

Taking “beach leave” to another level

During a busy and successful 3-month long sabbatical, the Vice-Chancellor, Dr Saleem Badat, visited three countries, finished his book for publication, met with donors, influential people and alumni to update them on Rhodes University and where he sees the institution going in coming years.

One of the key aspects of the sabbatical that he valued the most was that it allowed him to be far away from Rhodes, to have the time and space to critically reflect on certain aspects of the institution, to develop new insights and perspectives.

Chatting with Communications and Marketing staff, he says when working long hours every day (usually a 80-90 hour week), he does not often get the chance to leisurely sit back and reflect effectively on the work and on the institution.

The opportunity to be far away from Rhodes created the necessary distance and gave him the space to reflect on various aspects of Rhodes. It gave him the opportunity to focus on a few key issues, which he plans to share with colleagues and staff.

So far he has shared two reflections about Rhodes at the alumni reunions in London, Cape Town and Johannesburg.

He says that most of the alumni and staff members seem to think what makes Rhodes so special and distinctive is its small size. He is quick to point out he does not disagree, but he thinks there is much more that makes Rhodes special and distinctive.

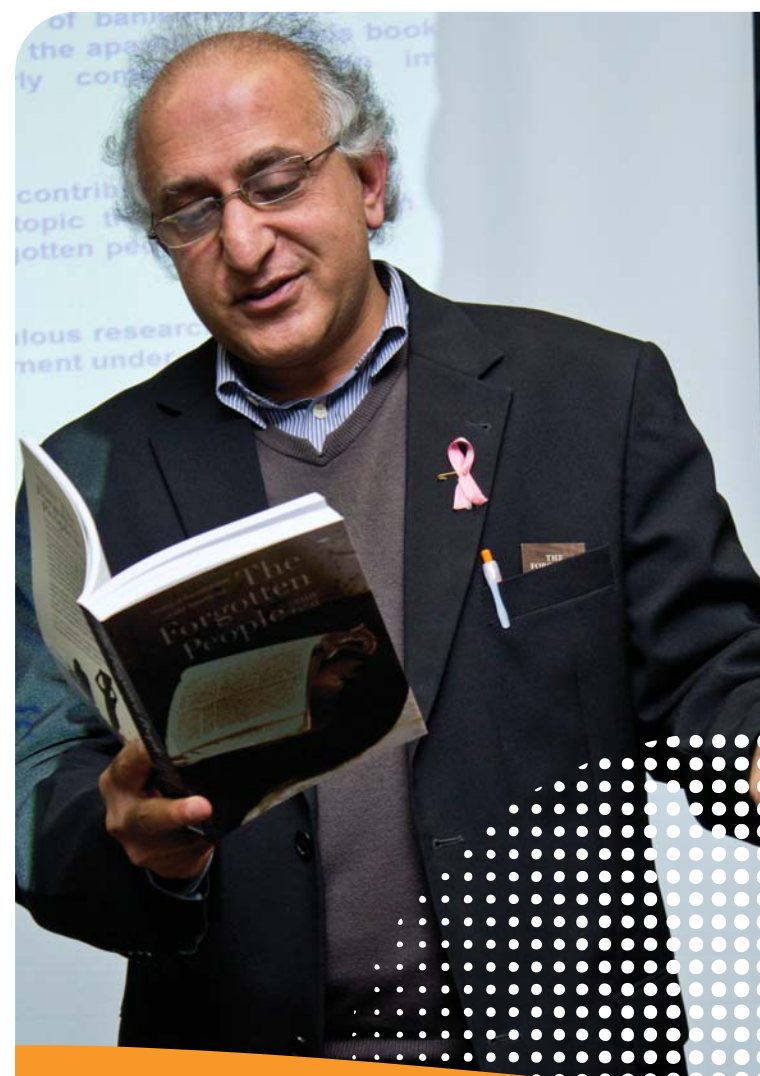
“I am not persuaded that what makes Rhodes so special and distinctive is entirely to do with its size,” he says.

He says this conventional wisdom needs to be interrogated, because there are other universities in South Africa that are much bigger than Rhodes but are also special and distinctive.

He argues that being special cannot simply be reduced to or be a function of the size of the institution and that being too obsessed and fixated about the size can make you miss key opportunities in terms of contributing to the Eastern Cape Province, to South Africa and the continent.

Dr Badat argues that what is special and distinctive about Rhodes, in a world that is losing its bearings on the social purposes and meaning of universities is “simply the idea of being a university in the true sense of the word. That is what makes this university special, that’s why I enjoy being at this university,” he added.

“Rhodes has not lost its keen sense of what a university is all about. I fear that too many universities around the world and even in this country are in danger of being or becoming something other than a university.”



It is not that he is against people lying on the beach, but not for 100% of the time....maybe 20% of the time you should relax, recharge and renew.”

When Dr Badat became Vice-Chancellor in 2006, his contract stated that he would get 56 days long leave in addition to annual leave.

“When I asked what these days were for, I was told it is for me to use whenever and however I wanted to. I was told it was called beach leave,” he says.

However, with the termination and phasing out of long leave, Dr Badat decided to use his accrued days to go on a sabbatical, forfeiting a cash pay-out, as he wanted to do something meaningful with the leave acquired.

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Renowned linguist spearhead African languages development

South African renowned linguist specialising in African languages (Xhosa), Professor Russell Kaschula, has been tasked to lead a team aimed at intellectualisation of African Languages in higher education institutions in the country.

He is spearheading the new National Research Foundation's SARCHI Chair: Intellectualisation of African Languages, Multilingualism and Education, in the School of Languages (African Language Studies) at Rhodes University.

Through the Research Chair, Prof Kaschula is focusing on the development of strategies to facilitate the access, retention and success of historically disadvantaged students, and using African languages to enable development, change and transformation within the university environment. The Chair is to focus on six academic areas, including multilingualism in Higher Education.

The only South African Research Chairs Initiative (SARCHI) chair (of African Languages) in the country, Prof Kaschula believes the intellectual African language research and teaching base at Rhodes University that has been built up since 2007, has been pivotal in allowing for this Chair to be awarded to Rhodes. This has been made possible through the SANTED Norwegian funding, the African language bursary funding from the National Department of Arts and Culture and general University support.

Acting until recently as Head of the School of Languages and presently the Chairperson of the Rhodes University language committee, Prof Kaschula says the Chair affords him the opportunity to directly address the implementation of language policy and national and provincial language imperatives as outlined in the Constitution and Provincial Language Policies. "There is a sense of professional destiny embedded in this Chair which is of fundamental importance to the language discipline, to education and to multilingualism more generally," he said.

His vision is that the Chair will entrench institutional, regional, continental and international collaborations across and within local and international universities. "Through my experience in the teaching of African languages over many years, the multi-disciplinary nature of the research conducted required collaborations, which I will seek to entrench within this Chair," he said.

The Chair provides an avenue for developing and reformulating research methodologies, approaches and strategies to the intellectualisation of African languages for the South African and the African context.

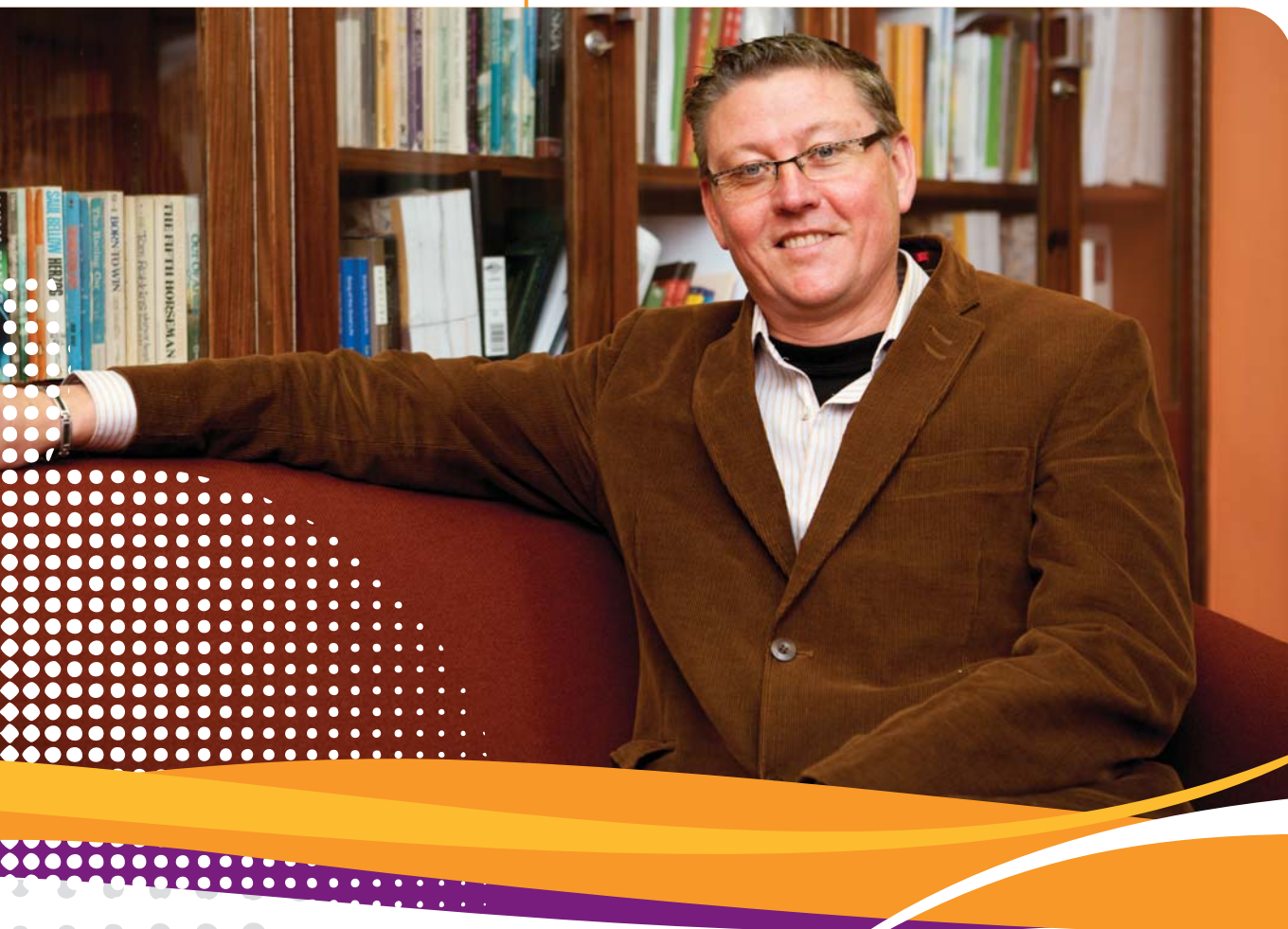
According to Prof Kaschula, this research is essential as Africa "attempts to find solutions to a range of matters pertaining to the under-performance of many black students at university, as well as challenges facing universities in achieving quality education that is responsive to the needs of society and where effective cognition remains central to the educational project".

