a different conversation about most of the challenges that we face.

This kind of work, which draws on inner energy and motivations to make external alterations, may seem naïve as some critics have often been so eager to point out, but its momentous rise around the world cannot be dismissed as a sign of cowardice. Rooted in a pedagogy of hope and non-violence, the possibilities for one to attempt to "change the world" by choosing to work on "changing their world" is spreading like wild fire. The chances of sustaining change through violence (whether inwards or outwards) can only justify more acts of violence and perpetuate more pain in the process. The challenge is learning how to respond to justified anger triggers, and in ways that will not necessarily come back to haunt us or the generations to come.

These subjects are also some of the points of discussion in the weekly practice group on Non-violent communication that Joe facilitates at the Institute. In 2017, Joe will provide more students and staff at the UFS with the opportunity to tap into possibilities for learning and being part of this global movement of mindfulness through a series of workshops and seminars on nonviolent communication and similar approaches.

General

About the *Institute*

The Institute is one of the flagship intellectual projects of the University of the Free State. Following the “Reitz incident” in February 2008 and within the context of a worldwide intensification of racism and social conflict, a collective vision took shape to set up a research outfit that would exemplify the scholarship and practice of reconciliation, forgiveness and social justice. After an incubation period of consultations and discussions lasting almost three years, Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu launched the Institute on 27 January 2011.

Over the past five years the Institute developed into a critical space that brings different voices, ideas and practices together to advance the human and academic projects of the University. Students, staff and community members meet here to find ways to engage with diverse views, realities and aspirations. We cultivate humanity on the basis of deep scholarly work for the pursuit of social justice to be expressed in our everyday lives and the work we do on our campuses, and within the national and global higher education system. The Institute has four major streams of work, namely Higher Education Transformation, Human Rights, Arts and Social Justice and Research.

The Institute contributes to institutional and national higher education change by doing transformation work; and the development of intellectual cultures in support of it. The human rights desk’s function has developed into an independent academic *Centre for Human Rights (CHR)* – an outfit that provides human rights advocacy, human rights protection, and human rights scholarly work through research and an interdisciplinary masters and doctoral programme. The CHR is hosted between the Law Faculty and the Institute. The momentum initiated by arts and social justice has resulted in a full-blown programme in its own right with national and international collaborations; a close working relations with state departments, public agencies, and non-governmental initiatives; and a productive community engagement function. The research vision of the Institute is to be a premier interdisciplinary site for intellectual inquiries relating, but not limited, to: social cohesion, reconciliation and social justice, critical studies in higher education transformation, and scholarship on human rights and *critical* human rights education. For more information visit the website at <http://institute.ufs.ac.za>.

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