

# Botno

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



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

## The Institute says **NO** to Racism and **YES** to Equality

The NO-TO-RACISM/YES-TO-EQUALITY campaign brought the UFS community together in actively declaring our commitment to unity in diversity. This campaign was aligned with the 2014 declaration by Council in which it was stated: "The Council of the University of the Free State believes very strongly in human dignity and the equality and freedom of all people. Accordingly, the Council reaffirms its abhorrence of acts of racism, sexism and unfair discrimination of any kind or in any form."

In celebration of Human Rights Month, the first leg of the campaign ran from 9–25 March 2015. Through the NO-TO-RACISM campaign the university community was encouraged to take a public stand against not only racism, but also homophobia, sexism, ableism, xenophobia, classism, ethnicism, ageism and all forms of intolerance and othering. This was followed by a YES-TO-EQUALITY campaign which ran until 17 April in celebration of 21 years of democracy. Through this campaign the UFS community reaffirmed its commitment to equality, respect, democracy, social justice, humanity, dignity, human rights and diversity.

Throughout the campaign the Institute and the SRC initiated various discussions on all three campuses of the UFS to deepen our understanding of the issues at hand. These formal and informal engagements culminated in a ceremony on all three campuses during which the university community publically took a pledge saying NO to racism and all other forms of unfair discrimination and YES to equality and all the other principles enshrined in our Constitution.



Joe Besigye, Busisiwe Ntsele, Prakash Naidoo, Annelie de Man and Mloni Dladla at the launch on the Qwaqwa campus

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# News

## Gateway 2015

On 30 January 2015 the Institute engaged with first year students during the annual First Year Gateway Programme. Phiwe Mathe, Christopher Rawson, Busisiwe Ntsele and Breggie Hoffman introduced the work of the Institute, and specifically the Human Rights Desk, to the new Kovsie students.

The Gateway session consisted of two parts: an exhibition outside the venue where pamphlets were handed out and two sessions of presentations for the first year Gateway students in the venue. Sessions were opened by a Questions and Answers session where Chris Rawson probed the students to answer questions on the meaning of human rights, the Constitution and their understanding of the terms 'dignity' and 'transformation'. The Questions and Answers session was followed by a PowerPoint presentation on the history, structure and activities of the Institute facilitated by Breggie Hoffman. The three legs of the Institute, namely Research, Institutional Transformation and Human Rights were highlighted. Busisiwe Ntsele presented the third part of the session and focused on the messages of Respect, Know, Grow and Share of the Human Rights Desk. Phiwe Mathe facilitated the final Questions and Answers session during which more questions were answered regarding the mandate of the Institute. Interested students could also sign-up to become a

volunteer at the Institute. The Gateway sessions provided the Institute with an excellent opportunity to reach a large group of students in order to share more about how the Institute functions. It also provided the students with insight as to how they could be part of the exciting events and programmes of the Institute.



Breggie Hoffman



Phiwe Mathe



Chris Rawson



Busisiwe Ntsele

## Dignity for All



Breggie Hoffman and Anneline Keet with the students

On 18 March 2015 the Human Rights Desk, upon request of the Department of Social Work, held an interactive event with students from their department, in celebration of International Social Work Day. The event was framed as an interactive discussion on the theme 'Dignity for All', culminating in the production of an artwork by the students based on this theme. Anneline Keet (Chair of the department) opened the session, followed by Breggie Hoffman who provided an exposition of the importance of the right to dignity, both constitutionally and in terms of its realisation in the profession of social work. Social work students were then prompted to paint text and pictures onto a large canvas that would represent their views on dignity for all. The artwork is on permanent loan to the Department of Social Work and can be viewed at their offices.

## Social Cohesion Advocate

Earlier this year, the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Blade Nzimande, appointed André Keet, director of the Institute, to the Council on Higher Education (CHE). Given his focus on higher education studies and transformation, he said he is looking forward to serving on this council: "One of the main functions of the CHE is to advise the Minister of Higher Education and Training on all aspects of higher education policy." The CHE also engages closely with key national issues and international trends to ensure the continual development of our higher education system. In addition, André has been appointed recently as a Social Cohesion Advocate linked to the work of the social cohesion programme of the Department of Arts and Culture. This programme serves to advise the Minister of Arts and Culture, Mr Nathi Mthethwa. Furthermore, he also serves on the Ministerial Oversight Committee for the Transformation of Higher Education in South Africa as well as the transformation structures of Higher Education South Africa's (HESA).

# Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice (IRSJ) Volunteers



André Keet with the volunteers

On 1 of April 2015, the Institute kicked off a newly structured volunteer programme which was designed by Mloni Dlodla, who also manages the programme. The aim of this programme is to give campus students who are interested in the work of the Institute an opportunity to get involved in the daily work of the Institute, as well as to play a role in the issues that the Institute deals with on a daily basis. Collaborations with entities such as the Psychology Students Association, Independent Electoral Commission, Free State Department of Basic Education and the Human Rights Commission of South Africa have been formalised to get an all-rounder experience of human rights activism, advocacy, institutional transformation and an overall notion of community engagement. A total of 20 volunteers were selected to participate in this 6 month programme and are to partake in a range of activities set out within this programme. The volunteers are encouraged to participate in panel discussions and conversations held by the Institute that aim to teach and diversify the mind-sets of individuals. Training sessions are also conducted through the Human Rights Desk, in collaboration with the Human Rights Commission of South Africa, in order to equip the volunteers on human rights activism, advocacy and for them to be able to take what they learn at the university and apply it to their communities. The volunteers are already contributing to the work of the Institute by organising events such as the Humanity Reignited Symposium and Anti-Xenophobia March which are covered elsewhere in this newsletter.