The need for addressing such challenges has already been proven through the success of the internationally-funded Rhodes University SANTED Multilingualism Project, which Prof Kaschula project-managed together with Dr Pam Maseko, which aimed to promote multilingualism, as well as retain young black academics at Rhodes University.

At a strategic level the research activities planned for the first five years of the Chair will focus on six major critical research projects including designing techniques, methods and approaches for language policy planning and implementation as well as teaching in multilingual Higher Education (HE) contexts; Corpus development in African languages with a focus on isiXhosa translation, terminology development and lexicography; African languages and ICT for Development; African theoretical linguistics - an intellectualisation process; Acquisition of African languages as second or additional languages in professional disciplines; and Literary Studies in African languages, documenting African literature prior to, and after the introduction of print in African languages and creating technology-assisted methods for archiving and preserving the African oral literary art-form.

Given the widespread institutional and intellectual challenges facing multilingualism in South Africa, the Chair is a welcome acknowledgement for years spent dedicated to advancing this cause in an otherwise hostile intellectual and institutional environment.

"I feel as though my voice regarding multilingualism, which has often been relegated to the wilderness, has finally been heard in relation to the importance of our languages as forming part of South Africa's rich heritage and resource package, also being of fundamental importance in improving cognition and understanding within our educational system, something that I have spent my life fighting for and being passionate about," Prof Kaschula said.



"There is a sense of professional destiny embedded in this Chair which is of fundamental importance to the language discipline, to education and to multilingualism more generally."

Professor Russell Kaschula

Prof Shackleton takes long-term perspective on research

Professor Charlie Shackleton of the Department of Environmental Science at Rhodes University has recently assumed the Rhodes awarded National Research Foundation's SARChI Chair: Interdisciplinary Science in Land and Natural Resource Use for Sustainable Livelihoods.

The objective of the Chair, Prof Shackleton said, is to develop interdisciplinary understanding and methods to reveal the role, value and importance of natural resources in rural and urban livelihoods for poverty alleviation.

With approximately 70% of South Africa's poor living in rural areas and approximately the same proportion of rural dwellers being classified as poor, the use of natural resources, poverty dynamics and how the environment shapes what humans can do is becoming increasingly critical to notions of wellbeing and for some, survival.

According to Prof Shackleton, almost one million rural African households have no access to demarcated arable lands and their reliance on and extensive use of natural biological resources is rarely considered in land reform or poverty alleviation programmes, potentially jeopardising the livelihoods of the beneficiaries.

The purpose of the Chair is, to develop interdisciplinary understandings of, and methods to reveal, the role, value and importance of natural resources in rural and urban livelihoods for poverty alleviation. Simplistically, this requires attention to four 'subsystems', namely the growth and production of specific natural resources; the household use of natural resources for consumptive and non-consumptive purposes; small-scale trade in natural resources; and the scale-dependent contextual attributes that influence each of the other three subsystems and how they interact with one another and change in time and space. He hopes to achieve this through personal research, participation in teams and support and mentorship of postgraduate students

"The relative magnitude of these to other livelihood strategies, especially with respect to use of land for varying purposes, requires elucidation to reveal and understand the potential for poverty alleviation. The trade-offs made within (and barriers between) each subsystem are of particular interest to us," he said.

The available time-frame of 15 years for the Chair is a crucial factor, Prof Shackleton said, as "this means that the research focus of the Chair can have a long-term perspective to it, which is sometimes lacking in much work on natural resources and livelihoods."

Typically, most research projects and publications span only a few years, but this Chair has the opportunity to "take a longer view and pose debates, questions and data collection cycles that will span longer periods thereby facilitating markedly deeper understanding of the temporal dynamics and variability of livelihoods and natural resources systems".

According to the NRF proposal the focus of the Chair will be interdisciplinary research and human capacity development on the complex social, economic and ecological links among land, natural biological resources, and human wellbeing for sustainable livelihoods and poverty mitigation and alleviation. In essence, it will grapple with the questions and methodological approaches around the policy, socio-economic and bio-physical contexts and situations and scales under which natural biological resources or land can contribute to or secure sustainable livelihoods, poverty reduction and greater equity, and to interrogate and expose the means of doing so in an ever-changing socioeconomic environment.

A future aim, not achievable within the initial phase, will be to combine the understanding resulting from the preceding three aims into comprehensive interdisciplinary system and process level models to explore policy options and trade-offs.

"The research focus of the chair can have a long-term perspective to it, which is sometimes lacking in much work on natural resources and livelihoods"

Professor Charlie Shackleton



Rhodes Celebrate NRF Ratings

Professor Tebello Nyokong

Professor of Medicinal Chemistry and Nanotechnology at Rhodes University, Tebello Nyokong has recently been awarded an A rating by the National Research Foundation in acknowledgement for her ground-breaking research into photodynamic therapy (PDT).

Intended as an alternative to chemotherapy, PDT includes harnessing light for cancer therapy using specially developed dyes to direct deadly light onto cancer cells. PDT is combined with quantum dots (QD), which are nanoparticles that absorb and then re-emit light, thus enabling scientists to target the cancer cells with red light and allowing for an efficient cancer treatment involving the photosensitization and imaging of these QD to kill the cancer cells.

The new therapy, based on using the blue dye used to colour blue denim clothing, which is inert and harmless by itself but can be activated by exposure to a red laser beam, has already been approved in some countries and reportedly does not destroy hair or healthy cells or cause nausea, unlike conventional chemotherapy. Prof Nyokong's research also extends to early detection of human diseases and environmental clean-up.

She holds a DST/NRF South African Research Chair and is the Director of the DST-Mintek and Nanotechnology Innovation Centre for Sensors, one of just three Nanotechnology Innovation Centres in South Africa.

Recognised in 2008 as one of the top three publishing

"I encourage my students to have a simple love their subject and to make that real."

scientists in South Africa by the NRF, Prof Nyokong is the recipient of an extensive list of national and international awards for her outstanding research, including the 2011 Distinguished Women in Chemistry Award as part of the Pan Africa Chemistry Network (PACN) and Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC) International Year of Chemistry Celebration of the 100th Anniversary of Marie Curie's Nobel Award in Chemistry, Vodacom Lesotho Hall of Fame Lifetime Achievement Award (2010), NRF President's Award for "Champion of Transformation in Research" (2009), Order of Mapungbwe: Bronze by the President of South Africa, His Excellency Mr Thabo Mbeki (2005), Shoprite/Checkers Woman of the Year in Science and Technology (2004) and Vice-Chancellor's Distinguished Senior Research Award (2003).

In addition Prof Nyokong was also awarded the Africa-Arab State 2009 L'Oréal-Unesco Award for Women in Science for her pioneering research. Only the third South African scientist to receive the award, she stresses the importance of using her authority as a leading researcher to encourage young women to pursue their dreams, using her life experience as an example of the power of hard work, dedication and perseverance.

"I always tell my students, when they talk to the public they must speak English, not science. I encourage them to have a simple love for their subject to make that real. She also believes in encouraging her students to think independently, and "to become employers rather than employees".



NRF Ratings for 2013

NRF rating results were recently announced for a record 22 researchers at Rhodes University. Twelve of these were first time NRF ratings, and ten were re-ratings.

The peer based rating process took place under the administration and quality assurance of the National Research Foundation during the course of 2012, and the research ratings take effect from 1 Jan 2013.

Rating categories represent the quality, impact and influence of the recipients' research output. The evaluation is undertaken by national and international reviewers, who are requested to critically analyze research completed during the past eight years.

A-rated researchers are those who are unequivocally recognized by their peers as leading international scholars in their field. B-rated researchers enjoy considerable international recognition by their peers, and C-ratings represent established researchers with sustained recent records of productivity in the field.

The Y category represents younger researchers (40 years or under), who have held their doctorate for less than five years at the time of application, and who are recognised by peers as having the potential to establish themselves as researchers within a five year period after evaluation.

Prof Tebello Nyokong's promotion to the A category brings the number of A-rated researchers on the full-time Rhodes staff to two - Prof Christopher McQuaid received an A-rating last year.

Two of the first-time rated researchers went directly into the B category - Dr Denis Pollney of the Department of Mathematics and Prof Ward Jones of the Department of Philosophy. Other notable re-ratings were Prof Mike Marais of the Department of English who went from B3 to B1, to become the highest rated Humanities researcher at Rhodes University, and Prof Martin Villet of the Department of Zoology and Entomology who jumped from the C to the B category.

This latest group of ratings brings to 71 the number of researchers at Rhodes University who are NRF rated, or 22 % of full academic staff, which is amongst the highest proportion of NRF rated staff in the Higher Education Sector. This represents 40% of staff who are in possession of PhD degrees, so there is plenty of scope at Rhodes for increasing the proportion of rated researchers. Of the current 71 rated researchers at Rhodes, 2 are A-rated, 18 are B-rated, 39 are C-rated, 1 is L-rated and 11 are Y-rated.

The NRF rating is a national indicator of research excellence. It is used by Universities and Science councils and entities that fund them for benchmarking purposes, and by the NRF and related research funders to determine the research strength of teams and individuals applying for funding. An NRF rating qualifies individual

researchers to make application to the NRF's Incentive Funding programme, which provides general research funds in proportion to an individual rating.

Herewith the full list of staff who received NRF Ratings this year:

Nyokong T Prof	A2
Marais MJ Prof	B1
Pollney, O Dr	B2
Botha CEJ Prof	B3
Jones, WE, Prof	B3
Marsh JS Prof	B3
Moller V Prof	B3
Villet MH Prof	B3
Foss, RJ Prof	C1
Boughey, C Prof	C2
Chithambo ML Prof	C2
Gotz AE Prof	C2
Klopper DC Prof	C2
Medved, AJM	C2
Rowntree KM Prof	C2
Antunes, EM, Dr	C3
Buettner SH Dr	C3
James, HM, Dr	C3
Machanick, P Prof	C3
Alagidede P Prof	Y2
Khene CJ Dr	Y2
Krueger, AR Dr	Y2

Committed to service excellence



The appointment of Mr Sipho Gumede as supervisor contributed to more effective service delivery in the Central Cleaning Department since he took up his post in October 2012.

Mr Gumede is infectious in his enthusiasm for excellent service. He says: "Every day I look forward to waking up. I'm also fortunate to be a part of a great team, which means everyone here has so much to contribute.

"I like being in charge and in control with my finger on the pulse, maybe I'm a bit of a control freak but I believe it's important to plan ahead every day to be prepared for unforeseen circumstances," he says, even if this means taking work home with him. He feels that it's important to realise that, as a leader, one is dealing with "real people and their incredible lives" – saying he looks forward to catching up with his staff whenever he can.

Having grown up in Durban, Mr Gumede has been working in the cleaning industry for around six years, managing profitable cleaning contracts in both the public and private sector, managing up to 60 staff at a time. Describing himself as "just a normal guy" he says he was privileged to have been formed and inspired by "a phenomenal single parent, my mom, who taught me to be a responsible man," which is not to be sneezed at as "often young people are often afraid of responsibility". His mom, who turned 60 in February, continues to be an inspiration as she raised and educated her children on her teacher's salary, obtaining an Honours in Linguistics a year ago. As the first born, he learned how to be responsible from a young age, becoming like a father figure to his brothers and cousins.

Mr Gumede completed a three year course in Public Management at the Durban University of Technology followed by two years in the public service industry. During his third year, he and a friend heard that a large cleaning company, *Super Clean*, were offering a two-month training programme accredited by SETA, to 100

contractors so that they can assist with staff shortages.

"I soon realised that there was no comparison with how you clean at home, as we had to learn how cross-contamination works, environmentally friendly practices... basically being given notes on cleaning as a definition and as a practice."

After completing the course, the director of the company gave him a call the next day, asking him to come in. Thinking he was in trouble, he was surprised to learn that he had been selected to train as a manager. Seeing as he was graduating the very next day, this was a lucky strike, especially since management thought he had only obtained matric.

"I think I stood out because I have an interest in what I do, I want to learn more, even though it's not an industry that attracts younger people. Often it's viewed as just a job, not a career."

He then had the opportunity of being trainee supervisor for a contract with Life Healthcare Hospital-heading a team of more than 70 people. "It was great to be thrown into the deep end and be employed before I graduated, and I was just 21 at the time."

He found it particularly useful to learn about infection control and how healthcare and cleaning work hand in hand. After three years he was promoted to primary supervisor where he liaised with clients -from the nurses to the deputy director to the suppliers. Then, after six months' training (other candidates usually take up to two years) he became sole contract manager.

"That responsibility alone groomed me to be more socially interactive and business-orientated; dealing with people from vastly different backgrounds, especially learning from staff members with many years' worth of experience," he says. He finds it inspiring to see how women who earn a low salary put their children through university because they are passionate about what they do. This is what makes his job so rewarding: exposing his fellow employees to management principles and developing them into team leaders.

"I believe it's more important to plan ahead every day to be prepared for unforeseen circumstances."

Students must take ownership of their studies

Describing himself as broad minded and positive, Mr Theus Louw has recently been promoted to the post of senior lecturer within the Department of Management. Since joining Rhodes University as a lecturer in the Department in September 2006, he has been intimately involved in teaching and learning, research, professional involvement, leadership, management and administration, and to a lesser degree community engagement.

Mr Louw, who lectures Human Resource Management and General Management, retains a focus on establishing a culture of "holistic deep learning" in his lectures as opposed to "atomistic surface learning".

"As a lecturer in Management Education my aim has always been to equip students with relevant competencies to deal effectively with the current and future work demands, both locally and internationally," he said.

"I try to focus on the development of higher levels of cognitive and affective competencies, providing the opportunity for students to think more critically and ... to deal with 'complex ambiguity more effectively.'"

Mr Louw believes it is crucial that his students take ownership and responsibility for their studies and that they learn how to produce new knowledge.

"In my teaching I attempt to empower students to take responsibility for their own learning, inspiring them to grow intellectually, encouraging dialogue rather than monologue, and encouraging them to become lifelong learners," he said, adding that he retains an open-door policy and encourages

all his students to approach him with queries pertaining to the course.

"I take the time to identify the weaker performing students who do not pass their tests, or students who feel they need help and invite them to address the issues with me. By doing this students hopefully realise that surface learning is not adequate to meet the course outcomes and that they need to be able to apply the learned theory in a constructive manner."

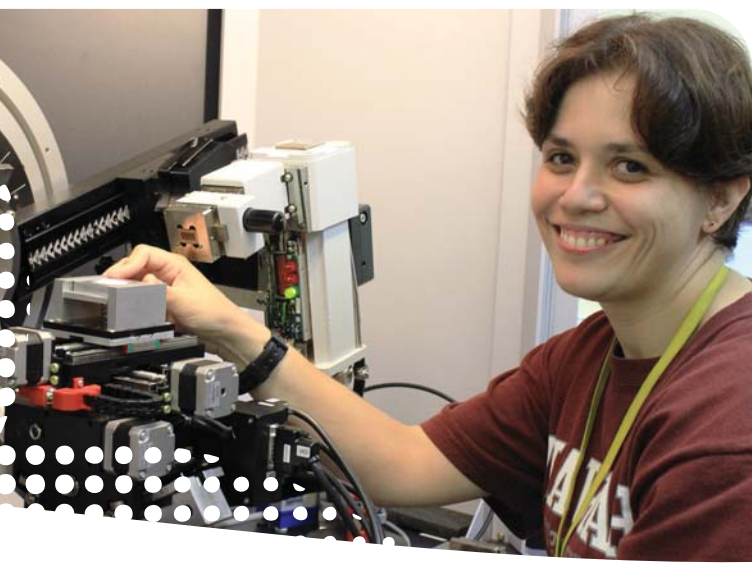
Before joining Rhodes University, Mr Louw had spent most of his career as an Organisational Development Practitioner, dealing with organisational transformational issues including human resources management. He has also lectured on undergraduate and postgraduate courses at various national and international higher education institutions.

He holds an undergraduate degree in Sociology and Industrial Psychology and an MBA degree from the University of Stellenbosch. He is currently reading for a PhD in Management as part of the Sandisa Imbewu Fund's China in Africa Research Project.

Focusing on the impacts of the changing geopolitical dynamics of China's presence in Africa on organisational and community levels, Mr Louw envisages that his research will contribute to a dearth of literature on the subject.

"The contribution of Chinese organisations to the South African economy is growing daily, however to maximise these benefits an understanding of Chinese work practices and culture is seen as a crucial element. Little is known on how culture influences Human Resource practitioners and managers in making decisions regarding human resources in Chinese organisations operating in South Africa," he said.





Senior Researcher passionate about the work

Anticipating a continuation of her prior post-doctoral research into phthalocyanine and nanoparticle synthesis and characterisation, Dr Edith Antunes is embracing her new position as senior researcher in the Department of Chemistry at Rhodes University.

Dr Antunes completed her PhD in Natural Products in 2003 at Rhodes University before traveling to America to assume a post as a post-doctoral researcher in the same field at Oregon State University. Her current research interests, however, include the synthesis and characterisation of phthalocyanines for application in photodynamic therapy, solar cells and sensors, and synthesis and characterisation of nanoparticles for application as sensors and catalysts.

In 2007 she began as a post-doctoral researcher at Rhodes University in the nanotechnology laboratory under the guidance of Professor Tebello Nyokong. She now manages the Nanotechnology Innovation Centre (NIC) for Sensors.

Dr Antunes, who has extensive research experience at Rhodes University, Oregon State University, USA and the University of East Anglia in the United Kingdom, said she has never seen such an array of top quality equipment such as the ones Professor Nyokong has acquired.

"I've done a fair amount of research work and what Prof Nyokong has built up, I've never seen anywhere else. It's all here," she said of the R25 million equipment.

"We have a lot of talented, eager postgraduate students. We have everything we need here in terms of equipment. We just need a little discipline to continue pursuing the work but we already have the talent". Dr Antunes manages the equipment, regularly training and supervising staff and students from other departments at Rhodes and institutions such as UFH, NMMU, NMW, UP and CSIR.

While Dr Antunes believes in the value of hard work and dedication, she said some things are necessary for an individual to become successful, such as world class equipment, opportunities, luck as well as emotional and academic support.

"I'm very grateful to Prof Nyokong and my husband, Denzil, for all they have done to enable my interests. I couldn't have got to this point without them," she said.

"I've never really thought of myself as a lecturer"

Dr Mosiuoa Tsietsi has been appointed as a lecturer under the Kresge accelerated development programme.

Dr Tsietsi, who completed his undergraduate degree at the University of Natal before joining Rhodes University as a Masters student in the Department of Computer Science in 2006, said he felt the need for developing his skills after becoming frustrated with the lack of intellectual challenge at work.

"When I was working I felt I was getting stuck and it wasn't that exciting. I was looking for an academic challenge and I knew that Rhodes was among the top two universities in the country for computer science," he said.