## MSM and LGBTIQ Programme

On 16 February 2015 the Health and Wellness centre launched the MSM/LGBTI programme as part of the Human Project of the university. The launch was a collaborative project between Health and Wellness, the Institute and Student Affairs. Zanele Thela, the newly appointed coordinator for the MSM/LGBTI programme for the University of the Free State stated the programme objectives as follows: to establish and strengthen MSM/LGBTI friendly health services on all 3 campuses; to create a supportive environment for MSM/LGBTI students and staff to access health care; to coordinate, manage, monitor and evaluate the programme to ensure successful implementation of the vision and the mission of Networking HIV/AIDS Community Of South Africa (NACOSA) and the UFS. Talita Calitz was the keynote speaker and other speakers included Francois van den Berg, Senior Officer at the Health and Wellness Centre, Cornelia Faasen, Acting Dean of Students and Annelie De Man who spoke on behalf of the Institute. This newly established office provides services to both students and staff.

## Flying the Rainbow Flag



Zanele Thela



This event was in anticipation of the International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia celebrated on 17 May 2015. People across the world, regardless of their sexual orientation, come together annually on this day in support of the LGBTI community. This year, Kovsies became part of that global community when, for the first time in history, the rainbow flag – a popular symbol of LGBTI pride – fluttered high over the Red Square. During the event Zanele Thela, coordinator of Out@Kovsies, said the following: “Transformation is not about black or white anymore, it’s about

including different diversities, different sexual orientations.” Laura-Jane Watkins, research assistant at the Institute, said: “This day reflects our attitude as a collective community to embrace difference. Today is a day that we reaffirm diverse expressions of love beyond societal perceptions of gender as an inherent human need and right. Let us now stand together as a student community to promote the value of humanness.” The event that was organised by Out@Kovsies in partnership with the Institute and took place on 15 May 2015



# Anti-Racism Network in *Higher Education* (ARNHE)



JC Van der Merwe, Thabang Queench, Allan Zinn, Prinola Govenden and Melissa Steyn



The feedback session led by student leaders



Participants in one of the commissions

The ARNHE hosted the first of its bi-annual colloquia on 29 May 2015. The topic of the programme hosted by the University of the Witwatersrand at Emoyeni Conference centre was: Transforming Transformation? The Changing Landscape of South African Institutions of Higher Learning. This topic explored how the transformation agendas of universities have been challenged by recent developments in the country and on its campuses. The intention of the one-day colloquium was to engage in dialogue and deliberation towards the production of a report, which will be circulated widely amongst institutions. Participants at the colloquium divided into workshop commissions, covering the following areas: Institutional culture (including symbols, signs and representations), Staff experience (including both academic and support staff), Student experience, Curriculum (including plans and measures for reform) and Leadership and Governance.

Each commission had 2 hours to discuss the topic at hand diligently in order to identify problems and solutions. After lunch groups had a final discussion to pull all the strings together to have a working flow of how the identified issues will be approached with solving them through interlinked help as main goal. At the end of the day, all the commissions came together to listen to an identified student leadership panel from a variety of institutions at the plenary discussion to give feedback on the topics of the day. The panel reported on the discussions of the entire day and the comments afterwards contributed widely to more complete understandings and crucial issues that needs urgent attention nationwide. The following staff members of the Institute represented the UFS: JC van der Merwe, O'Ryan Heideman, Eddie de Wet, Hlonipa Matshamba, Busisiwe Ntsele, Nokuthula Sithole and Nompumelelo Ngcobo.

## Women of the World

The Institute partnered with the Office of the Vice-Rector External Affairs in hosting an event at the UFS Women's Memorial Garden celebrating Women of the world on 18 March 2015. The event focused on creating awareness of the existence of the garden and providing insight into the problems faced by women across the world. Dineo Gaofhiwe-Ingram from the Department of International Affairs opened the event with a speech on international women's affairs and was followed by addresses from Mosa Leteane (SRC President), Che Keet and Busisiwe Ntsele. The highlight of the event was a poem presented by Kwena Peu, a student at the UFS.



Tessa Ndlovu, Hannchen Mielmann, Che Keet, Lerato Molisana, Busisiwe Ntsele and Mosa Leteane



## What is Freedom?

In celebration of South Africa's Freedom Day on 27 April 2015, the Human Rights Desk ran a poster campaign on all three UFS campuses. The campaign consisted of sets of posters which were affixed to lamp poles and trees following one another. The posters carried the following messages: What is freedom? What does Freedom Day mean to you? What have you done to advance the freedom of others? The aim of the campaign was to make students critically reflect on the meaning of Freedom Day and what they have done regarding the freedom of others. The posters also included a twitter handle – #freedom@IRSJ – to encourage students to publicly share their thoughts on freedom and the questions proposed on the posters.