After hearing back from Professor Alfredo Terzoli following an enquiry for Masters study, Dr Tsietsi said he was inspired to commence his studies at Rhodes University. "That is one of the benefits of being at Rhodes; you get top class supervision and full attention because of the small size of the university. You don't get that anywhere else," he said.

He continued his research into peer-to-peer devices in his PhD, which was also supervised by Prof Terzoli, which Dr Tsietsi describes as incorporating the convergence of the internet and telecommunications and the challenges posed by the former to the traditional revenue streams of telecommunication companies.

Explaining the origin of his research interest, Dr Tsietsi said he has had a lifelong fascination with mobile phones and never thought he would get to work on them directly, being a graduate of computer science.

However, his research focus allows for a broad analysis of the impacts of the new technology on more traditional forms. "This technology is allowing us to leapfrog the traditional development paths and to do the same research as people in America. There are no boundaries information wise," he said.

After being shortlisted for the scholarship, Dr Tsietsi was required to give a 20 minute oral presentation, open to the public and attended by Department of Computer Science staff and representatives from the Centre for Higher Education, Research, Teaching and Learning (CHERTL), followed by a formal interview.

While he is experienced at giving presentations, Dr

Tsietsi said the nature of the presentation was challenging in that he had to prepare information that would be understood by the general public and not only fellow colleagues.

"As a postdoctoral researcher I'm used to giving technical presentations that involved a certain amount of assumed and tacit knowledge, but this was a new experience because I had to gear my talk to the general public who are not necessarily well versed in the discipline, and explain my research and what excites me about my work in an accessible way," he said.

This proved to be invaluable experience, he said, and will stand him in good stead for his position as a lecturer and researcher in the Department. "I've never really thought of myself as a lecturer, it kind of crept up on me to be honest; it was more of a natural progression of life that has brought me to this point. I'm very happy with the way things have turned out," he said.

The Kresge accelerated development programme, initiated as a result of the University's strategic intent to enhance the diversity of staff, seeks to accelerate the academic careers of individuals from designated groups thereby better equipping them to compete for permanent positions at Rhodes University.

This is done through providing opportunities to acquire, within a mentoring system, teaching experience, research skills and further disciplinary and/or teaching qualifications. These are three-year part-time contract posts, at the level of lecturer or junior lecturer, where appointment at the level of lecturer requires at least a Masters degree, and appointment at Junior Lecturer level requires at least an Honours degree.



"When I was working I felt I was getting stuck and it wasn't that exciting. I was looking for an academic challenge and I knew that Rhodes was among the top two universities in the country for computer science."

Rhodes hosts Mellon fellows

The Masters in Creative Writing (MACW) course offered by the Institute for the Study of English in Africa (ISEA), has the good fortune of being able to invite two writers in residence a year for three month long stays at Rhodes University.

The first two writers-in-residence (of 2012) were Mr Eben Venter, known for his award-winning novels *Trencherman* and *My beautiful death* and poet/wordsmith and Mr Lesego Rampolokeng whose latest volume *Head on Fire* spans his considerable contribution to the alternative dub-poetry scene.

Sponsored by the Mellon Foundation, the writers were here primarily to do their own creative work, but they also contributed to the course by giving seminars and working with individual students.

They presented lectures and talks in the wider university community. Their teaching in the MACW added to the teaching by the 12 writer-teachers associated with the programme, who work part time.

The two visiting writers are nominated by the teachers in the MACW and approved by the ISEA board, while the Mellon Foundation funds are administered by the university's Research Division, through its Director Jaïne Roberts and her assistant Verna Connan. Funds are made available for their accommodation and travel to and from Grahamstown as well as a small subsistence allowance for the duration of their stay.

Mr Rampolokeng visited Grahamstown from May to July 2012. He impressed the students with his fast-paced performance style and intuitive, to-the-point responses to their work. "Being a fellow allowed me to explore my writing in the way writers should," he says, "without having to worry about external factors like food and shelter or delivering text to some school principal-type character standing there with a ruler and scissors trying to whack-'n-snip me into line."

During his stay Rampolokeng sat in on weekly writing and feedback sessions with the MA students and ran his own workshops open to any students and Grahamstown residents.

One of the students with whom he worked closely was Hailey Gaunt, who wrote 45 poems during the course. Getting to know Mr Rampolokeng as a writer had a profound yet subtle effect on her work.

"His particular background gave him a very different perspective; at times he was a contradictory voice, however not in a disruptive way. His role as an agitator was consistent with his views on what a poet should do in society challenge, disrupt, offend. This challenged me to consider my own views on the deeper function of poetry," says Gaunt.

After his time at Rhodes as a Mellon fellow, from September to November, Mr Eben Venter posted an album on Facebook of photos of the people and places that enthused and inspired him during his stay. He also spent valuable time at the Rhodes Library researching sexual repression in academic journals as research towards his next novel.

During his residency he presented a seminar to the MA students on writing a journal and a public presentation on how he uses photographs in his creative process. His talk at the English department focussed on the language used by one of his characters, Koert in the novel *Trencherman* (Horrelpoot in Afrikaans).

To a wider campus audience he read a selection of passages in English and Afrikaans from his work, under the auspices of Afrikaans/Nederlands Studies. This has inspired a correspondence between him and lecturer Anton Vorster on the possibility of becoming an ambassador for the School of Languages. "The

primary aim will be to canvass more pre- and post-graduate students to study at their school and to link them more widely with similar schools internationally," Venter says.

"Long after I left Grahamstown the easy-going, amiable way in which the races mixed lingers with me as the strongest impression of my stay. It would be naive to idealise the rainbow nation aspect of Grahamstown society: I became aware of the poverty and high rate of unemployment which certainly hampers easy-going mixing. Even so, I came away with a sense of goodwill among the people I encountered in the cafés and bars, in the supermarkets and on the streets. And since then I've often shared these good impressions, in South Africa and here in Australia where I currently live."

Gideon Strydom, an MACW student who was supervised by Mr Venter, says the course took him out of his comfort zone, requiring him to write creative assignments in English instead of Afrikaans (the novella he is completing is written in his mother tongue).

He considers Eben among the three best Afrikaans writers, so felt "blessed" to have worked with him. "He is brutally honest, which I like and prefer. There is just so much I can learn from him. Eben is very real, what you see is what you get. He is not a Facebook/Twitter/YouTube-glorified persona - although I have suggested that he flaunts it a bit!" he quipped.

Mr Robert Berold, the poet who coordinates the MACW course, says he is grateful for the boost that Mellon fellows give to the programme. "They keep us wide awake, and other readers on the campus too, reminding us how vivid literature can be." The first Mellon Fellow in 2013 will be playwright and poet Kobus Moolman.

Mr Lesego Rampolokeng (left) and Mr Eben Venter were writers in residence for the Masters in Creative writing programme at Rhodes last year.



Taking “beach leave” to another level

cont.../from page 1



“I spent my three months away from the institution to finish a book, recharge, visit some institutions and have conversations about where universities are going, where the world is going and how universities are relating to this world and so on...”

With the sabbatical, Dr Badat has certainly taken “beach leave” to another level.

It is not that he is against people lying on the beach, but not for 100% of the time....maybe 20% of the time you should relax, recharge and renew, he says.

“I spent my three months away from the institution to finish a book, recharge, visit some institutions and have conversations about where universities are going, where the world is going and how universities are relating to this world and so on...”

He met with current and potential donors in the United State of America such as the Mellon Foundation, Carnegie Corporation, Rockefeller Foundation and Ford Foundation.

Dr Badat had lunch with the South African Ambassador to the US with whom he discussed several Rhodes projects, which included getting his support “for our efforts around water education and research on which we are partnering with University of Fort Hare and Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University and the Department of Water Affairs”.

“I also met the US Country Manager of Brand South Africa, Simon Barber, and the South African Consul General and his staff at their New York office. I briefed them about where Rhodes is and where we were hoping to go and discussed how they can assist.”

In Silicon Valley, San Francisco, Dr Badat, ably supported by the Chair of the Rhodes USA Trust Donovan Neale-May, met with Rhodes alumni as well as those that are part of the wider South African diaspora.

He hosted a radio show at the Commonwealth Club which was broadcast live and featured the Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister, Mr Ebrahim Ebrahim.

He also participated in a half-day seminar at the Stanford Business School which was hosted by a Stanford academic and attended by academics and business people that constitute the South African diaspora in Silicon Valley and San Francisco.

The rest of his time was mainly spent finishing his book, *The Forgotten People*, published by Jacana Media locally and Brill internationally.

“I went on sabbatical to the University of California in

Berkeley with the final copy with the principal aim of finalising the book for publication and that is essentially what I did...”

“The 10 odd weeks that I spent at Berkeley, an outstanding American university, was spent working with the copy editor - so it was an intense time of finalising the text for the book, arguing about what should stay in, what should be left out, finalising all the footnotes, the bibliography, the index, the photos and so on...””, explained Dr Badat.

Some of the time was used to prepare articles based on his book for submission to journals and to identify appropriate journals.

He also worked with Jacana Media to prepare the launches of the book in different cities and to ensure that a photo exhibition and TV documentary associated with the book publicity were completed.

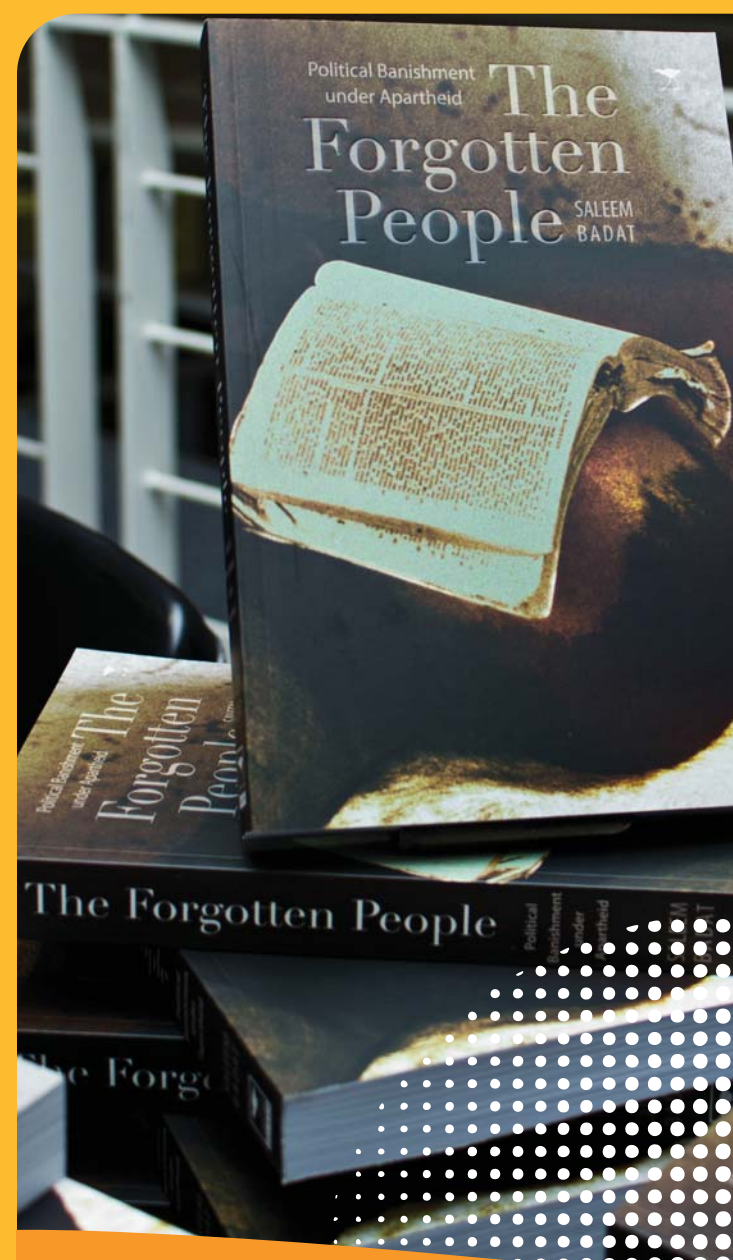
Dr Badat participated in seminars at the Berkeley Centre for Studies in Higher Education, and attended a week long programme on the California model of higher education, which was attended by senior administrators from US, Danish, Dutch, Middle Eastern, Mexican and other universities.

He met with the provost at University of California at Davis to discuss bringing an outstanding scholar in gender studies, Prof Amina Mama, to Rhodes on the Mellon Senior Scholar programme to work with emerging scholars and postgraduates, and undertook brief tours of the universities of Santa Clara and Santa Barbara.

He also travelled to Toronto, Canada to speak at the first Rhodes alumni reunion attended by a Vice-Chancellor and also presented a seminar on his book at the University of Toronto. He was hosted by a Grahamstown-born scholar, Prof Thembele Kepe, who will soon join the Geography department as a visiting scholar.

He then flew back to the US to make a presentation on South African higher education at the renowned Centre for International Higher Education at Boston College and another seminar on his book at the African Studies Centre at Boston University.

On his way back to South Africa, Dr Badat flew to



United Kingdom for the annual Rhodes alumni reunion and meetings with the Rhodes UK Trust and donors. There was also brunch with Rhodes alumni on scholarships at Oxford as well as a seminar on his book hosted by the Centre for African Studies at Oxford University.

“By the time I went on sabbatical, I had been at Rhodes for six years and this was an ideal time and opportunity to critically reflect on Rhodes - not only on the good and the strengths but also what is troubling and problematic about an institution like Rhodes, its weaknesses and shortcomings...”

Dr Badat feels strongly that after appropriate periods of service, senior administrators such as the Deputy Vice-Chancellors and Deans must be given the opportunity to go on sabbatical. He believes that both (Deputy Vice-Chancellors and Deans) and the institution will greatly benefit from these sabbaticals.

Rhodes takes health wellness seriously

Inspired by a vibrant and holistic approach to health and wellness premised on an understanding which incorporates the physical, academic, social, emotional and spiritual elements of an individual, the Student Wellness initiative at Rhodes University is the first of its kind among South African universities and is serving as a leading example of a dynamic and integrative wellness model in the country.

Fast dispelling the myth that wellness comprises only an absence of disease, the model developed at Rhodes University is among the most advanced for how it incorporates the various elements into an integrated model. The model comprises 23 staff members and four offices situated on the university campus, and include the Counselling Centre, Career Centre, Health Care Centre and HIV/Aids Office.

Following a thorough restructuring at the beginning of 2012, the Student Wellness initiative emerged out of widespread consensus that real health and wellness are best achieved in treating an individual holistically with a combination of mental, emotional and physical services.

Spearheaded by counselling psychologist and Manager of Rhodes University's Student Wellness section, Dr Colleen Vassiliou, the initiative promotes regular communication and collaboration between members of the four offices and in this way enables a more focused and dynamic approach to health and wellbeing.

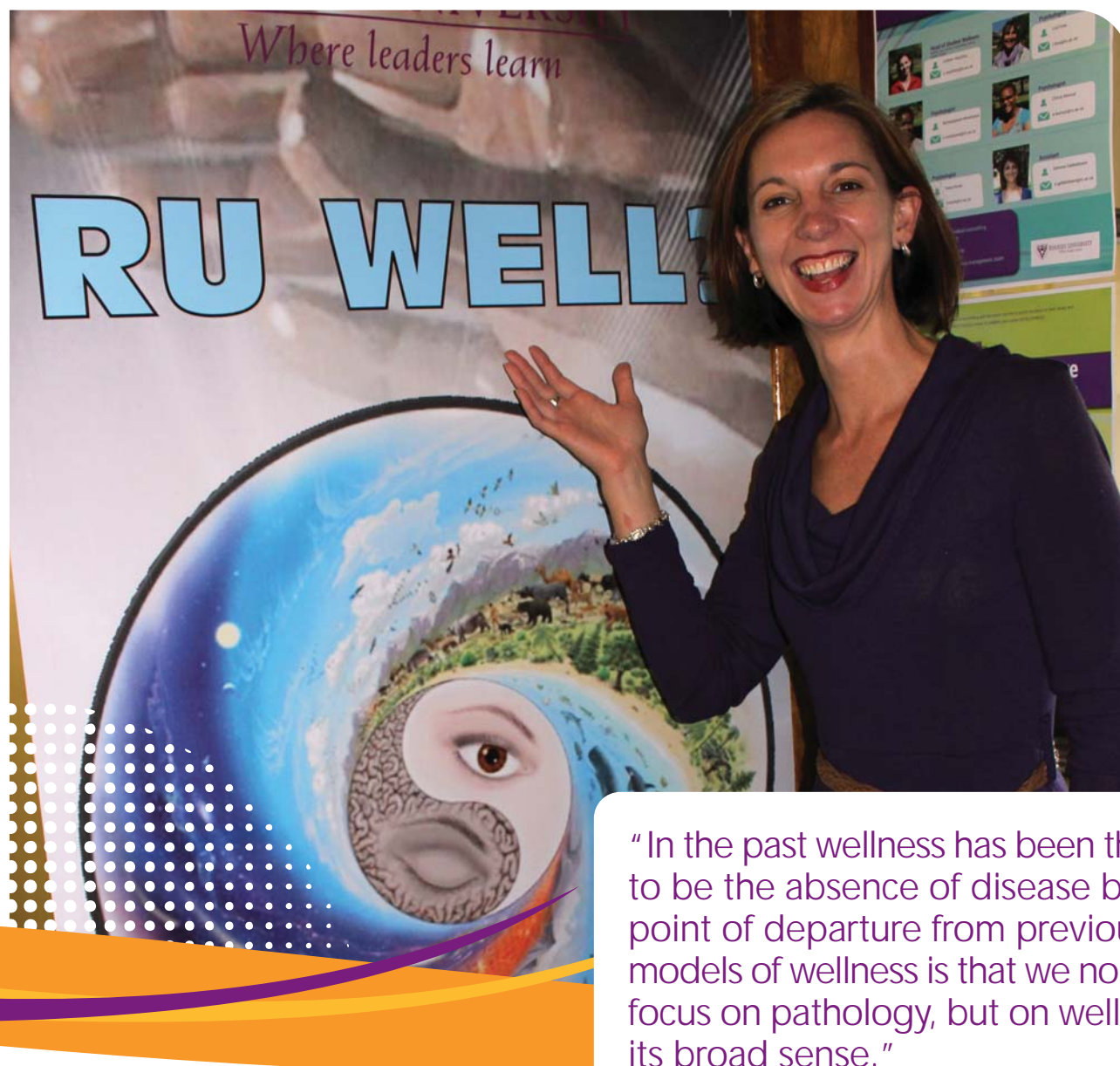
According to Dr Vassiliou, "In the past wellness has been thought to be the absence of disease but our

point of departure from previous models of wellness is that we no longer focus on pathology, but on wellness in its broad sense. When students present us with psychological issues which are also linked to other areas of wellness, we are able to refer that student to the relevant centre, and vice versa when mental or emotional problems manifest in a physical ailment. This is a wonderful collaboration and ensures that students see the benefit of holistic treatment," Dr Vassiliou said.

While the model is designed to approach wellness from various angles, its success also relies on shifts on public perception surrounding the use of such facilities as the counselling centre and HIV/Aids office. "I think a lot of people are under the impression that you should only go for counselling if you are depressed or not coping, but we are hoping to change these perceptions and encourage people to use our facilities consistently as part of efforts to improve coping mechanisms or for self-growth," Dr Vassiliou said.

Also crucial to the model's success, Dr Vassiliou said, is the strength and dedication of the multidisciplinary team, comprising Dr Vassiliou, Ms Sarah Green, Manager Career Centre, Mr Thandi Mzizi, Institutional HIV Officer and Sister Heather Ferreira, Head Nurse of the Health Care Centre, all of whom Dr Vassiliou describes as "deeply passionate and dedicated to service and caring. I couldn't do this without them; they have all been incredible and believe in what we are doing."