# Institutional Support

## NO-TO-RACISM/YES-TO-EQUALITY



Busisiwe Ntsele, Tumelo Rapitsi, Jonathan Jansen, Peet Venter, Moruti, Eddie de Wet and Thato Rheeder at the South campus launch

In February 2015, the Rectorate requested the Institute to conceptualise a campaign against racism which would assist in bringing to fruition Council's Declaration of 2014 in which it reaffirms its belief in human dignity, the equality and freedom of all people and declares its abhorrence of acts of racism, sexism and unfair discrimination of any kind or in any form. In celebration of Human Rights Month, the first leg of the campaign was officially launched on 9 March 2015 at the Qwaqwa campus, on 11 March at the Bloemfontein campus and on 17 March at South Campus. During the launch at the Bloemfontein campus Prof. Jonathan Jansen said the following: "Look at yourself in the mirror tonight. Ask yourself: 'To what extent can I truly say that I am dealing with my racism, my bigotry, my ethnicity, my homophobia, my xenophobia? Am I truly dealing with those in my life?'" The SRC President, Mosa Leteane, urged the Kopsie community to make South Africa work. "We say NO because we want to say YES. Fix your NO so that your YES is clear, it's equal, it's honest. That is what YES looks like".

The NO-TO-RACISM/YES-TO-EQUALITY CAMPAIGN generated renewed conversation and interest in the challenges we face in pursuing our goals of inclusivity and equality at the UFS. This positive, productive solidarity has highlighted the urgency of much needed action in terms of making transformation a reality in the everyday lives of staff and students on all three campuses. What

emerged from the conversations is the need to go beyond dialogues and consultation processes towards active decision-making followed by real commitment and implementation. Throughout the campaign, the Institute and the SRC initiated various discussions to deepen our understanding of the issues at hand. These formal and informal engagements culminated in a ceremony where staff and students on all three campuses publically made a pledge, saying no to racism and all other forms of unfair discrimination and saying YES to equality and all principles enshrined in our Constitution. JC van der Merwe said the following at the pledge: "In 1994 we as South African citizens drew a line and said: 'We are breaking with apartheid and we are committing ourselves to new constitutional values. We, as a country, are going to do things radically differently now: South Africa belongs to all those who live in it'. But that line became blurred rapidly at the UFS – some might even argue that that line was never drawn here at this university in 1994. But today, when we put our thumb print on that canvas we draw that line anew: we say NO to racism and all other forms of unfair discrimination and we say YES to equality and all the other principles enshrined in our constitution. May we all take responsibility to ensure that that line does not get blurred again." The pledge took place on 13 April 2015 at the Bloemfontein campus, on 15 April 2015 at the Qwaqwa campus and on 17 April 2015 at the South campus.



JC Van der Merwe, Choice Makhetha, Mosa Leteane, Jonathan Jansen



Staff and students at the Qwaqwa campus's pledge ceremony



Pledge at Qwaqwa campus



Pledge at Bloemfontein campus



# Thinking through *Ethnicity*

During October 2014, the Rectorate requested the Institute to conduct a study on the dynamics and extent of ethnicism on the Qwaqwa campus against the background of recent events related to a student protest. Grey Magaiza organised two focus groups and generated a report which was discussed at a workshop on 9 March 2015. The report stated that the complexity of ethnicity requires creative solutions and strategies crafted in a collaborative inclusive approach. This entails having multiple stakeholders, with both experiential and intellectual positioning, meeting to untangle the myriad of issues embedded in ethnicism and to unpack the idiosyncrasies of ethnicity and ethnic boundary formation. It was against this background that staff and students engaged in the

think tank. More than one participant emphasised the importance of continuously evaluating institutional practices and determining the sometimes unintended consequences of these. Some of the policies and practices raised in this regard were: the composition of sports teams, the placement policy for residences and the difference in experiences between residence life and student life in general. Participants also highlighted some of the steps that have already been taken to address the issues of ethnicism, such as the Amazing Race, the Step Up process and the establishment of the Kowsie-Q identity initiative. Everyone agreed that staff, students and community members are all stakeholders required to give input in these issues.



Jonathan Jansen, Prakash Naidoo and Grey Magaiza



## *Naming and Renaming*

The Naming Committee of the UFS accepted a proposal by the Institute to consider the South African Constitution as departure point for the naming process on all three campuses. Names representing persons and histories are tricky since history has a tendency to continually rewrite itself and our country and our campuses are no exceptions. Given the sensitivity around the naming of buildings, streets, public spaces and so forth, the only macro-consensus document available to us is the Constitution of SA. Also, it has been 66 years since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which formed the basis of the Bill of

Rights (Chapter 2) in our own Constitution and it is evident that the values and principles undergirding these have wide appeal and support, across various divides. Furthermore, sourcing names for 'renaming' and 'naming' from the Constitution will strengthen the interplay between the academic and human project of the university. The Institute has been involved in formal and informal discussions in this regard with various stakeholders. Because the naming of buildings and spaces are a continuous process, this project will ensure that lively discussions on the principles and values embedded in our Constitution will continue.

# University *Assembly*

The Transformation Desk requested the Rectorate to call a university assembly which took place on 28 April 2015 in the Callie Human Centre on the Bloemfontein Campus. The Assembly, attended by executive and senior management, members of the UFS Council and the President of the UFS Convocation, was also streamed live to the Qwaqwa and South Campuses. The aim was to deal with issues such as symbols, policies, practices and curriculum as transformative strategies for creating a university culture that supports its Human and Academic Projects.

For logistical purposes and in view of inclusivity, it was requested that all individuals or groups submit their submission in writing to JC van der Merwe at the Transformation Desk of the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice before 22 April 2015 in order to give structure to the proceedings. Therefore, no new submissions from the floor were allowed. However, members were welcome to tie their remarks into the submissions being made from the podium. The purpose of the assembly was not to debate each of the submissions in detail, but to establish whether they have significant support so that they could be conveyed to the Rectorate who will provide feedback on how these issues will be addressed. Twelve written submissions covering a wide range of issues from curriculum to sport were received. The areas that received the most submissions were the language policy and issues surrounding symbols and statues. All submissions made by individuals did so in their personal capacity as staff or students of the UFS, except for two submissions made by the SRC president on behalf of the SRC.

After the assembly the Transformation desk compiled a report containing the submissions made as well as the amendments and suggestions from the assembly which was submitted to the Rectorate. Here is a summary of the submissions tabled, for the full report on the assembly contact JC Van der Merwe (vdmjc@ufs.ac.za).

- **The transformative power of sports at the UFS – Joe Besigye**

Adopt policies regarding the 'less popular' sports as an integral aspect of university transformation through inclusion, openness and access.

- **Language policy – Keabaka C. Mokae**

A multilingual model with a pillar of Educational Interpreting, similar to the model that the University of North West is experimenting with, should be adopted.

- **Language policy – Willy Nel**

SeSotho, like Afrikaans, should serve as a translated language from English as the medium of instruction at the UFS.

- **Language policy – Dionne Van Reenen**

The business, instruction and events of the UFS are to be conducted in English.

- **Language policy – Mosa Leteane/SRC**

The language policy should be reviewed in order to speak to the changed and changing demographics of all 3 campuses as well as to access for visually and audio impaired students.

- **Curriculum – Tania Rauch Van der Merwe**

A university wide engagement with hidden curricula is needed: the historically inherited, taken for granted but un-interrogated pathways of how knowledge should be organised, produced and presented.

- **First-year residence student experiences – Christopher Rawson**

The UFS should review the limitations of first-year's Constitutional rights, such as the wearing of uniforms, religious preference/exclusion and other inferiority practices.

- **Statues and symbols – Kobus Marais**

UFS should represent a hybrid semiotic universe in its symbols, institutional culture and physical appearance generally.

- **Statues and symbols – Mosa Leteane/SRC**

The statue of President MT Steyn should be taken down and once the statue has been removed, subsequent dialogue on what inclusive symbol to erect in its place can take place within the university community.

- **Statues and symbols – Laura-Jane Watkins**

The CR Swart statue should be removed from the premises of the UFS Law Faculty.

- **Statues and symbols – Thierry Luescher**

All statues like that of CR Swart are either moved or fitted with a plaque that commemorates their good and bad in a fair manner and buildings should be named after institutions rather than persons.

- **The role of the SRC in representing students – Eddie de Wet**

The SRC should consult with students and relevant divisions within Student Affairs before acting on their own to issues at hand.

The UFS Management stated that they consider the above-mentioned submissions, as well as the University Assembly of 28 April 2015, as the beginning of a comprehensive process to stimulate discourse about these issues on various platforms of the university. The discussions are in an early stage and no decisions have been taken yet. Final recommendations on the issues will be submitted to the normal decision-making structures of the university, such as the Rectorate, the Senate and the Institutional Forum, after which it will ultimately be presented to the UFS Council for approval.

# CONVERSING THE RESEARCH PROJECT

Under the banner of *Critical Conversations*, the Institute clusters a series of modalities of dialogue that aim to generate debate, critique and investigation of the implications that theory has for praxis as scholars, researchers, students and citizens. Given the cyclical and self-referential tendencies of intellectual work (always returning to the same beginning, which in most instances are intellectual comfort zones), the hope is that these critical conversations will help us to engage in a deep, scholarly manner with social reality and our interpretative and knowledge schema for 'acting on it' and to subject our ways of knowing in order that productive critique for innovative social practices continues to emerge.

## What's wrong with 'Bantu languages'?

An advert for a Head of Department for Bantu Languages at the University of the Free State caused immediate social media uproar upon its publication. Fingers were pointed towards its offensive use of the term 'Bantu languages'. A courtyard conversation was convened on 26 February 2015 at the Institute during which Munene Mwaniki and Kobus Marais from the Department of Linguistics and Language Practice explored intellectual debates surrounding the scientific term 'Bantu Languages' in the field of linguistics and the controversies that accompany the term in a South African context. In an attempt to propose an alternative to the term, they pointed out the epistemological diversity/ecology of knowledges upon which such an attempt should be anchored, as well as the need for an intelligent and sustained debate within and beyond the academy aimed at critiquing the epistemological nomenclature that underpins the scientific reference 'Bantu Languages' in linguistics, on the one hand, and/or (re)appropriation of the term in socio-political discourse(s), on the other hand. Kobus Marias offered a rich historical context of the use of 'Bantu languages' as a linguistic category for languages with similar grammatical features spread across Africa. Citing the current, more politically correct preference for 'African languages' in most South African academic institutions, he argued that such a reference did not offer the kind of scientific specificity that could be useful in linguistic framing. In the same way, the alternate use of 'Previously marginalised languages' in the South African context did not offer a proper understanding within international academic discourses. It was also noted that there was a clear clash between the academic user-community (including the international community) and the South African user-community regarding the use of the word 'Bantu'. Munene Mwaniki said that whereas the issue of Bantu languages had been settled

within the understanding of linguistic research and scholarship, South African exceptionalism was still a noteworthy aspect. He argued for the need to take note of the discrepancy between linguistic science and politics in reference to the offense stirred around the use of 'Bantu languages' as an academic term. This courtyard conversation left more questions than answers for all the participants, with a bewildering inquiry as to whether a uniquely South African term like 'Sintu' or 'Kintu' could be posited, without alienating the country from the larger international body of knowledge, in which the framing is satisfactorily settled on 'Bantu languages'.