Students are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the various facilities, situated in the Bantu Stephen Biko Building in Prince Alfred Street and the Health Care Centre in Rhodes Avenue next to Campus Protection Unit (CPU) and make full use of the services available throughout the year.



"In the past wellness has been thought to be the absence of disease but our point of departure from previous models of wellness is that we no longer focus on pathology, but on wellness in its broad sense."

Career Centre

No matter where you are in your personal career plan, you are always welcome at the Career Centre.

Situated on the first floor of the Bantu Stephen Biko Building in Prince Alfred Street (known as the Union), dedicated staff are equipped with information and ideas on careers as well as overall assistance with personal career development.

According to Ms Sarah Green, Manager of the Career Centre, "We recognise that career development is a process rather than a once off decision and that there are lots of students who are not completely sure of which direction to take. We are available to discuss options and possible directions based on recognising strengths, abilities and skills."

Students are encouraged to make a 30-minute appointment with a career counsellor, during which academic performance - both past and present - will be discussed; interests and abilities will be examined, and a general discussion on career planning will also take place.

Besides these personal sessions, group sessions and workshops focusing on specific topics take place throughout the academic year. Workshop themes include CV-writing and interviewing skills, as well as career construction. Various companies are also invited to the campus from time to time for lunchtime presentations and to participate in career fairs.

Contact the Career Centre, please email careercentre@ru.ac.za or 046 603 7070.

"We recognise that career development is a process rather than a once off decision and that there are lots of students who are not completely sure of which direction to take."



Hours During Term time:

Monday - Friday:
08:00 - 17:00

Weekends & Public
Holidays:
08:00 - 13:00

Contact Details:

t: 046 603 8523

e: healthcarecentre@ru.ac.za
to make an appointment

Emergency:

A Health Centre Sister is
available 24 hours for
emergencies, on:

c: 083 801 1409

Health Care Centre - One-stop shop for all your health needs

Known as the old sanatorium on campus, the Health Care Centre provides a range of free services to students and staff and is the only university health care centre to offer a 24 hour service to students.

Describing the newly refurbished facility as a "one-stop shop", Head Nurse Sister Heather Ferreira said, "When a client comes to the health care centre we don't just see the physical problem they may display; we also take into account the emotional, mental and spiritual being that they are. You have to see the person in totality. There are often many other issues going on - we don't just focus on one aspect."

Services include:

- Treatment of minor ailments such as flu, tonsillitis, etc.
- In-patient care for acute illnesses
- Management and care of patients with infectious diseases

- Emergency assessment and crisis management (e.g. in the case of rape)
- Voluntary HIV testing, including pre- and post-test counselling
- Treatment for chronic care e.g. TB, HIV/AIDS, Hypertension
- Screening tests, e.g. blood pressure
- Family planning advice and contraceptives

Services at minimal cost:

- Vaccinations (flu etc.)
- Pregnancy tests
- PAP smears and blood tests
- Vitamin injections

Referral services

Healthcare Centre staff can make referrals to a range of other medical services in town, including private doctors and dentists, the Counselling Centre, the Rhodes University Psychology Clinic, Settlers' Hospital, as well as social workers and private counsellors.

Other services on offer: Health education individually or in groups; awareness campaigns ie breast cancer, drug abuse; free literature on health issues.



"When a client comes to the health care centre we don't just see the physical problem they may display; we also take into account the emotional, mental and spiritual being that they are. You have to see the person in totality. There are often many other issues going on - we don't just focus on one aspect."

Counselling centre

Situated on the top floor of the Bantu Stephen Biko Building (on Prince Alfred Street) the Counselling Centre comprises professional, registered psychologists and interns who are available to discuss a variety of issues related to students' mental health and wellbeing.

The counselling centre offers:

- Confidential counselling on academic, family, stress, depression, anxiety and isolation and loneliness
- Referral information such as directing and linking students to other appropriate support services to ensure that students get the right help
- Workshops on relevant issues; and
- Support groups for students with similar interests and goals.

Group therapy is also held throughout the year and comprises an art therapy group, hangover group, wellness group and relationship support group.

Senior counselling psychologist Mrs Nomangwane Mrwetyana said she aims to "provide a psychological service that enhances holistic self- development" within a professional environment which facilitates holistic healing and wellness. Staff also encourage students to work on personal development throughout the year and not only make use of the facility in a crisis.

After hours, students are free to use the Counselling Centre's psychological emergency helpline, which is dedicated to helping students in distress. **This helpline is to be used for psychological emergencies only** - by students who are depressed or considering suicide, or by those seeking help for a student in immediate distress.

The Counselling Centre is open daily from 08:00 to 17:00. Please call (046) 603 7070 to make an appointment or e-mail: counsellingcentre@ru.ac.za

The emergency after-hours number is 082 803 0177.



Tackling HIV related stigma and discrimination at RU

According to Mr Thandi Mzizi, Institutional HIV/Aids officer at Rhodes University who assumed the newly created post in September 2011, the prevalence of HIV/Aids among Rhodes University staff and students is 1.5%, with students accounting for less than 1%.

Rhodes University administration staff register 12.9% compared to the national average of 4.4%, and Rhodes University support staff prevalence is 12.9% compared to the 12.2% national average.

"We will be working on overcoming the stigmas and discrimination people suffer, through workshops and talks throughout the year. Stigma begins and ends with each one of us. The combination of ignorance, prejudice and fear creates fertile ground for the continued spread of HIV," he said.

"Openness, acceptance and accessible sexual and reproductive health and HIV services is the key to its reduction." He also encourages all staff and students to join the **First Things First** testing campaigns that will be held through the year.

The HIV/Aids office, situated inside the Health Care Centre (known as the old sanatorium) offers the following services:

- Awareness drives to encourage, inter alia, prevention, care and support of those with HIV and AIDS, positive living, and stigma reduction.
- Testing campaigns to encourage awareness of one's status and the promotion of positive living.
- Peer Education /support programmes for both students and staff.

- Supervisor/management training/support programmes.
- Development and distribution of resource material supporting HIV/AIDS Committees or related structures in the institution.
- Ensuring availability of condoms at appropriate points across campus.
- Liaison with medical aids as regarding support available for those HIV/AIDS.

Support for those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS including:

- Ensuring the provision of pre and post test counselling.
- Ensuring the provision of ARVs at the HCC and liaison with relevant bodies where necessary.
- Ensuring treatment literacy and compliance with the treatment protocol. Where there are difficulties, providing support to resolve these.
- Referring to other resources where appropriate.
- In the case of students, acting as a mediator between students, academic departments and Wardens etc where the student is having difficulties related to their HIV/AIDS status.
- In the case of staff, acting as a mediator between staff and supervisors/managers where staff have difficulties that are related to HIV/AIDS. Involve the HR Division where necessary.
- In the case of staff, where medically boarding or incapacity becomes necessary, together with the HR Division, support the staff member in understanding the issues related to this.

- In the case of students, where leaving the University becomes necessary, together with the relevant authority, support the student.
- In the case of students, provide support to wardening staff and academic staff where their students are infected and affected.
- In the case of staff, provide support to manager/supervisors where their staff are infected or affected by HIV/AIDS.

Please contact the HIV officer: (046) 6038523 or e-mail: t.mzizi@ru.ac.za for more information.



Contact details for organisations in Grahamstown involved with HIV/AIDS

List of service providers

Government/Municipality

Makana Local Aids Council

Tel: 046 603 8063 | Toll-free: 046 603 8063

District Health Services

Tel: 046 622 4901 | Toll-free: 046 622 4901

Masonwabe Clinic, Settlers Hospital (ARV site)

Tel: 046 622 2215

Fort England Hospital

Tel: 046 622 7003 | Toll-free: 046 622 7003

Non-governmental organizations

Black Sash

Tel: 046) 622 8091 | Toll-free: 046 622 8091

FAMSA (Family and Marriage Society of South Africa)

Tel: 046 622 2580 | Toll-free: 046 622 2580

Grahamstown Child Welfare South Africa

Tel: 046 636 1355 | Toll-free: 046 636 1355

GADRA (Advice and Community Work Day Hospital)

Tel: 046 636 1744 | Toll-free: 046 636 1744

Grahamstown Hospice

Tel: 046 622 9661 | Toll-free: 046 622 9661

Jabez Centre

Cell: 083 413 0252 | 083 413 0252

Raphael Centre

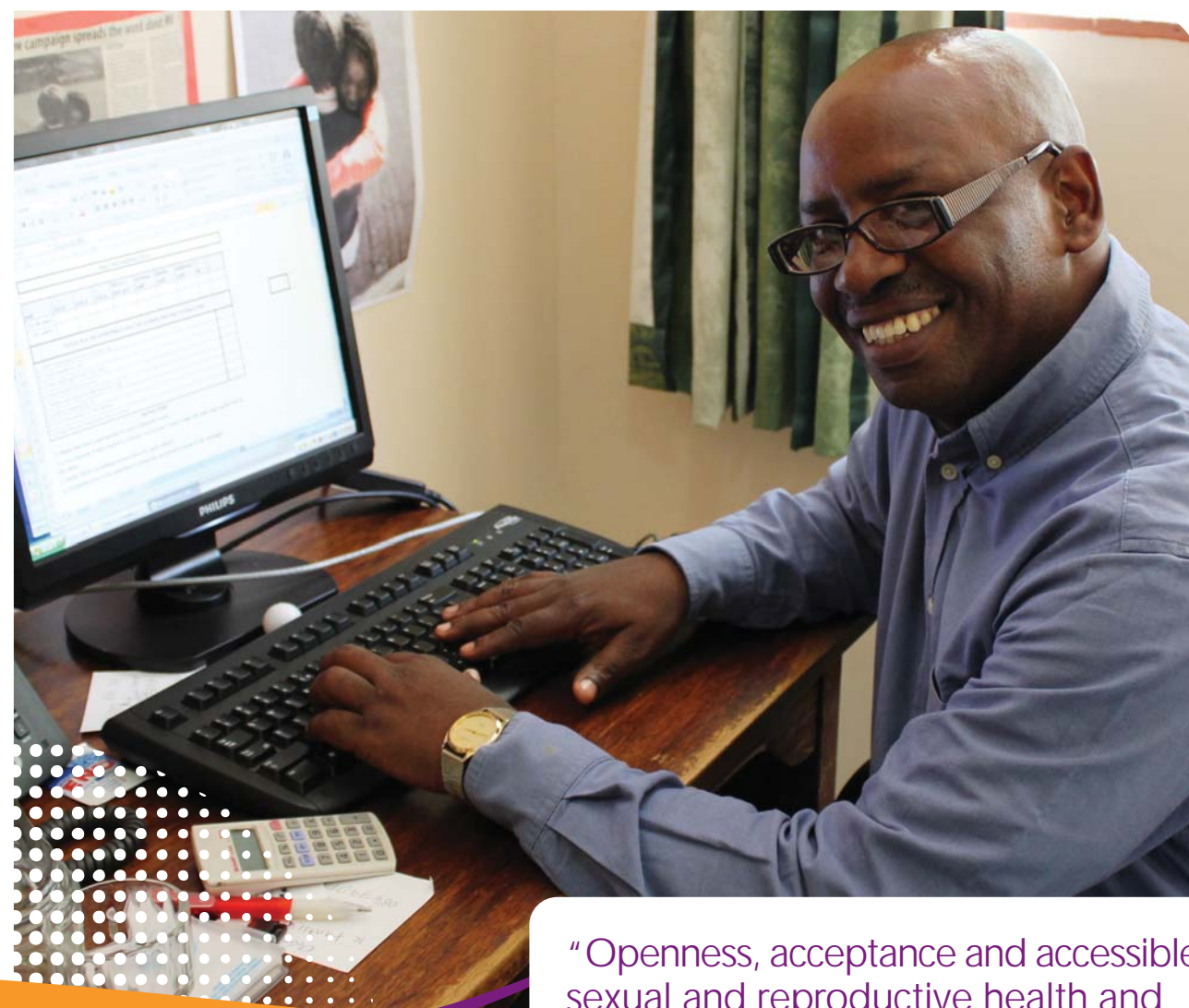
Tel: 046 622 8831 | Toll-free: 046 622 8831

St John's Ambulance

Tel: 046 622 5670 | Toll-free: 046 622 5670

Umthathi Project

Tel: 046 622 4450 | Toll-free: 046 622 4450



"Openness, acceptance and accessible sexual and reproductive health and HIV services is the key to its reduction."

First year students find a new home



A flurry of first year students have descended on Grahamstown and are settling in following a registration weekend that has been deemed smoother than ever before. According to University Registrar, Dr Stephen Fourie, the efficiency of the Rhodes registration system rests on excellent organisation and a team approach.

"One reason the Rhodes system works is that small is beautiful so we can do things that bigger institutions can't," Dr Fourie said. "The other reason is that we

have consciously tried to make the system really good."

Improvements to the registration system this year include a faster Windows-based computer system and the removal of new-comer fingerprinting from the registration process. Fingerprinting will now be done in students' dining halls, with the added benefit that first years will be able to meet their hall wardens and committees in the process. Dr Fourie believes that the changes made have streamlined the registration process and virtually eliminated the hassle of queuing.

First year Zuzeka Gwaxa agreed that the process was particularly stress free. "I am very impressed with everything because there were no queues and it was all very quick," Gwaxa said.

Fellow new-comer Ofilwe Seleka echoed these sentiments. "Registration was so fast. I just got here, but everyone was so helpful and there were no long queues," she said.

Parents and guardians also seem impressed by the weekend as a whole, with aunt of a first year, Unathi Mdaka, commenting particularly on the lack of hassles and paperwork. "I have been pleasantly surprised at how smoothly things went," Mdaka said.

Dr Fourie said that it is not unusual for the University to receive unsolicited compliments on the registration system from up to 200 families a year. "It is my impression that our system is streaks ahead of other institutions," he said.

According to Dr Fourie, this may be the result not only of the registration system, but of the application process as a whole. He explained that Rhodes aims to integrate students' academic application with applications for residence and financial assistance. "This seems to be a winning recipe," he said.

Dean of Students Dr Vivian de Klerk said that her impression of the registration weekend has also been

very positive. "I am pleased to say that I have received only compliments," Dr de Klerk said, "I get the impression that registration went very smoothly and was as easy and hassle free as it could be. It takes dedicated workers to achieve that and makes me very proud."

Despite the fact that the weekend proceeded without any hiccups, Dr Fourie has confirmed that work will begin in less than three weeks to ensure that next year's registration process is even better.

He explained that a meeting will be held at which all those involved in this year's registration will have an opportunity to express their concerns and suggest improvements. Necessary changes will be identified in the course of this evaluation, though Dr Fourie admits only minor tweaks will be likely.

One significant change is in the hope that a new online system will be up and running by 2014, allowing returning students particularly to preregister. "Students will still have to pass through the system, but there is much that they can do themselves to ensure it is just a case of confirming their registration," he added.



Rain fails to ruin the Jazz Evening

The annual Jazz Evening, held to welcome first years to Rhodes, was once again a success with not even the Grahamstown rain able to dampen newcomer's spirits. Though the turn-out was not as good as hoped for, those in attendance enjoyed the event. The Student Representative Council who co-ordinated the event, were happy with the outcome of their hard work.

"The Jazz Evening is supposed to be an opportunity for parents and first years to mingle with academic staff. It is a nice evening for people to get to know each other," said former SRC Vice-President, Martin Forsyth.

Ms Carey Frazer, SRC Projects Manager, said that her aim this year was to ensure that the music at the event catered to different tastes and represented a range of Grahamstown talent. In line with this, she organised for the Graeme College steel band, Rhodes University's Band 05, and community band, The Walters Clan, to perform. "The Rhodes students,

school band, and community group all play very different music, but it interlinks nicely," said Ms Frazer.

First years seemed to agree with this sentiment and many of them were soon on their feet dancing along. "So far everything is good, except for the rain," said first year Andile Ndlovu, who is registering this year for a Bachelor of Commerce majoring in Accounting.

"I felt like the evening was entertaining and that the crowd responded well to all the acts," said Band 05 member and third year student Shadley De Lange. "The night ran smoothly as all the acts had their time to perform. I am really glad all the first years enjoyed themselves especially when we saw them jamming along."

One disappointment was a poor turnout of academic staff, but this was likely the result of the unpleasant weather conditions which also affected the SRC's set up and forced guests to scurry between the tents set up on the Great Field. Regardless, Ms Frazer felt that the evening was as hoped in that it was a short and enjoyable, semi-formal welcome for all.



"I chose to come to Rhodes because it is different and far from home and I have heard really good things. I have also never been to the Eastern Cape so I thought it would be an interesting experience."

Ofilwe Seleka
BComm Law



"Rhodes offers a high quality of education and is small and intimate so the lectures can be more focused on each student and learners can make lasting friendships."

Nombeko Qete
BSc Geology

O-Week... behind the scenes

While first years scuttle from serenades rehearsals to introductory lectures, returning students and University staff have been hard at work ensuring that their first week at Rhodes is as easy to manage as possible.

"We try to make doubly sure that our orientation is a warm, welcoming, and positive experience for our first years and parents," said Dean of Students Dr Vivian de Klerk. To ensure that this is the case, Dr de Klerk said that nothing is left to chance.

"We have been training our leadership teams for the past week and this compulsory training is really important," De Klerk said, adding that the focus is on ensuring students assisting with orientation are respectful of diversity and do not force first years to do anything they are not comfortable with.

"Orientation week is about speeding up the settling down process so first years can focus quickly and painlessly on the main reason for university: the academics," Dr de Klerk said. For this reason, Dr de Klerk said that the social aspect of the orientation program has been slightly toned down this year following complaints from academics that first years are too tired to concentrate in the very important introductory lectures which take place in the week.

The Student Representative Council (SRC) has been very involved behind the scenes during Orientation Week.

"We have been getting four hours sleep a night if we're lucky!" said SRC Projects Manager Carey Frazer. Frazer explained how much work goes into organising even small details like food for the Jazz Evening and said that students sometimes underestimate the amount of energy that goes into making Orientation seem effortless. Despite the long hours and fatigue, Frazer said that the SRC has been working very well as a whole. "As an SRC we are very close so we feed off and help each other," she said.

In addition to help from fellow councillors, SRC members have had assistance from this year's team of "O-Week Helpers" - returning students who



"Everything is so efficient, everyone is so friendly, and Rhodes is such a welcoming space. It makes a big difference."

volunteer their time to help with running O-Week. The 2013 team has been led by former SRC Vice-President Martin Forsyth and was described by Frazer as brilliant.

O-Week helper Carl Rigby said that while the team has had a lot of work, it has been worth it. "Parents and first years are so grateful for the help and seem really happy to have experienced student help at hand," he said, adding that the team had worked well together to iron out any creases in their running.

"I think the parents particularly are appreciating the helpers," Forsyth said. "Everything is so efficient, everyone is so friendly, and Rhodes is such a welcoming space. It makes a big difference."

First year students have appreciated the assistance as well. "Registration has been very easy and simple. Everyone was so helpful and knew what was happening," said new BA student Kathleen Wesson.

Fellow first year Aliya Kassam agreed with Wesson and said she was particularly surprised by older students helping first years with their bags, the shuttle, and directions. "I was preparing for the worst so that was not what I expected!" Kassam laughed.

House committees have also been hard at work in preparation for "O-Week" after returning to Grahamstown a week before the first years arrived to go through training and help with decorating and readying their residences.

"The most important part of orientation is probably the weekend that the first years arrive," said Lwandiso Mkhize, sub-warden of Chris Hani house. "We need to represent Rhodes and assure the new students that this is a good place to be. Our aim is to give them a healthy, fun O-Week while also punting that this is really about their academics," Mkhize explained. In line with this, House Committee members all over campus have been accompanying first years to introductory lectures and assisting them with questions about the University.



Those living off campus have not been left to their own devices either and the Oppidan Committee has dedicated themselves to welcoming and orientating first years appropriately. Oppidan Sub-Warden Kundai Sibanda explained that each first year comes to the Oppidan office to learn about the support structures in place to assist them, receive information on matters such as security and budgeting, and find out how they can get involved with sports and community engagement. New oppidans are also able to find out about and take part in the various Orientation Week activities, such as RU Jamming where a very strong Oppidan team stood out in their orange t-shirts.

Sibanda also complimented the SRC on their organisation during O-Week. "The SRC and Oppidan Committee have had a very good relationship this year and the SRC has really been on top of everything," she remarked.



Orientation in the spotlight

It is an annual feature of Orientation Week that first year students spend some time in the Rhodes University Theatre watching performances put on by students of the Drama Department and members of local theatre company *Ubom!* This year, *STDiesel* and *The Most Amazing Other Show* entertained the new students while also highlighting some issues Rhodes students are likely to encounter during their time at the University.

Raising questions about racism, sexuality, class, drugs and other issues, the show forces audience members to reflect on what the dominant Rhodes culture is and what is perceived as the norm at this institution.

"The major purpose of the show is to throw light, to speak the unspoken, and to allow for discussion beyond our knee jerk fears," said head of the Drama Department and director of *The Most Amazing Other Show*, Professor Andrew Buckland. "We can't cover all the issues but hopefully the action of the show and, critically, the discussion exercise which follows encourages a way of thinking about all the issues they will confront in this time of change."

Both shows are fashioned from the experiences of cast members and other Rhodes University students through a creative process combining research, anecdotes, improvisation, and careful directing. "The show is crafted into a performance event that hopefully has the ability to arrest and entertain and provoke questions and re-consideration of pre-conceptions," said Professor Buckland.

STDiesel cast member and Rhodes alumnus, Sparky Xulu, said that the response from first years has seemed very positive so far with students rating the show highly and engaging with the issues seriously. "Our aim is to present the issues and get people to engage in debate and start conversations," Xulu explained.

Xulu also added that *STDiesel* has been updated this year, with adaptations made to the script of its forerunner, *Hush*. "We fused our own



experiences with the old stories from 5 or 6 years ago to update and amend them in terms of terminology and new information," Xulu said. This was particularly significant given that *STDiesel* places a lot of emphasis on HIV/Aids.

New developments also formed part of *The Most Amazing Other Show* this year. "An innovation this year has been the inclusion of scenes which engage with the dynamic interaction between students and the wider community. Rhodes is not an isolated unit - it exists within a social and geographical context and we felt it important for the students to consider this phenomenon," Professor Buckland said.

He added that an important part of the show is to try and develop the characters to the point where the audience is able to understand something of their background. This allows for engagement with how different characters have come to hold the views they do, especially in the case of markedly prejudiced or bigoted opinions. "Without excusing it the idea is to try and understand the dynamic so as to bring it to light and deal with it," Buckland said.

An interesting element of *The Most Amazing Other Show* is the discussion session which takes place at the end of the show, facilitated by Push Nqelenga. Shortly into this feedback session, an actor planted in the audience stands up and expresses the view that the show was hugely offensive and inappropriate before storming out. "The effect of the plant is simply to provoke the audience into speaking their feelings about what she said. She gives them courage by standing up and bravely expressing a not very popular point of view confidently," Professor Buckland explained.

Professor Buckland said that all genuine criticisms of the show are taken very seriously and dealt with. "The fact that someone is frustrated or angry enough to speak out or write to us means that we have touched something worth touching," he said.



Senerades practice reviewed



“We have a great bunch of first years who are really enthusiastic, fun, and keen to get involved despite the rules. It has also posed a challenge for residences to be more creative when it comes to participation which is good,”

The Rhodes tradition of Serenading, in which first years sing to one another as the sun rises over Grahamstown, has seen some changes following complaints about the practice which surfaced last year. Though some students are sad to see the ritual altered, it is hoped that the new guidelines for Serenades will ensure that this part of orientation makes no first year student feel uncomfortable.

Historically, Serenades has taken place at dawn with first years being awoken by House Committee members banging on doors, shouting over the intercom, or setting off the fire alarm. Men's residences then walked to the ladies' houses with whom they were paired for the morning.

Usually clad in pyjamas, the new students would watch each others' performances before being divided into pairs and asked to find out certain information about one another. The purpose has always been to help first years meet and make friends in an enjoyable way.

The complaints about Serenades came to light early in 2012 following the publication by Dean of Students, Dr Vivian de Klerk, of a letter she had received from a first year student. In the letter, feelings of objectification and concerns about pressure to participate despite unwillingness connected to, for example, religious beliefs or personal principles were expressed.

These issues were echoed by other students and

arose in 2012's Residence Life Survey as well. The complaints precipitated what Dr de Klerk described as a deeply consultative process to review the Serenades practice.

“I think Serenades is a wonderful tradition,” Dr de Klerk said, “There were suggestions last year of doing away with it altogether, but we have done our best to work with leadership teams to save it and make it more controlled.”

Hall Committees were required to discuss the matter last year before negotiations were undertaken between elected representatives of each hall, hall wardens, the Vice-Chancellor and Deputy Vice-Chancellors, the Students' Representative Council (SRC), and the Dean of Students.

According to Dr De Klerk, the proposed new protocol was taken back to each residence and the matter was thrashed out between the various parties until all details were agreed upon. The new rules were then approved by the Board of Residences and endorsed by senior management and senate.

Changes include banning the wearing of pyjamas and setting out guidelines for appropriate dress, prohibiting the waking of first years by intercom, alarm, or loud banging, and emphasising that participation is strictly voluntary.

Despite the long negotiation process, some house

committee members have been unhappy with the changes. This came to light at a heated meeting between Dr De Klerk and House Committees during House Committee training.

Palesa Mashigo, sub-warden of Atherstone House, said that some leaders felt the new rules were not a fair judgment of the general feeling towards serenades on campus. Mashigo did note, however, that students appreciated the opportunity to voice their opinion and highlighted that first years still seemed to be enjoying Serenading.

“We have a great bunch of first years who are really enthusiastic, fun, and keen to get involved despite the rules. It has also posed a challenge for residences to be more creative when it comes to participation which is good,” Mashigo said.

Dr De Klerk agreed that many seemed disappointed at the training meeting, but said that this was mostly due to the fact they have not been properly briefed by outgoing committees about the changes made during 2012. “Many students came into the meeting with no prior warning of the agreed policy so it turned into a arguing over of old points,” Dr de Klerk explained.

Dr De Klerk has, however, undertaken to conduct a survey when the “madness of orientation” has settled down and said that, if strong dissatisfaction becomes apparent from this, it will be possible for residences to work through their leadership teams and reopen negotiations in the Board of Residences.

“I do hope that serenades continues and lives long while we respect the rights of certain students not to participate,” Dr De Klerk said.

Facelift for Health Suite



If you haven't ventured down to the newly refurbished Health Suite yet, you may not believe your eyes when you get there. Having undergone an overhaul in 2012 the sparkling facility boasts top class equipment, a revamped interior and a motivated team to boot.

The Health Suite main gym (Weights Facility) was closed throughout the 2012 June/July vacation to allow for the refurbishment, which primarily affected the ceiling. According to Health Suite Manager Mr Felix Muyai, the goal was to improve ventilation by "opening up" the ceiling, which also enhanced the overall look and feel of the facility.

In addition, renovations were done to the old Spinning Studio on the ground floor, to fully integrate it into the main gym by turning it into a user-friendly and easily accessible free weights area. The gym interiors were also refreshed with a coat of paint.

The Health Suite now boasts an impressive array of top class strength equipment totalling R400 000, including seated leg press, cable jungle, chest press and total abdominals.

The changes made during 2012 include:

- New Indoor Cycling Studio

The primary addition is a new indoor cycling studio, on the first floor of the main gym, complete with modern lighting and better ventilation. Members will appreciate the refreshing view from the Studio which includes the King's Field and the Monument. The Spinning studio is also able to accommodate more bikes.

- The Main Gym - Weights Facility

The relocation of the Indoor Cycling studio has added much needed space to the gym, on the ground floor, creating a better layout which allowed for more equipment.

The gym has also acquired a new entrance. This direct entrance is user friendly for physically

challenged individuals or people in wheel chairs.

- Maintenance Store/Workshop

The passage space freed up by the relocation of the past entrance has been converted into a maintenance store/workshop. This arrangement will ensure that minor repairs and basic routine maintenance of equipment will be done in the facility.

Until now the facility has had to rely mainly on the services of maintenance technicians from Port Elizabeth. Given the high usage of the facility, keeping the equipment in good working condition is a priority.

According to Mr Munyai the various Section Heads did a wonderful job throughout last year to drive their section-specific goals and to keep their teams in shape and focused. All sections ran a successful event and also found time to organise and enjoy social functions through the terms.

"Our service remained solid and reliable throughout. Hiccups were few and staff disciplinary issues minimal. Health and Hygiene standards and maintenance turnaround time significantly improved," he said.

Highlights included the annual Indoor Cycling marathon (led by Lindi Lombard), Aerobics Marathon (led by Ruth Vorster) and the Upstart Initiative (led by Robert Evans).

With a staff compliment of approximately 75 dedicated team players, including Personal Trainers and Group Fitness Instructors, Mr Munyai said he is looking ahead to an exciting new year of developments.

"Beyond moving closer to our members' fitness goals through new programs, initiatives and partnerships, we will continue to build on the successes of the previous years." With a student membership of 2900 out of 3600, Mr Munyai said the Health Suite is a student's facility, "primarily run by students who inspire and drive the changes we make. Each year has a surprise for our members, and this year will be no exception, we are confident that they will once again be delighted by the changes looming on the horizon."



"Beyond moving closer to our members' fitness goals through new programs, initiatives and partnerships, we will continue to build on the successes of the previous years."

The Health Suite is open between 05h00-09h00, 12h00-14h00 and 16h00-21h00h on weekdays and between 07h00 and 10h00 and 14h00 and 18h00 over weekends.