## Memory Formation



Punam Pandey, Maroyi Mulumeoderhwa, Giselle Baillie, Moruti Ledwaba and Laksh Venkataraman

Punam Pandey, a post-doctoral student at the Institute, presented on 10 February 2015. Bangladesh is the only nation-state in South Asia which has witnessed partition twice, in 1947 and in 1971. Multiple political and social groups participated in the liberation movement which led to diverse narratives about the freedom movement. The main political actors have systematically constructed *dichotomous* memories of the freedom movement along their political beliefs by prioritising one narrative over another. Their positioning has entangled India in the middle of competitive politics over Bangladesh. Though there are multiple narratives about violence involving different groups in the liberation era, these have become political tools for 'manipulative elites' in Bangladesh (Bell 2006:15). The present research intends to make intellectual enquiries into the process of memory-formation of the liberation movement. A pertinent question arises: Will contested memory ever make forgetting possible?



# Experiences of *Othering*



*Phiwe Mathe*



*Dionne Van Reenen*

In 2015 the Transformation Desk of the Institute launched a series of Courtyard Conversations that would map 'Experiences of othering' in society. Othering, as distinct from identity, often concomitantly ascribes a variety of values and features resulting in conflict between many different groups. South Africa has not escaped such conflicts which have been mirrored around the globe and occupying both international and local media with increasing intensity in light of recent events.

The topic of the first conversation on 12 February 2015 was XENOPHOBIA aimed at initiating a conversational response or critical observation to the Soweto looting and attacks on foreign owned businesses in mid-January. The discussion encouraged participants, mainly students, to consider the word 'xenophobia'. Phiwe Mathe and Dionne van Reenen posed questions resulting in the deconstruction of general existing perceptions. Whilst the individuals in the room confronted personal perceptions of this word, its contexts, connotations and conflicts, the following perceptions were identified: xenophobic attacks might stem from South Africans' associative fears of either fear of the unknown, fear of being impoverished and unemployed and/or fear of being culturally disenfranchised or infiltrated. Also, the idea persists that attackers could hold a sense of entitlement to land, property and economic standing in the community and thus seek to destroy or defend themselves against those who pose a threat to these entitlements. Lastly, although the nature of violence could not be

accounted for by anyone amongst the group, it was suggested that these attacks could be the product of compounded frustrations of poverty, education, unemployment and political discontentment. The concluding remarks of the group left standing questions to be addressed in a prospective follow-up panel discussion whereby recommendations would also be explored. In conclusion, the conversation highlighted a better understanding of the word, however, challenged whether xenophobia should even be used to describe such attacks. Furthermore, questions were raised whether these violent acts could be an issue of racism, socio-economics and changing dynamics or classism. Or, is society completely misbranding these extreme acts of violence and hate?

The second conversation on 'Experiences of othering' involved Conversing (dis)ability. The Institute's Youth Forum joined Gloss Purple, a student association, in hosting a dialogue between differentially abled students. Students living with disabilities explained some of their experiences on campus and engaged with the audience on what they need from their fellow students and staff as well as how they would like their student experience to be. The discussion revealed that able-bodied students experience some difficulty in knowing how to engage with students living with disabilities, in spite of being willing to do so, while students living with disabilities communicated their need to be acknowledged and welcomed questions regarding their respective positions on the issues. The discussion was both thought-provoking and informative.



*Zingisa Ngwenya*



*Vhugala Nthakheni*



*Louzanne Coetzee*

# An *Unexpected* Encounter with Eugene de Kock



Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, Candice Mama and André Keet

Candice Mama was eight months old when her father, Masilo Mama, was killed with four others when the car in which they were travelling was ambushed. Eugene de Kock was denied amnesty when he appeared at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for the killing of 'the Nelspruit Five'.

When Candice Mama's family received an invitation from the National Prosecuting Authority to visit a convict in prison, little was known about what to expect from such a visit. For Candice, who was only 8 months old at the time of her father's death 23 years ago, meeting with the man who had been convicted of her father's murder was no easy feat. On 4 March 2015 Candice visited the Bloemfontein Campus to talk about 'An unexpected encounter with Eugene de Kock: A journey of transformation'. The event was a collaborative effort between the Institute and the centre for Trauma, Forgiveness and Reconciliation Studies.

The conversation revealed discomfiting information and a confirmation of de Kock's own responsibility in the horrific events of 'the Nelspruit Five' murders. Requests to end the conversation by the family were received as well as a desperate plea from de Kock to offer them the whole story – perhaps a man in search of a different kind of closure for himself. Filled with compassion

for the man in the orange jumpsuit, each of the family members reaffirmed their personal forgiveness to him. However, Candice spoke last and asked a question that de Kock later confessed he never wanted to be asked. "Do you forgive yourself?" she inquired. The ensuing attempt to find a response to this question caused strong reactions. "After all I have done" he mumbled, "it is impossible to forgive myself." Through this visit, Candice said she had learnt never to have a preconceived judgement of anyone, considering that it would have been easier to label de Kock in more ways than could be possible to establish a human connection with him. "The whole interaction" Candice explained, "was like an out-of-body experience." This humanised de Kock before her eyes. She shared her understanding of how the apartheid system had created the conditions that warranted individuals to take the kind of place that de Kock had occupied. "If it had not been Eugene, it would still have been someone else," she retorted. However, Candice was not oblivious to the fact that the system did not absolve individuals of their responsibility. De Kock's parole was granted shortly after Candice Mama and her family visited him, after which Candice made a public statement in support of de Kock's application.

# *Xenophobia* and Unions

In a critical conversation on 15 April 2015 Mondli Hlatshwayo discussed his work on trade unions and their attitudes towards external migrants. Mondli is a senior lecturer in the Centre for Education Rights and Transformation at the University of Johannesburg and has worked for Khanya College, a Johannesburg-based non-governmental organisation (NGO), as an educator and researcher. His areas of research include: post-schooling, adult and youth education, workers' education, xenophobia, trade union and social movements. Mondli explained the relationship between external migrant workers (from outside the borders of the country) and COSATU and its affiliates. He examined the link between globalisation and external migrant labour systems and the ways in which unions respond to external migrants. This included an exploration of the evolution of policies on external migrants including attempts to organise those external migrants that are employed in various sectors of the economy. He concluded with a discussion of unions' responses to the May 2008 xenophobic attacks and external migrants' views on the approach of unions to their struggles. He indicated that unions may be failing to reach out to external migrant workers. Historically, workers from other African countries have worked in

South Africa and contributed immensely to the development of its economy. Thus, the rising tide of xenophobia is an important issue that confronts the labour movement as well as society at large.



Dionne Van Reenen and Mondli Hlatshwayo



# Statues



Wiaan Visser, Lucius Botes and Philippa Tumubweinee

Amid various protest actions against historical statues across the country, the Institute presented a three-day discussion session about the role and place of statues, symbols and signs in the transformation attempts of universities. During these lunchtime sessions, various speakers from different contexts had expressed their opinions about this issue that has become a focal point, not only for universities, but also for the country as a whole. Thus, speakers not only gave their opinions about whether there is a place in present-day South Africa for statues and symbols from colonial and apartheid South Africa, but also highlighted the cultural-historical values and the more deep-seated issues and symbolism of the statues debate. According to the National Heritage Resources Act, heritage must serve to reconcile the past, heal divisions and advance the interests of social justice and cultural restitution. Chitja Twala (Department of History and chairperson of the Free State Provincial Heritage Resources

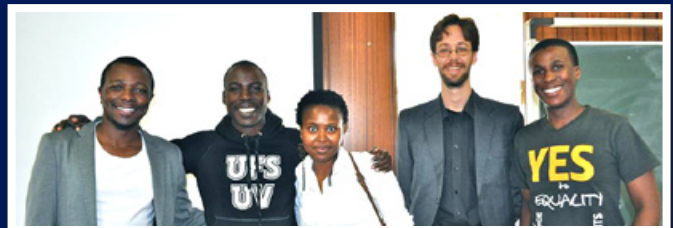


Qondile Khedama, Phiwe Mathe, Tumelo Rapitsi and Chitja Twala

Authority), Qondile Khedama (General Manager: Communications Services Mangaung Metro Municipality), Tumelo Rapitsi (SRC Transformation), Lucius Botes (Dean: Faculty of Humanities), Philippa Tumubweinee (Department of Architecture), Wiaan Visser (University of Stellenbosch) and three students from The International Studies Group at the UFS namely, Kuda Chitofiri, Anusa Daimon and Alfred Tembo held the discussions. The students for the International Studies Group talked about how similar issues have been addressed in their own countries (Zimbabwe and Zambia). The discussions were necessary for information: What are the legal guidelines to be followed? How do we consider the historical context within which the statues should be viewed? These discussions are of critical importance within the bigger problematic framework of transformation in Higher Education. Students and staff were encouraged to take part and, in so doing, co-opt some responsibility for the transformation at the UFS.

## Humanity Reignited

On 29 April 2015 The Human Rights Desk, in collaboration with and upon the initiative of the volunteers of the Institute, hosted a symposium on and marched for anti-xenophobia. Four speakers, namely: Joe Besigye, Numpumelelo Ngcobo, Phiwe Mathe and Christian Williams addressed the students. The issues were: an explanation of the different narratives that were offered in the wake of the conflict; the underlying socio-economic reasons for the conflicts; the underlying Afro-centric tone to the conflicts; the misplacement of blame and South Africans' culture of entitlement as aggravating factors as well as the need to take account of the perspectives of non-South Africans on African conflicts. Students then gathered at the Thakaneng Bridge which formed the starting point for the march. After being addressed by the Rector, students carrying posters with the message: 'NO-TO-XENOPHOBIA' marched through campus. The Institute served as the end point of the march where students gathered to discuss their experiences.



Phiwe Mathe, Joe Besigye, Numpumelelo Ngcobo and Christian Williams and Lebogang Moichela



Leon Wessels, Inez Bezuidenhout, Christopher Rawson, Lynette Jacobs and Loot Pretorius

## Criminalising Orientation Practices?

The Human Rights Desk hosted a panel discussion on the possibility of criminalisation and orientation practices. Leon Wessels, Research Associate at the Institute, Inez Bezuidenhout from the Faculty of Law and UFS Law Clinic and Christopher Rawson, Research Assistant at the Institute presented their thoughts on the topic. Loot Pretorius from the Faculty of Law and Lynette Jacobs from the Faculty of Education acted as respondents. Presenters highlighted the negative consequences of initiation practices on identity formation and its effect on the inherent dignity of each student. It was also highlighted that orientation can be based on a value-driven approach to support and welcome new-comers and develop the values we, as an institution, want to subscribe to our members. It was proposed that what is needed is a holistic approach to battle the institutional culture of hierarchy rather than judge each initiation practice separately in the light of Constitutional values.



# Public Engagement Initiatives

## Human Rights Day

In celebration of South Africa's Human Rights Day, members of the Human Rights Desk took part in a human rights march organised by the Prophetezz Foundation. Members of both organisations were joined by community members and marched through Heidedal, Bloemfontein, calling for human rights and equality for all. The march took place on 21 March 2015 and was followed by a music and poetry event where poets, dancers and musicians showcased their talents.

## Electoral Democracy



Busisiwe Ntsele

The Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), together with the Institute and the Department of Basic Education hosted a schools debate and artistic competition in celebration of the IEC's annual Democracy Week. The aim of the event was to educate learners on this year's theme: Electoral Democracy. Primary school learners showcased their visual arts projects and competed in group dramatizations demonstrating their understanding of electoral democracy. Secondary school learners debated on the pros and cons of electoral democracy. During performances learners were also eager to express their support for anti-xenophobic campaigns. Volunteers of the Institute participated as adjudicators, awarding top three places in each category. Volunteers also prepared a slide show presentation depicting 20 years of electoral democracy through pictures, music and video clips. In preparation for their roles, the volunteers received training on the adjudication of artistic work and debates. They were also educated on the topic of 'Electoral Democracy' by a staff member of the IEC. Overall, the event proved to give valuable training and experience to the volunteers of the Institute. Learners and teachers from 15 schools took part in the event that took place on 22 April 2015 on the South campus.

## Open Day

The UFS welcomed thousands of prospective students and their parents to the Bloemfontein Campus on Saturday 9 May 2015 for the annual Open Day. Prof. Jonathan Jansen described what being a Kopsie is: "Here we use our minds and not muscles. We use reason and not rage." The Human Rights Desk of the Institute used this opportunity to introduce prospective students and their parents to the YES-TO-EQUALITY/NO-TO-RACISM campaign. Many of the prospective students, their parents and teachers pledged by signing and putting their hand and thumb print on the flip charts and on the posters and received the yellow YES-TO-EQUALITY wrist-bands of the campaign. The Institute campaigners interacted with all the



people who pledged in explaining the necessity of the campaign, as well as giving them more information on the functioning of the Human Rights Desk.

## Bob Marley

On 10 April 2015, the Institute, Student Affairs and the No Student Hungry (NSH) Campaign invited university members to a concert in honour of Bob Marley, to raise funds for the NSH. The Institute stated: "The Bob Marley biography provides testament to the unparalleled influence of his artistry upon global culture. Since his

passing on 11 May 1981, Bob Marley's legend looms larger than ever, as evidenced by an ever-lengthening list of accomplishments attributable to his music, which identified oppressors and agitated for social change while simultaneously allowing listeners to forget their troubles and dance." <http://www.bobmarley.com/history/>



Angelo Mockie and the other artists performing at the concert



André Keet

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# Research

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## Research Programmes

The research vision of the Institute is to be a premier interdisciplinary site for intellectual inquiries relating to, but not dogmatically limited to the following: social cohesion, reconciliation and social justice; critical studies in higher education transformation; and dexterous scholarship on human rights and critical human rights education. Research projects, conferences, publications and post-graduate studies are organised around the following three research programmes:

### Programme 1: Social Cohesion, Reconciliation and Social Justice

This research programme aims at rethinking the term 'social' as an entity with its heterogeneity and studying the social dynamics of disrespect, disaffiliation, precarisation, solidarity, integration and friendship; exploring the structures of social domination and freedom; and crafting possibilities for social justice agency through transformative praxes. As a critical enterprise, students will revisit and redefine current notions of reconciliation, social cohesion, inclusivity, social justice, human rights, diversity and citizenship in a changing world by applying interdisciplinary approaches to its analyses and practice.

### Programme 2: Critical Studies in Higher Education Transformation

This research programme focuses on critical analyses of higher education transformation that study inclusion and exclusion in relation to the social structure of the academy; the power-relations embedded within the organisation of knowledge, its disciplines and disciples; the construction of professional and student identities; the regulation of student life and voice; staff and student access and success; the mechanics of authority within knowledge generation processes; research subjects, objects, topics and trends; pedagogical typologies; the interplay between pedagogy, research and institutional culture; and the connexionist dynamics between higher education and the state, private sector, interest groups, pressure formations and broader society.

### Programme 3: Human Rights and Critical Human Rights Education

The objectives of this research programme are: to deepen the study of human rights education and human rights in education; to study human rights and its violations locally and globally; to generate comparative and international research initiatives on the scholarship of human rights education within various socio-political contexts; to engender creative approaches by which human rights can be critically enriched through inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary approaches; and to prompt inquiry into the linkages between human rights and peace, conflict, development, multiculturalism, citizenship and democracy.

## International Engagements

In January 2015, Dionne van Reenen attended the joint research colloquium 'Silenced voices: Diversity and Social Justice in Higher Education' between UCLA, VU (Amsterdam) and the UFS, which was hosted by VU in Amsterdam. She presented a paper entitled "Maintaining plausible deniability: Mechanisms of subtle discrimination in a South African higher education institution".

Following her participation in the Inter-disciplinary.Net conference in November 2014, Dionne was asked to present two papers at Florida Gulf Coast University in Florida, USA, in February 2015. One paper was for the students of the Queer Studies programme and the other was open for the campus. Both were very well attended. Kimberly Huff and Jon Braddy were excellent hosts who showed great interest in the work of the Institute.

André Keet attended a three-day continental summit on Higher Education from 10–12 March 2015 in Dakar, Senegal. The summit was organised by several key pan-African organisations around the theme of 'Revitalising higher education for Africa's future'. The aim was to build a movement of like-minded institutions to transform the African higher education sector. The objectives of the summit were: to build a constituency for transformation and investment in Africa's higher education; to create a shared vision for the future of African higher education; to harness and highlight exemplary efforts and initiatives in African higher education; to harness disparate efforts and interventions in African higher education and to spur and sustain innovation in African higher education.

On 6 May 2015 he visited the University of Humanistic Studies in the Netherlands fostering various forms of scholarly collaborations and presenting on the work of the Institute. He spent another day (7 May 2015) with Vrije University in Amsterdam meeting with the Dean of Social Sciences and colleagues who are already collaborating in projects with the Institute. He then left for Coburg University in Germany to attend a conference on Women and Peacebuilding (9–12 May 2015) where he delivered the closing keynote.

# Research *Projects*

The Institute is currently working on a number of research projects independently and in collaboration with a number of national and international partners. These projects are all aligned with the research programmes of the Institute: Pedagogies to Advance Capabilities, Humanising Pedagogies, Curriculum as Discourse, and Human Rights and Citizenship Framings in higher education institutions.

## New Project: Visual Arts and Social Cohesion



Funding had been received from the National Arts Council (NAC) and since January 2015 a National Flagship Project in the Visual Arts has been facilitated through the Institute. This project is being implemented across three universities: Rhodes University, the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University and the University of the Free State. The objectives of this project are to capacitate art students and professional artists working in the university surroundings to critically grapple with issues around Social Cohesion, the National Development Plan and the Visual Arts. In collaboration with one another, the three universities have determined the short- and long terms goals for this project. As a means of output and within the partnership framework developed within this collaboration, all three universities are developing and launching exhibitions during August and September 2015 which articulate how each university has worked with the concept. Furthermore,

all three universities are also hosting colloquiums during August and September 2015 to further develop the capacity of students, artists, stakeholders and community members to engage meaningfully with the issues raised through the project, and jointly, all three universities will publish a 240 page book which documents and explores the project across all three sites and across a range of concepts with regards to Social Cohesion, the National Development Plan and the Visual Arts. The book will be launched in November 2015. For more information on this project, contact Giselle Baillie at [BaillieGK@ufs.ac.za](mailto:BaillieGK@ufs.ac.za)

## Post-graduate Studies

On 10–11 April 2015 the Institute's first cohort capacity development and support sessions for interdisciplinary masters and doctoral students took place on the Bloemfontein campus. The objectives of the two-day workshop were:

- To generatively explore the forms, function and expression of true interdisciplinarity through post-graduate engagements;
- To allow space for students to present and engage with one another in a critical-supportive environment;
- To assist the Institute to craft new forms of engaging with post-graduate subjectivities and identities from academic, social and political points of view;
- To explore ways to link the technical demands of scholarly studies with the social and developmental complexities of our country and continent, including the need to renew the academy intellectually and otherwise;
- To assist each other in engaging with the heterogeneity of the social framework by responding to the pressing material and social questions of our time.

Twenty post graduate students attended the first cohort workshop and another workshop is planned for the second semester.

## Structured MA in Reconciliation and Social Cohesion

Starting in 2016, the University of the Free State will offer a unique master's degree to advance knowledge, scholarship and practice in the fields of Reconciliation, Social Cohesion and Social Justice. In the MA Reconciliation and Social Cohesion, 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.

The programme is open to all students with background studies in the Economic, Management, Natural, Social and Health Sciences as well as students with qualifications in the Humanities, Law, Education and Theology. Students and practitioners in the heritage, development, human rights, transitional justice and peace sectors as well as candidates from the cultural and creative industries will also benefit from this degree. 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](mailto:besigyejb@ufs.ac.za), Dr Willy Nel at [nelwn@ufs.ac.za](mailto:nelwn@ufs.ac.za) or Prof. André Keet at [keeta@ufs.ac.za](mailto:keeta@ufs.ac.za).



# General

## About the *Institute*

The Institute is one of the flagship intellectual projects of the University of the Free State. The Institute, more than any other academic initiative, represents the University's *human project*, which rests on cultivating humanity as a counter-strategy to the disrespect and violence that pervades human relations. Following the so-called Reitz incident of 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.

The Institute's mandate is divided into three complimentary legs, one being research and the other two being institutional transformation/higher education transformation and human rights. These two areas work hand in hand with the research mandate in the sense that the Institute's approach to transformation in higher education and human rights is informed by its research framework, while its research agenda is responsive to work done in the area of transformation in higher education and human rights.

## Get involved with the *Institute*

The UFS staff, as well any person or institution outside of the university (locally or internationally), who wants to get involved with the Institute's work are welcome to approach us with project proposals. The Institute has also initiated a Student Volunteer Programme for interested undergraduate and postgraduate students registered at the UFS. Participants will be given the opportunity to independently develop and drive projects that tie in with the Institute's mandate. Students who wish to participate will be required to show a keen interest in social justice issues, identify and interpret issues of concern on the UFS's various campuses and actively engage with the surrounding communities. Visit [institute.ufs.ac.za](http://institute.ufs.ac.za) for more information.

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THE HUMAN EMBRACE

Newsletter of the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice