

The Rhodes University Community Newsletter

Rhodos

**Staff Edition** 

March 2014

## Vice-Chancellor steps down pg 22 - 24



#### Rhodos: Staff Edition

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Rhodos Editorial team would like to express their gratitude to everyone who supplied us with pictures

According to Mrs Fischer, the assessment of each application is a rigorous process and consists of the following:

 Submission of a teaching portfolio by the applicant. This is assessed by his/ her peers in the Faculty. Support is provided by CHERTL in putting this portfolio together;

2. Submission of a CV and application;

3. Referee reports are solicited by the HR Division. These include reports from the Head of Department and from senior colleagues of the applicant. For more senior promotions, the Dean indicates which external referee should be contacted for a report. This

# Merit drives personal promotion

Academics at Rhodes are encouraged to regard personal promotion as part of a larger developmental process, involving the continued pursuit of learning and scholarship, according to the Director of Human Resources, Mrs Sarah Fischer.

Institutional excellence is achieved, in part, Mrs Fischer said, through a "robust and fair system" that recognises and rewards academics for this excellence. Among the core features of the University's promotion policy are the expectations that the majority of academic staff will progress during their time at Rhodes.

Over the course of their academic careers there is likely to be an increase in the quality and effectiveness of their teaching, an increase in the quality and impact of their research or creative endeavours, a growing community engagement involvement, an enhanced qualitative contribution to the discipline or profession and an increasing assumption of leadership roles within the institution.

Mrs Fischer said that Rhodes' philosophy regarding personal promotion is that merit alone drives the recommendation as to whether or not to promote a staff member.

As such, fair and consistent assessment of academics for promotion and appropriate criteria that are seen to support the pillars of the university, namely teaching, research and community engagement and the future strategic direction of the institution, comprise the cornerstones of the policy. Every effort is made to ensure transparency of assessment criteria and adherence to labour legislative requirements, she said.

In considering the eligibility of applicants for promotion, a process which is undertaken annually, consideration is given to what has been achieved since the last promotion or appointment to a particular level as well as the total achievements to date.

Ideally, the requirements for the various academic ranks should be studied far in advance of any actual application, "so that academics can have a realistic understanding of how they need to develop in order to be eligible for promotion, and begin building up the necessary evidence needed for an application".

Individuals considering applying for promotion are encouraged to discuss their application with the Head of Department and



#### Mrs Sarah Fischer, HR Director

distinguish between employees". However, in reality, they have a disproportionate and negative effect on certain individuals or groups. This is known as "adverse impact", she said.

is someone in the discipline of the applicant;

4. Reports from the DVC: Research and Development as regards the quantity and quality of the research outputs (publications, supervision of postgraduates) of the applicant;

5. A committee of peers considers all the documentation.

Dean of the Faculty before submitting their application.

Through this rigorous process great care is taken, said Mrs Fischer, to avoid any form of unfair discrimination, which can take place in two forms. Firstly, direct unfair discrimination where individuals are not promoted because of their race, gender, sex, disability status, sexual orientation, religion, age, pregnancy or marital status, ethnic or social origins, class, family responsibility, HIV/AIDS status, conscience, belief or political opinion, culture and language.

Secondly, indirect unfair discrimination, "more subtle and often not as easily recognisable", involves the application of policies and practices that are "apparently neutral and do not explicitly "If 100% of applicants meet the quality requirements, 100% of people will get promoted. In other words, the University does not say we can only afford to promote 60%. While the balancing of the budget is important, this is managed in other ways and not in terms of limiting personal promotion for individuals," she said.

"The Committee works very hard to ensure that each applicant is given fair consideration and over the years, detailed notes have been kept of previous decisions and of the principles that guide decisions. Diversity considerations are also key, and Committee members are reminded of these at the outset of each annual personal promotion process."

## Snowball the first female professor in Economics Department history

Professor Jen Snowball is the first female to be promoted to a full professorship in the history of the Economics Department. She looks forward to the new opportunities and challenges that a the full professorship position will bring.

Prof Snowball does not anticipate that her recent promotion will alter the work she is doing at present, but does feel that it is another step in her academic career and a validation of her work.

In addition to this, and of particular significance given that she is the first female professor the Economics Department has had in its 100 year history, she believes it does allow a greater voice through the position on Senate in influencing matters such as University policy.

"From a job profile point of view, there is a bit more leadership and opportunities for taking things forward that you want to do," she said.

Prof Snowball has been with the Rhodes University Economics Department throughout her academic career. After completing her studies here, she joined the University's staff in a junior lecturer position and discovered that academia was what she wished to pursue.

The years since have allowed her to engage with many aspects of campus life and discover what is

particular about the Rhodes Economics Department.

"We're a small department but the advantage of that is lots of scope for exploring your particular areas of interest," she said. Academics in the department are expected to teach a broad range of subjects and be flexible about their engagement with postgraduate supervision.

She noted that an added advantage of the Rhodes University campus space is that it allows for a large degree of interdisciplinary research and learning. "It really facilitates that sort of work which I really like," she said.

"I'm leading a double life in the research side," she said, going on to explain that her research interests and postgraduate supervision responsibilities include work in both cultural and environmental research as well as teaching and learning.

In relation to the latter, she has explored innovative ways to maintain good teaching and learning quality in large classes.

Outside of her academic work, Prof Snowball also undertakes consulting work, particularly with the National Arts Festival, and is involved in various campus committees, the Women's Academic Solidarity Association (WASA), and residence life through her Fellowship with Nelson Mandela Hall.

In addition to this, she oversees the Economics Department's community engagement project in which students volunteer to tutor at Ntsika High School.





#### Professor Jen Snowball

The community engagement project will change from being focused only on Ntsika High School (as it was in 2012/13) to catering for students from all Grahamstown schools through our partnership with Ikamva Youth (an NGO that facilitates tutorials and workshops in the afternoons).

She spoke of the work WASA has already done in changing policies that have inadvertently disadvantaged women whose career trajectories do not always follow the linear pattern often pursued by their male colleagues.

"Those are the kind of things I'm hoping to have an influence on changing," she said. "I'd like to say that while I might be able to do it [achieve full professorship] because I've had a long linear career starting when I was a first year student and because I have a very

supportive husband, it may not be the same for all woman."

As to what the future may bring for her, she is very happy in her work at present, but imagines that one day the next logical step may be to move into a more administrative leadership position.

"At the moment though, I would miss the teaching and research too much as it's what I am having fun with and what I want to do for at least the foreseeable future," she said.

## Limson puts full Professorship towards socio-economic impacts

Janice Limson has been promoted to a full Professorship at an exciting time for Biotechnology at Rhodes University. With the discipline now falling under the Biotechnology Innovation Centre (RUBIC), Prof Limson's team has a vision to work towards— delivering on the promise that biotechnology holds for society.

"Biotechnology speaks to developing new products and processes with social, environmental and economic impact," Prof Limson said. "The hopes and dreams of the field shared by many is that innovative graduates and scientists will be able to translate their research from MSc and PhD to bring tangible change in health, environment, energy, food and water security."

While the practice of Biotechnology has traditionally been about the application of Biochemistry and Microbiology, the field is now broadening and cutting across the chemical, physical, life sciences and engineering fields. This brings with it the changing demands that, according to Prof Limson, underlie the strategic decision to create RUBIC as Biotechnology's new academic home.

A big part of the Centre's work will look at understanding society's needs and how science and technology can respond to them. In Prof Limson's opinion, an interdisciplinary approach is essential to the success of the project.

"Biotechnology is also the ideal field for community engagement around science. With an entrepreneurial mindset, training also needs to include aspects of business and legal areas," she said. "RUBIC is modelled on three pillars -Education, Innovation and Communication."

"The vision of the RUBIC is to create an enabling environment for the translation of Biotechnology related research into products or processes with socio-economic value and to serve as the academic home for the discipline of Biotechnology



#### **Professor Janice Limson**

However, Prof Limson's primary focus this year is on building RUBIC. "My colleagues and I have been working towards this for a number of years, but now have the institutional space to move

"Biotechnology is also the ideal field for community engagement around science. With an entrepreneurial mindset, training also needs to include aspects of business and legal areas..."

together with other Rhodes departments as well as with government to develop short courses for entrepreneurship and science communication. She is also trying to find space on campus for

> the Innovation Labs which will provide an environment that enables postgraduate students to work towards making their ideas more marketable.

"It is heartbreaking watching potentially marketable research not

through targeted programmes in postgraduate and undergraduate teaching and research and in science communication," she elaborated.

It is in line with this vision that she pursues her current research as part of a group called BioSENS (sensors, energy and nanomaterials) which is focused on the use of microbial fuel cells to turn waste into energy while simultaneously cleaning water. She is also continuing work with Dr Ronen Fogel, a postdoctoral fellow, in diagnostics and sensors for malaria, breast cancer and HIV monitoring.

ahead and unlock the potential Biotechnology holds," she said.

As part of this project, she will be working

being explored beyond publication. Hopefully with the Innovation Space, students need not leave these ideas behind," she said.

On the topic of her

recent promotion, Prof

Limson expressed excitement at the opportunity it brings. "My dream is to see the science that we do at Rhodes translate into real benefits and tangible change for the country," she added.

## "Power needs to be contested"

"I like teaching and I always have," Mr Richard Pithouse of the Department of Politics and International Relations said. "I have learnt a lot from students and I appreciate being around their energy and enthusiasm. I think it's a privilege to teach."

He has recently been promoted to the position of Senior Lecturer and considers the teaching side of his job extremely important.

He believes a testament to the Rhodes Department of Politics and International Relations is that its lecturers take teaching seriously.

"There are plenty of academic departments around the world where people see teaching as a kind of chore or liability, but here people take it seriously and I think that's great," he said.

After completing his undergraduate and Honours studies in Philosophy at the former University of Natal, he became involved in academia as a lecturer before going on to finish his Master's degree at what was then the University of Durban-Westville. He joined Rhodes University in a full time position in 2010.

"One of the pleasures of being here is that you get to teach things that you think are important and interesting," he said in acknowledgment of the autonomy that academics in his department enjoy with regard to curricula.

He works in and publishes across a number of disciplines, though still considers his fundamental interests to be philosophical.

He focuses mostly on political theory, looking largely at the ideas of Frantz Fanon, other post-colonial theory like the work of the subaltern studies group in India, people like V.Y. Mudimbe and Achille Mbembe, as well as contemporary French philosophers like Alain Badiou and Jacques Ranciere.

In addition, he also considers questions in the field of urban studies, popular struggles, and popular power.

"I felt that it became necessary to contest that



terrain," he said in reference to his initial involvement in popular struggles and how he began to publish in this area. "Popular struggles are so often misunderstood and so maligned, often in a really scurrilous way, including in the academy, so if you're in a position to be aware of the disjuncture between reality and academic assumptions and you can translate your awareness in to those kinds of spaces, it can be politically useful."

"The academy is largely irrelevant to what happens in general life," he continued, "but not exclusively - it can also be a space of power. And sometimes that power needs to be contested.

#### Senior Lecturer, Mr Richard Pithouse

Part of the power of the academic realm, according to Pithouse, lies in the opportunity to introduce students to central contemporary concepts.

"I think it's really important to have people who introduce the students to good ideas, useful ideas, interesting ideas from the start," he said.

This is something he strongly believes is necessary, having found his own undergraduate studies largely

disconnected from reality and the important theorists of the time.

Currently, he is occupied with the manuscript for a book about the history of struggles in shack settlements in Durban and an edited collection on popular struggles.

He is also planning a co-edited book on Frantz Fanon.

## "Controversial role"

Describing his position as Industrial Relations (IR) and Equity Specialist within the division of Human Resources as a "controversial role", Mr Obed Maphutha explains how, in his chosen career, his work is seldom done.

"Some people think my job is depressing, but I've grown to like it. I like the continuous engagement with people and most of all I like to see people happy," he said.

"If at the end of the day I am walking out of my office and I am approached by a colleague, I put my life at home on hold and make myself available. That is the nature of my work. It is seldom finished and I cannot do enough for people."

His major responsibility in his role as IR and Equity Specialist is to render advisory support and advice on the implementation of policies such as the Labour Relations Act, Employment Equity Act, Skills Development Act, Basic Conditions of Employment Act and other legislation governing the employment relationship.

According to Mr Maphutha, within the context of a volatile economy, his main objective is to keep people employed and negotiating and explaining the terms and conditions of employment, hopefully eliminating the possibility for the occurrence of a dispute between parties by unpacking and explaining the meaning of specific acts.

"In general, most people spend about 70% of their time at work, and the rest with friends and family. Here at Rhodes we have employees from around the country who spend a minute amount of time with their families over the holidays.

"My work is to try and make Rhodes so comfortable that people feel rightfully integrated into their second family. We need to create an environment that is friendly and receptive and makes you feel 'I am home' despite being away from your family," he said. One of the best ways of doing this is by talking to people about their expectations of their working environment, and to explain those of their employers.



Mr Obed Maphutha, Industrial Relations (IR) and Equity Specialist

other and the main issues are generally the policies which control the relations between the two." He explained that common grievances between the

"We need to create an environment that is friendly and receptive and makes you feel ..."

two parties typically involve the management of misconduct, disputes and discipline issues, mostly relating to the ever-changing policies.

"You have to work on integrating people into a changed management system or environment. The best way to get people on board with new employment regulations is to liaise with their representatives, in the form of trade unions. In this way I think of myself as the liaison desk between for one party and unfair for another suggests one is winning and one is losing. This is not the approach I take in my endeavours," Mr Maphutha explained.

Collective buy-in from labour union representatives plays a crucial role in this process, and as such, forms an important part of Mr Maphutha's portfolio. "If any changes are made to legislation my first point of departure are the trade union representatives within the university. You need to engage them in the process and help employees understand why the changes are being implemented.

"Once you've done this, you can then manage any individuals who have been left behind or who don't agree with the changes. This way, you will have fewer grievances, your staff morale will improve and everyone will get out of bed in the morning wanting to come to work at Rhodes."

The other important portfolio of his job is Employment Equity, which comes high on the agenda of the University. In this role, his main responsibility is to drive the implementation of policies relating to elimination of unfair discrimination and harassment.

According to Mr Maphutha, although the University has not been prone to disputes of this nature, it is important to ensure that employees are well versed

"A crucial element to his role is that of informer, as many disputes which end up on my desk could have been avoided if the various parties had been adequately informed of their rights and expectations from the start," he said. "The changing nature of the labour relations legislation involves constantly updating and informing employees on what is expected of them in order to avoid grievances and disputes in the University."

"In a lot of cases people are unsure of what is expected of them and what rights they have in the course of their employment. Typically, you have your line managers on one side and employees on the employers and management on the one hand, and employees and their unions like Nehawu/NTEU on the other," he explained, sharing that his role as mediator is a delicate one, as he is expected to remain impartial to both parties, yet have gained their total trust.

In the context of employment, Mr Maphutha said he doesn't believe a single law in South Africa is "fair". "The laws cannot be fair but they can be reasonable. My work is to help people realise this and make working relationships as smooth as possible so they don't become destructive to the delivery of services to the institution. The idea that something is fair and informed.

"It is very important that our employees are well educated on this issue, given its sensitivity and importance in society. It is a good thing that the University takes a firm stand against issues of unfair discrimination and harassment in the workplace, because these issues on a larger scale can become human rights matters and have got serious constitutional rights implications".

He joined Rhodes in September 2013 after working in the industrial employee relations field for eight years in Limpopo and Pretoria.

## Bridging the gap between academia and industry

Dr Philani Mashazi, senior lecturer in the Department of Chemistry at Rhodes, has returned to his alma mater with a vision for helping bridge the gap between academia and industry and for improving early detection mechanisms in the Eastern Cape, with a skill set to match.

"Even while I was studying here, I knew I wanted to come back and teach. I've got so much love for academia, perhaps I just didn't think it would be so early in my career," Dr Mashazi explained.

He also emphasised the influential role his former supervisor, Distinguished Professor Tebello Nyokong, played in cultivating his love for the subject.

After completing a Masters in Chemistry at Rhodes, he pursued a PhD with a focus on electrochemical (immuno) biosensor-based systems for early detection of virus and disease outbreaks, using measles as a model and analysing how the technology can be transferred to other systems with similar detection mechanisms.

The success of an article he co-authored during his Masters with Prof Nyokong and Prof Kenneth Ozoemena proved influential, as it inspired him to pursue his interest in the design of biosensors.

"It was a great experience and the paper is receiving good citation internationally. It is

amongst my best published articles and from then I realised I could do so much and play a critical role in the human capital development within the biosensors research industry," he said.

His research was informed



Senior lecturer in the Department of Chemistry, Dr Philani Mashazi

turnaround time for results to be obtained, by which time the virus infections could have spread.

The only available systems were laboratories located in remote areas, thus requiring time for samples to be transferred, analysis to be done and results communicated on time.

"I have found a new love in my role as a senior lecturer at Rhodes ..." "Imagine if we could have these systems available to nurses, and healthcare practitioners at local clinics and hospitals. It would make it easy for them to diagnose symptoms and they could take immediate action, witnessed a knowledge gap between university and industry.

"There is so much ongoing research in South Africa but most of it ends up in the 'valley of death', never being used. I developed a real interest in trying to bridge the gap between laboratory applied research which could lead into innovative products," he said.

In his capacity at Rhodes, he will conduct research into systems that can be used in the early detection of communicable and non-communicable diseases. A strong believer in the adage "prevention is better than cure", Dr Mashazi's work could save countless lives if implemented correctly.

"I have found a new love in my role as a senior lecturer at Rhodes. It is an interesting and

by a lack of adequate response to a 2009 outbreak of measles in the Sub-Saharan region and the global spread of the H1N1 virus, which highlighted the inefficiency of current detection mechanisms. The research is important, he explained, as it provides the opportunity for early detection for efficient treatment.

In South Africa only one laboratory, based at the National Institute for Communicable Diseases, was used for screening of samples suspected of measles. He said this can provide a bottleneck in a virus outbreak situation, with elongated such as putting a suspected infectious individual in isolation so as not to expose healthy individuals and start the treatment whilst they await confirmatory test results. This will immensely assist in managing disease outbreaks effectively and efficiently," he said.

The work conducted during his MSc played an important role in securing him a position with Mintek in Johannesburg, where he worked for almost seven years setting up a facility for carrying out biosensor research while reading for his PhD. It was during his time at Mintek that Dr Mashazi first challenging role and whilst this is my first teaching experience, apart from the tutoring and demonstrating duties I did as a post-graduate student, I am looking forward to some awesome experiences and challenges that this new role has to offer."

He intends establishing a research group where electrochemical and optical-based diagnostic systems for point-of-care sensors and biosensors applications and the integration of nanomaterials with biomolecules for the fabrication of nanobiosensors will be investigated.

## Passion for teaching and research

A passion for combining teaching and research underpins Professor Tsitsi Mutambara's approach to academia and is testament to her success, having recently been promoted to Associate Professor within the Department of Economics and Economic History.

Prof Mutambara's research interests include international trade theory and policy focusing on intra-Africa trade, intra-Southern African Development Community (SADC) trade, South-South trade linkages and benefits, and transport infrastructure and their implications for trade and industrial development within the SADC region.

Before coming to Rhodes to pursue postgraduate studies (Masters and PhD) between 1999 and 2005, Prof Mutambara read for a BSc Economics Honours Degree and Graduate Certificate in Education and Diploma in Education at the University of Zimbabwe.

While she relishes the experience of teaching, she values the opportunity to be able to concurrently



Professor Tsitsi Mutambara

pursue her research interests.

"Being allocated time for research during the course of the year by my Head of Department so that I can improve on my research output has meant a lot to me and motivates and inspires me," she said.

Having her research articles accepted for journal publication in both local and international journals, and recognition of her research output by both the University and other organisations outside the University, such as the World Business Institute which awarded her a Fellowship in 2013 for her contribution in research, also spurs her on.

In addition, "encouragement and commendation from my brother who values doing research and publishing one's work in both local and international journals keeps me going, as well as attending international conferences to make one's work known by others."

She hopes to continue teaching at Rhodes for the foreseeable future, simultaneously taking advantage of the working environment which "is very conducive for research, so that I can do more research and publish more".

### "Women who have conquered adversity"

Mrs Pateka Qwesha's warmth and enthusiasm for her subject are clear for all to see, and she has the skills set to match.

A registered chartered accountant, Mrs Qwesha's passion for imparting knowledge to her third year students at Rhodes infuses her approach to academia with heart and intent.

A senior lecturer in the Accounting department, she joined Rhodes in August 2013 and has relished the experience of developing herself as an academic and Having been advised by her aunt, who was her guardian at the time, to pursue commerce for possible job opportunities in the future, Mrs Qwesha has not been disappointed.

"Admittedly when I started in the commerce stream I was a bit lost but as I continued with the subjects I fell in love with them in good time. I loved the business sense that came through studies. I also had a teaching interest which partly explains why I am in academia today," she said.

A former assistant manager at Ernst and Young, where she was responsible for Ntsaluba – Gobodo following a merger.

She completed her tertiary education at Walter Sisulu, followed by an Honours in Accounting at the University of KwaZulu-Natal and is currently reading for a Masters degree in Taxation at Rhodes, with special interest and focus on retirement planning for tax purposes.

"I haven't specialised yet but I'm really interested in the issues around retirement and how people are being taxed twice on the same income, when they are working and when they are retired, " she said.

Counting former president Nelson Mandela

juggling industry with academia thus far.

She teaches the third year Accounting course, which she described as highly technical, as an exit course, meaning students should be able to cope in the working world after completing it.

She said it is designed for those who want to pursue careers as chartered accountants and as such demands high calibre lecturing. preparing financial statements, recruiting graduates, awarding bursaries and keeping alumni in touch, Mrs Qwesha is no stranger to academia either.

Prior to this she held the position of senior lecturer at Walter Sisulu University where she lectured Accounting, and before that lectured at Fort Hare University.

Prior to this she completed her articles at Gobodo Incorporated now known as Sizwe

(a "peacemaker"), US president Barack Obama ("the change") and Martin Luther King ("the dream") as her main sources of inspiration.

She also draws inspiration from "women who have conquered adversity and became great when the odds were against them. I also embrace the principles of our deep rich culture of Ubuntu and caring for one another. I am continually inspired by myself when I fight for my right to be."

## Streamlining security at Rhodes

New Campus Protection Unit (CPU) Manager Mr Towers Naidu is looking to use his varied professional background in the field of security to develop the CPU team and streamline security systems so that Rhodes University students and staff will be safer than ever before.

"My aim is to centralise and harmonise the security systems," he explained. "I am initially looking at cost saving and technology implementation - Rhodes could do a lot there."

"Data Management Unit (DMU) in conjunction with the Proctors have developed an online reporting system and in consultation with both parties, this will be a project of which I will take ownership, so that matters are reported within 24 hours and received by the relevant departments for attention and this will greatly improve CPU staff skills, due to the exposure that they will receive," he said.

At the moment, Mr Naidu is primarily concerned with internal development, putting energy into structures and training to improve the skills and abilities of the CPU team.

With the campus security guards themselves, he is looking to implement team building and get everyone working together to show improvement.

"It is also about improving the lifestyle and working conditions of the guards and exposing the talents that they possess," he said.

"At the end of the day, it's not just the manager who is in charge; it is a team effort and conducting effective two way communication," he said.

This open-door approach is an important part of what Mr Naidu hopes to achieve as CPU Manager. "I have a vision of where I would like to go, but I need the guys to come on board," he said.



Campus Protection Unit (CPU) Manager Mr Towers Naidu

interact with the team itself, but with all the departments," he said.

He has also been in close communication with the Student Representative Council after taking the initiative to introduce himself to their team and highlight how he can be of assistance to them.

He invites students with security issues to approach the Unit freely. "I will listen and if it is valid and reasonable, I will help you," he said.

Having previously worked in the South African Police Services, corporate and banking sectors in both Durban and Johannesburg, Mr Naidu explained that part of his decision to join Rhodes University was a desire to escape the mania of city life and move his family to this quieter centre of learning.

"Coming to Grahamstown was such a pleasure," he said, though lamenting that he has not yet had much time to enjoy one of his favourite pleasures of fishing because of work commitments.

With his big plans for the Unit, however, it looks like the hard work will pay off. He encourages all on campus to still take responsibility for their own safety. "Just be a little bit more alert and aware," he said.



Consultation also extends to other sectors of the University that CPU is charged with protecting.

Mr Naidu is presently working to develop a network

between the secretaries and office administrators of various offices and departments to find out about their security needs and identify areas that can be improved upon in order to better overall safety.

"At the end of the day, my job doesn't only

#### Campus Protection Unit Guards, Mr George Goliath and Mr Brotherhood Wewe

### "I love doing chemistry because I know it is for the greater good"

"I love doing chemistry because I know it is for the greater good. The discipline is so accessible and yet so intricate. It's a lot like playing piano, if you have a great understanding of the basics, you can make brilliant music in time," said Technical Officer in the Department of Chemistry, Mrs Bryone Peters.

Mrs Peters fell in love with Chemistry at a tender age and the love affair continues today.

First inspired by the magic of chemistry after reading stories about insect chemistry, she dreamt of one day combining the two disciplines of entomology and chemistry.

She joined Rhodes late last year and spends her time preparing the generous laboratories in the Chemistry department for practicals for 385 undergraduate students.

She is responsible for cross-checking the laboratory manual with her supplies and ensuring adequate supply of chemicals and condition of equipment.

"There is a high degree of pressure in this job because everything has to be done by a certain time and it has to be done correctly. We can't suddenly run out of supplies or be short of a particular chemical. I have to make sure it all runs smoothly at the end of the day," she said.



Technical Officer in the Department of Chemistry, Mrs Bryone Peters.

society she combined her theoretical knowledge of chemistry with further studies with a natural science influence, adding to her analytical chemistry degree from the then Cape Peninsula University of Technology a second undergraduate degree in

Ecology at the University of Cape Town, followed by an Honours in Zoology at Rhodes.

As such, she knows the value of a theoretical appreciation of her craft. "At the time of my studies I thought chemistry was too commercial. Like most people I wanted to follow my dreams and do some good in the world so I learnt more about a natural science approach," she said.

But wherever she has worked, which includes the Biological Control Unit at UCT, people took note of her chemistry background, combined with the natural sciences, which gave her skills such as gravimetric analyses and sample and solution preparation.

"I'm glad I never lost my chemistry background and that it has always been there and I've been able to

In pursuance of her dream to "give back" to



build on it. The two have definitely complimented each other," she said.

In her capacity as laboratory technician at Rhodes she relishes the experience of improving on old experiment techniques and being kept on her toes by the students.

"I suppose one of the challenges I've faced is moving from small scale work to such a large scale, where I am now in charge of hundreds of peoples' experiments. What's nice about it is I don't have to reinvent the wheel, I can just improve here and there where necessary," she concluded.

## Naicker applauds RU culture of learning

Newly appointed Head of Library User Services and Research Support Services, Mr Larshan Naicker, believes that the Rhodes University Library is an interactive facility that supports the institution's strong culture of learning.

"I have worked in many libraries before, but Rhodes Library seems to have become a social space within the University itself. There is a whole thing of knowledge sharing and that process is taking place here," he said, adding that he was particularly impressed by the Library's work during first year orientation week.

He felt this culture of learning was something ingrained in students from first year to postgraduate level and supported by the institution's situation in a university town. "I have worked for a long time, over 18 years now, and it is the first institution I have seen where the whole culture of learning is embedded in all students and academics and people take pride in the University itself," he said.

Mr Naicker, whose interest in librarianship was sparked as a child through reading, refers to work in university libraries as his calling. He completed an Honours degree in Information Science before winning a Carnegie Scholarship to pursue his Masters in Information Technology at the University of Pretoria. He also has significant experience both in public libraries and through his work for UNISA.

He is pleased to be at Rhodes University now, having had five years' experience in distance learning, and finds that the



Head of Library User Services and Research Support Services, Mr Larshan Naicker

environment was very easy because people understand their roles here in the library so the handover was not a difficult one at all," he said.

He believes the Library facilities are on par with international expectations. "We use best practices from all over the world so even in terms of the library resources and the library building itself, if you look at other universities across the world we meet the standards," he explained.

He is hoping to enhance the Library's communication through social media and training to make students more aware of its research support.

"I think the faculty librarians who fall under me have a pivotal role in liaising with the various departments," he

#### Thousands of Grahamstonians brave rain to celebrate Mandela's legacy

Despite the wet and rainy conditions, thousands of Grahamstown residents gathered together to form a human chain through the City on 21 February connecting rich and poor, academics, students, pupils, church groups, the homeless and politicians in memory of former president Nelson Mandela.

The first event of its kind in the province, the human chain was envisaged by the organising committee, which comprised various Grahamstown-based institutions and organisations, to bridge past divides in the City by encouraging residents to unite around Mandela's legacy.

With some of the highest levels of poverty and unemployment in South Africa, many residents of Grahamstown continue to lead very isolated lives, often disconnected from the daily realities of others' lives some five kilometres away.

Mrs Katie Appollis, a teacher at Good Shepherd Primary School, attended the event with children from her Grade 1 class and said it is important to support Mandela's legacy and to increase awareness that "we are many but we are one and we need to stand together and move forward together".

She said, Mandela's legacy lives on in children, and the event offered her the opportunity to reflect on the importance of education in "moving forward together".

Sebastien Plutsick, a Grade 11 pupil at St Andrews braved the rain to be able to show his support for Mandela's legacy and to "celebrate all he has done".

For Tristan van Rooyen, also in Grade 11 at St Andrews, participating was more about "expressing our freedom as a country".

Siyamthanda Stamper, a Grade 5 pupil at Victoria Primary, said she linked hands with peers "to celebrate Madiba's life. He was like a father to me and fought for freedom for blacks and whites to live together".

engagement with students has opened up more opportunities for teaching and learning.

"I think mainstream universities give you more access to students and to the needs of students and academics. It is more in line with what academics and students really want," he said.

Settling into his position has not been difficult due to the Library staff's strong working culture. "To adapt to this said. "It is about partnerships with the academic departments to integrate the library."

Mr Naicker is ready to forge ahead with these plans and looks forward to the work to be done.

"I think I will take the challenges and opportunities in my stride and embrace the culture of the university to uphold the standards of the institution," he concluded. Describing the extremes, along racial lines, between the wealthy and the poor in South Africa as "incredible", Vice-Chancellor of Rhodes University Dr Saleem Badat said the human chain could serve to challenge us to realise that "we need to start addressing the extreme inequalities in this town in terms of violence against women and unemployment."

According to Dr Badat, the event served as "a call to all of us to ask what we can do as a municipality, or school, or university or business to address challenges and how to bring about dignity for everyone."

# Human Chain bridge divides in Grahamstown

Thousands of Grahamstownians joined hands on 21 February 2014 to bridge the city's class and race divides and to reflect on the legacy of the late Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela. The Human Chain event was the first of its kind in the Eastern Cape.

Grahamstown residents formed a human chain through the city, connecting residents from Ncame Street in Joza location to Somerset Street in town.

Mr Roger Domingo, co-organiser and director of GADRA Advice in Grahamstown, said that while

Grahamstown residents are often separated by location, the chain afforded them the opportunity to bridge the divides that still exist in the city.

With some of the highest levels of poverty and unemployment in South Africa,

many residents continue to live very isolated lives, often disconnected from the daily realities of others' lives some five kilometres away.

"We continue to live in very divided societies where past divides and great inequality exist, but these are the things Madiba fought against and we should be conscious of this. We can still come together and be united and keep striving towards those values of an equal society," he Co-organiser and director of Community Engagement at Rhodes University, Mrs Diana Hornby, said "Madiba brought a divided people into a nation and if he and our future means anything to us we should reflect on how we move forward. One way is to move forward in the Human Chain way, acknowledging our role in building and shaping a new and just society in Grahamstown."

"Many events and festivals come to town and yet with many of these there is still a sense of disunity. People don't actually come together. I think the fact that this event is non-political, is not aligned to any particular institution or organisation, and is a Grahamstown-led event plays an important part in really getting people to join forces and reflect on where we

> are as a country 20 years into democracy, where we want to go and how the values of Madiba can help with this," said Mr Domingo.

Initially conceived by Archbishop Thabo Makgoba of the Anglican Church, the first Human Chain event was hosted on 18 July 2013 in Cape Town, and saw over 5000 Capetonians join forces representing a

range of churches, synagogues, civil society organisations and media houses.

Mr Domingo said the Local Organising Committee, comprising various Grahamstownbased institutions and organisations, that has been planning the event since 2013, was inspired by the initial event and has added to the idea by planning a range of cultural activities on the day to be hosted at various Living Legacy sites around the city, including







"We continue to live in very divided societies where past divides and great inequality exist..."

said.

Joza Youth Hub and the Drostdy lawns.

"Regardless of location, we will be linked as a city. Whether you're holding hands up in Joza or in High Street, you'll still be linked with people all over the city. This chain will pass through three areas and through past divides and can serve as a symbol of integration," he said.

The event afforded the residents an opportunity to reflect on the state of contemporary South African society and how the values of democracy, non-racialism and equality exemplified by Mandela can be revived. Mrs Hornby added that Grahamstown is blessed with some "extraordinary visionaries who are already hard at work in a number of sectors, contributing strategically. There is a growing belief that it is very possible to turn Grahamstown around and we know this event will strengthen this citizen's movement and give it more impetus."

Mrs Hornby said the event provides a space for residents, learners and students to collectively commemorate Mandela's death and celebrate his life.

## Encouraging reflection and dialogue through art

Encouraging reflection and dialogue through engagement with art was one of the main objectives of the organisers of the Human Chain event.

"Art offers us a means to access contentious topics in a variety of ways and allows for the audience to come to their own conclusions about a certain issue," explained Nosipho Mngomezulu, Human Chain event organiser and student volunteer programme coordinator for Community Engagement at Rhodes University.

The various heritage sites set up around Grahamstown on the day are testament to these efforts and included various performances and exhibitions by local artists, poets, musicians and dancers.

"The idea was to use art as a platform to generate conversations around Nelson Mandela's legacy, bridging old divides in our community, and 20 years of democracy. From the poetry, to the schools art and the musicians, we wanted to not only celebrate Nelson Mandela's life and legacy but also offer people a means to think about how they interpret these."

For Rhodes undergraduate student Jesika Kilian, the event presented an opportunity to engage with schoolchildren painting posters which were displayed outside the Cathedral of St Michael and St George during the event.

Kilian offered her garden to the organisers who used it as a space to paint the templates of characters holding hands. These were then handed over to local schools whose pupils decorated them with depictions of their love for Mandela.

"I have a great love of doing things like this. I really enjoyed painting and think the human chain event



was successful. It makes me happy that something like this happened and I think it should happen more often, getting all the schools together," said Kilian.

For Fine Art Masters student Chiro Nott, the event encouraged creative engagement with Mandela's legacy. After reflecting on the former president's life and work, Nott was inspired to build a portable tree using branches and a papier mache trunk in homage of Mandela's memory.

"I worked with the concept of Mandela as the great tree who had fallen and us as members of society as the seeds of the future," Nott explained. She also suspended 80 apples from the branches which members of the public were invited to eat, extending the metaphor.

Participants like Nott and Kilian were encouraged

to approach the Community Engagement office and offer their ideas for engagement on the day, said Mngomezulu.

"We made a call out to various performers and artists on campus and in town and held meetings with interested artists who pitched ideas around these themes," she said.

The organisers wanted to utilise Church Square and the Cathedral because of its central locality, which was envisioned to encourage maximum participation in the event.

According to Mngomezulu, "we also wanted to use public space as a shared or common space for thinking about the notion of community. I think the reclaiming of public space as a space for cooperation allows us to re-imagine Grahamstown as a shared space."



Staff Edition | March 2014



# Returning HoD to grow teaching and research track record

Returning Head of the Computer Science Department Professor George Wells is looking forward to serving his second term as HoD after holding the position for 9 years between 2003 and 2011. He hopes to use the opportunity to sustain and improve upon the department's currently positive work.

"There are no major plans or goals for the future, except to keep growing on the solid foundations of a dedicated teaching Department, with a strong and growing research track record, and active and effective community outreach projects," he explained.

Particular challenges that Prof Wells anticipates facing while HOD include diversifying funding sources for research projects in a competitive



Returning Head of the Computer Science Department Professor George Wells

funding environment, managing a massive demand for the department's coursework MSc programme in information security, and increasing the space available for postgraduate students. "This has been a long-standing goal and one which finally seems to be showing some signs of a possible solution," he said in relation to the latter.

He developed an interest in academia while studying as an undergraduate and Honours student. When a junior lecturing position became available towards the end of his Honours year, he took the opportunity and has been working his way up the ranks ever since. Having been a part of the Rhodes Computer Science Department for 27 years now, he is well-placed to comment on what makes it particular among South African universities.

"Nationally, we are known for the very strong practical or applied orientation of the department, and the resulting skills of our graduates which make them highly sought after in both industry and research settings," Prof Wells said.

He continued to say that the "real world" research and practical teaching undertaken by students and academics in the department is an exciting approach. "At postgraduate and research levels, it involves cutting-edge research applied to real-world problems."

Prof Wells's research focused in the area of distributed and parallel programming, which for the layman can be understood as the practice of getting many computers or processors to work together in the resolution of large problems.

#### "Demystifying the University space and performance"

With a background in both music education and social activism, new Head of Department (HoD) for Music and Musicology, Dr Lee Watkins, hopes his position will be an opportunity to transform the study of music at Rhodes University and move the department into the future.

It is perhaps his work with social and civic organisations prior to democracy which drives Dr Watkins's vision of active engagement for the department.

During his tenure as HoD, he hopes to work on recruiting students from diverse backgrounds and cultures, demystifying the University space and performance in particular, and opening the field up by making more scholarships available.

"I like to get my hands dirty outside the office," Dr Watkins explained, saying that the traditionally conservative approach of music departments in South Africa may be holding them back.

The department already has a number of interesting projects moving them towards the goal of broadening audiences and engaging with perceptions of music scholars in the University space.

One such project sees them working in collaboration with the Rhodes University School of Languages and the Ntinga Ntaba ka Ndoda Development Centre to promote service learning and the study of heritage.

"We are trying to bring in new audiences from other parts of Grahamstown," he said. "We are getting interest from local organisations and making service relationships with active projects."

"I think we have the right people in the department with a progressive understanding of what music is," Dr Watkins continued, saying that the range of interests among departmental staff are tied together by the study of sound and that the team as a whole works well to develop all the courses on offer. "Each person is so strong in his or her field and that is what we need to build on."

Having himself studied in the field of ethnomusicology both in South Africa and abroad, he has used his research to pursue interests in rap music and hip hop in South Africa and he has also explored the relationship between migrant musicians and their hosts. He has also looked at the use of music performance as a cover for human trafficking between the Filipino musicians and their hosts in Hong Kong.

Many years working as a school teacher and as a cataloguer for the International Library of African Music (ILAM) completed

He has, however, taught on a wide range of subjects throughout the various levels of the Computer Science curriculum, with his energies put mainly in to programming, computer languages, and hardware or technical topics.

Currently, he is working on mechanisms for improving the efficiency of Java programs when using multicore processors and similar systems. His results have shown that improvements are possible in mechanisms using the widely-used programming language.

"How best to make these improvements in a way that is portable to different operating systems such as Linux and Windows and easy to use for programmers presents a number of interesting research challenges," he said.

Looking forward to the end of his tenure, Prof Wells said: "I hope that the Department will still be in a strong condition with regards to its teaching, research and community engagement activities, having grown and developed these from the already strong base we currently enjoy." his experience before joining the Rhodes Music and Musicology Department in a full-time position in 2011.

Although he described himself as daunted by being appointed HoD after only three full years at Rhodes, he said it was a wonderful opportunity.

"I think what my colleagues saw was that I might be the right person to facilitate change and transformation not only in the perception of the department but also in our curricula and relationships with the outside world," he said.

Dr Watkins believes his main challenge in furthering the department's projects during his tenure will be resources, but he is working on securing funds in order to ensure sustainability and development.

## Interdisciplinary collaboration takes centre stage

As the Department of Environmental Science's first female Head since its inception in 2002, Professor Sheona Shackleton's vision for the Department is to encourage interdisciplinary collaboration and facilitate communication and exchange amongst her colleagues.

She takes over the reins from previous HoDs Professors Christo Fabricius, Charlie Shackleton and Fred Ellery. "I'm incredibly fortunate to be taking over such a well-functioning, active, enthusiastic, productive and collegiate department, thanks to the leadership that has preceded me. I envisage no major changes but I would like to build on some elements which I believe to be important," she said.

According to Prof Shackleton, who has lectured in the Department since 2008 following eight years as an independently funded research associate, a review of the Department's mission statement and objectives is timeous.

She intends to "make sure these guiding statements and principles of 'who we are' still fit with where we see our strengths, our current research interests and where we believe we need to be going as a Department in the next five years." This is especially relevant, she said, as the department is welcoming three new young staff members "who need an opportunity to shape the future of the Department".

For Prof Shackleton, ensuring that the Department can continue to align with the external science policy and research funding environment that has shifted substantially in the last few years is a top priority.

Although relatively new to the job, having assumed the role of HoD at the beginning of 2014, Prof Shackleton flagged funding as a potential stumbling block to achieving her objectives.

"It is becoming increasingly clear to me that the University budgets have little leeway. It is therefore really important we continue to bring in our own research funding, but we also need to be thinking about funding for activities such as community engagement and student learning. We often draw on our own funding resources to help cover student field trip costs which are all an important part of what we do, so we do need the income that activities such as short courses bring."



Department of Environmental Science's first female Head of Department since its inception in 2002, Professor Sheona Shackleton

"For me these bigger, often more generously funded projects are really exciting; they provide an amazing learning environment for students that goes way during her sabbatical at the University of Copenhagen and established breakfast 'get-togethers' once a month where colleagues share good news, anxieties

Alongside the demands of funding is the need to continue to engage in transdisciplinary and cross-country research, particularly in relation to environmental challenges and global environmental change. These objectives are underpinned by Prof Shackleton's belief in the importance of interdisciplinary research, which she is hoping to encourage by increasing the number of projects within the Department and with external partners both within and outside of Rhodes. beyond the individual thesis, they build the capacity of staff, and provide an excellent opportunity to produce research that can really contribute to policy and practice," she said, highlighting projects such as the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) funded project on vulnerability and adaptation to climate change that the Department undertook with the University of Alberta, Canada over the last four years.

Passionate about supporting collegiality, she believes in the benefits of regular communication and exchange between staff and encouraging recognition of achievement.

As such, she has adapted an idea she came across

and achievements in an informal atmosphere.

"Personally, I think good communication and mutual respect is the essence of a well-functioning and happy department. I think we're lucky that we do have a department where there's a lot of mutual respect for each other, which makes us fairly unique. My job is to ensure this continues."

In addition, Prof Shackleton has a view to encouraging the Department's community engagement commitments and activities, which could partly be achieved by finding funding that supports communityengaged research and social learning processes.



## What lies behind the

"The lawn is the carpet on which the university rests. If the lawn is tatty, it makes the buildings look crummy. If the lawn is neat, it can make any old building look good, "says Grounds and Gardens Division Manager, Mr Mark Hazell.

Mr Hazell sheds light on the importance that the 72-strong division plays in campus life, particularly during times of high exposure such as Orientation Week and Graduation.

Mr Jeffrey Qubuda, who is responsible for the flowerbeds in front of the Administration Building, says that many students take photos in the area during Grad.

"Their parents must see the university to bring more students. We advertise it," he says. Mr Wandile Mabindisa works alongside Mr Qubuda, and adds that staff, as well as tourists visiting Grahamstown, also enjoy taking pictures of the grounds.

But the responsibilities of the ground staff do not end with marketing the soft, green environment. The continuing maintenance of 240 hectares of land on campus (240 football stadiums in size) and 17 hectares of the Botanical Gardens, require intense pre-planning.

The division is divided into horticulture, operations and minor works. Work on the ground includes landscaping, more than seven million square metres and removing over 1500 tons of dry waste from residences in 2013.

Tasks vary from highly specialised work such as preparing soft surfaces for cricket pitches, to collecting loose litter on campus. Litter has increased exponentially as student numbers have grown from 2400 in 1988, when Mr Hazell started at Rhodes, to around 7700 this year. The size of the team cleaning refuse has, however, stayed the same.

With the unpredictability of nature, challenges to maintaining the vast expanse of lawn on campus, 4355 surveyed trees, 5km of roads and 5000m square of gutter space (to name a few) are expected.

But December 2013 and January 2014 have brought added difficulties. The combination of burial activities surrounding Nelson Mandela's passing away, the burial of a senior mower operator and the three-week shut down over New Year, have resulted in loss of production.

In addition, the excessive rain, high humidity and high temperatures in January 2014 have led to exceptional plant growth, which has also caused severe backlogs.

Extraordinary circumstances like these force staff, who are short in

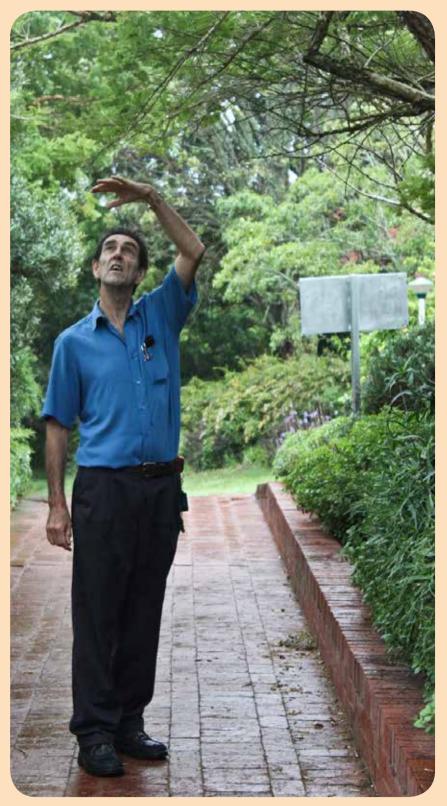
will be used for. "You can't just sommer plak a tree in," he jokes.

Succession planting is something that particularly excites Mr Hazell. This is when trees and shrubs spread their own seeds and cause new saplings to grow without the assistance of human beings.

He regards the green belt in front of the Centenary House as the crown of his landscaping at Rhodes, and points out individual saplings that have come up as a result of succession planting.

The role that Grounds and Gardens staff play in the marketing of the university and maintaining the grounds, can therefore not be underestimated.

"Without the dedication of the staff, none of this would be possible," he concludes.



supply, to focus on managing priorities such as clearing pathways of branches and leaves after a lightning storm rather than doing other gardening activities. The backlogs have thus made the four weeks leading up to O-Week particularly challenging.

Despite this, Mr Hazell stresses that the division does its utmost to pre-plan, rather than react to unforeseen circumstances. Planning for and planting of the beds in the quadrants in front of the Administration Building, for instance, needs to be done at least eight to 10 weeks in advance.

Greening initiatives such as tree planting take place years in advance, as it has to be predicted how big the tree will become and what the space

Grounds and Gardens Division Manager, Mr Mark Hazell who will retire at the end of March after 26 years of service



## beautification of campus



Grounds and Gardens staff members



From left to right: Mr Jeffrey Qubuda, Mr Wandile Mabindisa







Rhodes University staff members wellness walk

### What do you want from Wellness at Rhodes?

It's not something that applies to everyone. At least, that is what we tend to trick ourselves into thinking. But wellness of staff does apply to us all, whether it relates to concerns that are physical, social, emotional and spiritual, financial, intellectual, or quality of work life.

These are the six pillars upon which the RU Human Resources (HR) Wellness Programme are founded, and this year, HR's objective is to find out what you, as a staff member, want from it.

HR works in partnership with institutions both on and off campus such as FAMSA, Counseling Centre and Health Care Centre to put their plans and programmes into action.

The Health Care Centre (which includes the HIV Officer and Peer Educators), Sports Administration, Community Engagement, Counselling Centre and which led to the proposed Assertiveness in Life campaign. The campaign will deal with issues around not being able to say no to children, other family members, and friends.

But why should you as a staff member participate in any aspect of the Wellness Programme? According to Mr Schalk van der Merwe, Organisational Development Specialist at Rhodes, it is impossible for anyone to give their best at work if they have pressing problems at home. These may include family arguments, dealing with abuse, or having the court come knocking at your door.

Mr Van der Merwe adds that financial wellness also forms a large focus of the wellness campaign. In September, staff can learn about interest rates, paying back loans or drawing up a will. He feels that members owe it to their family to have a will.

Benefits of the programme and associated partnerships include confidentiality and anonymity, easy access on or near campus, and being able to share problems with someone who is not in Even though HR has a wellness programme in place, it keeps its ear to the ground to address the specific needs of staff. Suggestions are welcome at any time, and can either be emailed to Schalk van der Merwe at S.Vandermerwe@ru.ac.za or Tamsyn Rippon at T.Rippon@ru.ac.za or made by popping into their offices in the Administration Building in Rooms 214 and 219.

Admitting that all is not well in your life is not an easy task, especially when it means having to share it with someone else. But knowing that the University has available systems to support you, may make all the difference.

#### Planned Programme For 2014

March – Physical wellness activity

April – FAMSA and Alcoholics Anonymous presentation of their activities

Rhodes Law Clinic offer services on campus.

The HR division also works through Rhodes University managers regarding practice and treatment of staff on campus.

External partners include FAMSA and Alcoholics Anonymous. Whereas the annual wellness programme corresponds with monthly events at Rhodes, for example HIV testing during the HIV/AIDS week in August, HR encourages staff to approach them with suggestions.

One such suggestion was a talk on how to say "No",

your department. And because Rhodes and the Grahamstown community are inseparable, your family can benefit too.

One such example is FAMSA, where, if necessary, staff are assisted alongside their family members. As part of demonstrating responsible employeeship, Rhodes pays FAMSA to accommodate staff members.

Naturally, the University also gains from its investment into wellness. Having a professional support system in place means a decrease in absenteeism, retaining more staff and nipping problems in the bud before they spiral out of control. May – Medical Aid Testing Week; Peer Education Training

June – Assertiveness in Life campaign

August – HIV Week (testing and speaker)

September – Financial Wellness

October – Will Week

November – Violence from different perspectives

## "Nexus between research, water resource management and community engagement"

In an effort to share their groundbreaking research into the nexus between research, water resource management and community engagement, Rhodes University's Institute for Water Research (IWR) held its annual open day in February with a focus on the uses of various scientific and conceptual models and modelling.

According to Professor Tally Palmer, Director of the Unilever Centre for Water Quality, integrating scientific models into broader social contexts is a crucial element to successful research, comprising the "groundbreaking interface" between water resource management and community engagement with which she is involved at Rhodes.

This year's more academic focus, as compared to previous open days, was reflected in the attendance of representatives from a range of departments at Rhodes, with whom the IWR is pursuing transdisciplinary research endeavors.

Working alongside hydrological and water resource modelling expert and director of IWR, Professor Denis Hughes, Prof Palmer is involved in integrating scientific models into their broader social context, "so that when the research outputs are being developed and when they are ready for use, they are actually used ... As our research needs to be transformative, and given Rhodes' commitment to community engaged research and making a difference, let's do the work of practising applied research in a very practical way."

According to Prof Palmer, who presented



Professor Tally Palmer, Director of the Unilever Centre for Water Quality

can never really be sure if we have the crucially relevant information for the question we are investigating, we are constantly in the process

"As our research needs to be transformative, and given Rhodes' commitment to community engaged research and making a difference, let's do the work of practising applied research in a very practical way..." modesty, she said.

Scientific modelling aims to make a particular part or feature of the world easier to understand, define, quantify, visualise, or simulate. It requires selecting and identifying relevant aspects of a situation in the real world and then using different types of models for different aims, such as conceptual models to better understand, operational models to operationalise, mathematical models to quantify, and graphical models to visualise the subject. Models are typically used when it is either impossible or impractical to create experimental conditions in which researchers can directly measure causal relationships.

The open day featured presentations by members of the Agricultural Research Council; Department of Water Affairs; Institute for Water Research and its Unilever Centre for Environmental Water Quality, and Delft University of Technology, the Netherlands.





feedback from her research into and engagement with models of complex social-ecological systems, the value of a model lies in how it enables individuals to understand and act.

"When you combine science and social science you are combining very different original concepts and you need to check if concepts align or whether there are assumptions that are not aligned with the assumptions of another one. Because we can only gather partial information from both the natural and social worlds, and

of matching our model (both mental, conceptual models and quantitative models) against what we observe." This process requires reflection and





## **OppiTV's Premier Project launched**

Oppidan Press student newspaper launched its first OppiTV's Premier Project, which was streamed live on 16 February 2014 at 18h30 from the Africa Media Matrix television studio, following many weeks of technical, editorial and creative preparation (http:// oppidanpress.com/oppi-tv-livepremiere-broadcast/).

This is the first such project that the OppiTV team has undertaken after producing an impressive number of pre-recorded video stories for our publication in 2013 and pulling in massive views in their first year of existence.

"We are extremely proud of the OppiTV team for learning how to do a broadcast of this nature and taking the initiative to get it going. As the first of its kind at Rhodes, we think it offers an amazing new space for student journalists to explore innovative ways of bringing news to those on campus," said Oppidan Press editor-in-chief, Kyla Hazell.

"The premiere live broadcast was a project initiated and executed within the OppiTV team. I was lucky enough to be present in studio when they went live and was astounded to find myself tearing up - it really felt like watching student media history being made. We are so proud of their hard work and dedication to the exploration of something entirely new and intend to give them every support we can offer in making this endeavour a success," added Hazell.

Marc Davies (Broadcast Producer) and Vimbai Midzi (Editor) said, "the premiere included news pieces from Orientation Week for first years and new students, a 'preview' news piece to the Human Chain Grahamstown, as well as an in-studio interview with Dean of Students Dr Vivian de Klerk.

"OppiTV Live intends to produce two webcasts per academic term as well as special coverage of the SRC elections



From left to right: Natalie Austin (Chief Editor), Lilian Magari (Output Editor) and Marc Davies (Webcast Producer)

"In addition, we would like to run a series this semester that focuses on the numerous challenges faced by residents within the Makana Municipality and hope to encourage critical debate on how students and those in power can respond to these challenges in 2014," she said.

"The School of Journalism and Media Studies has been immeasurably helpful and supportive by enabling this project through the use of its television studios

offering as OppiTV is of exceptional importance to television and other journalism students in particular who wish to participate in the 'live' media environment, as many may following their studies. We wish to encourage these students to participate in this on-going application of critical thinking and skills taught in classes."

> "What we hope for most, however, is a committed audience that will be informed, interested as well as entertained by what OppiTV Live has to offer. We also hope our project will contribute to student media in South Africa, becoming a force to be reckoned with and a space where aspiring journalists can develop the necessary creative, critical and technical skills for journalism," added Midzi.

and other major events. These should include live interviews and perhaps panel discussions that also offer live interactive capabilities using online social media," said Davies.

"It is our vision that students will engage with those being interviewed or participating in panels as well as the journalists who ask questions and create content. This opportunity for 'dialogue' will hopefully encourage students to utilise social media capabilities to participate in the discussions produced by OppiTV," added Midzi.

"The School of Journalism and Media Studies has been immeasurably helpful and supportive by enabling this project through the use of its television studios. The School is also very kindly lending the necessary equipment to television journalism students who work with OppiTV, but we intend ultimately to raise funds for our own filming equipment," said Davies.

"Nevertheless, we believe what we are

In early 2013, Journalism and Media Studies 4 student Palesa Mashigo envisioned the creation of 'OppiTV' - a group of enthusiastic television journalism students that would go on to produce video-on-demand student news and distribute it via The Oppidan Press online.

OppiTV experienced a successful pilot year of video production, and boasts Mnet investigative journalism programme Carte Blanche's usage of OppiTV's footage of the 'water protest' in Grahamstown in 2013.

## Makana Green Fun Run promotes environmental sustainability in Grahamstown

About nine hundred Grahamstown residents participated in the newly revamped Makana Green Fun Run, which took place on Sunday 16 March 2014.

The event aimed to promote environmental sustainability in town and on campus, with a view to raising environmental awareness and encouraging Grahamstown residents, scholars, students and businesses to adopt more sustainable lifestyles and practices.

The name change and new route comprising a 2.3km walk and 6.4 km run reflects the expanded organising committee's aim to reflect more explicitly the role played by the local municipality and community.

According to co-organiser Ms Nikki Kohly, Safety, Health and Environmental Officer at Rhodes University, organisers are hoping local community members will embrace the event and its objectives of increasing environmental awareness.

"We realise a lot of people really liked the Bots route, but as new members of the organising committee pointed out, that route tended to favour Rhodes University only....hence the move in an easterly direction. As with the name change, the idea with the new route is to physically demonstrate the inclusiveness of the event, and also make the start/ finish more visible and accessible to all," she said.

One of the advantages of the new route is that participants no longer have to repeat the same circuit in different directions, which was the case with the old route, Ms Kohly said, noting that the new one is one continuous route (see details of route at www. ru.ac.za/environment/funrun/route).

The timing of the event, on a Sunday afternoon, has worked well as traffic volumes tend to be lower than





on a week day. The only drawback is that the Traffic Department has fewer staff available to assist over weekends. However many volunteers assist with marshalling runners around the routes.

Accessibility and fun played an important part in the success of the event, Ms Kohly said, noting she had drawn on the "lovely ideas and energy" of new organising committee members.

Certificates and indigenous trees, planted in participants' honour at DD Siwisa Primary School were awarded to the first three individuals to cross the finish line, winner of the best outfit, the biggest Rhodes residence team, biggest school team and best business support.

#### Staff Edition | March 2014



## Vice-Chancellor steps down

I wish to announce that I have advised the Chairperson of the Rhodes University Council, Judge Jos Jones, and our Chancellor, Justice Lex Mpati, of my decision to step down as Vice-Chancellor and depart Rhodes later this year. The precise date of my departure will be announced in due course, following discussion with the University Council.

As to the institution that I will join later this year, an announcement in this regard will be made by that institution very shortly.

The post of Vice-Chancellor is today one of the most demanding and challenging leadership positions in South Africa and internationally. I have revelled in the challenges and have spent eight interesting, fulfilling



and rewarding years at Rhodes. I thank you for entrusting the leadership of Rhodes University to me during the past eight years and I thank all those who have supported me and my efforts to further develop, transform and modernise Rhodes.

I have loved being in the midst of outstanding young minds and people, full of talent and potential, from whom I have drawn great inspiration and who fill me with optimism about the future of South Africa. Whenever I have wearied, it has been our students that lifted my spirits and provided me with the energy to undertake my responsibilities and work with a spring in my feet.

It has been a very special privilege to be in the midst of outstanding scholars and intellectuals. Rhodes University is inhabited by dedicated teachers and researchers that give it a deserved national and international reputation as indawo yolwazi - a place of knowledge. To possess among the best pass and graduation rates among South African universities is testimony to the combined efforts of Rhodes academics and students and support staff, who labour to create an environment in which the future graduates that our society desperately needs can flourish, and the knowledge that is critical for intellectual, social and economic development can be produced.

I have sought to lead Rhodes by example and in a principled, open and transparent manner with deep respect for academic freedom, freedom of expression and the autonomy that is critical for scholars, faculties and academic departments to thrive and advance the frontiers of knowledge.

I have counselled against an obsession with global rankings and on the need to remain focussed on the core idea, meaning and purposes of what it means to be a university - not just in abstract, but under the real conditions of a developing and transforming country and changing continent and world. In a nutshell: how do we cultivate knowledgeable, skilled and compassionate graduates and citizens, produce knowledge through different kinds of scholarship and engage with communities within a framework of commitment to the public good and building a society in which all are able to enjoy dignity, afforded opportunities and lead rich, rewarding and productive lives. or too conservatively, given social imperatives and competing priorities and needs with their attendant difficult social dilemmas. We have increased financial aid significantly and also mobilised much donor support, though the need to support eligible students continues to be outstripped by available resources. We have also addressed key infrastructural backlogs and numerous new academic buildings and student residences have been constructed and are being constructed. With sober deliberation and goodwill among key constituencies, Rhodes will continue to be a sustainable university.

I have served Rhodes loyally but have not been shy to be critical of our institutional failures, weaknesses and shortcomings when this has been necessary. The extent to which I have succeeded in developing, transforming and modernising Rhodes University I will leave to you and others to be the critical judges.

I have been blessed to have a University Council which has been enabling and highly supportive, and appreciative of the distinction between governance and management - something that unfortunately does not exist at all universities. The Senate is the custodian of the academic integrity and vitality of a university and together with the Faculty Boards at the heart of constituting a university as a collegial institution. I have valued Senate as a deliberative space and as the guardian of the academic project. The Rhodes Board of Governors and countless loyal alumni have provided me wonderful support in our efforts to raise funds and resources locally and internationally for financial aid to deserving students and large infrastructure development projects.

The top management of the University have been committed, outstanding and superb colleagues and it has been a pleasure to lead Rhodes with their backing and wonderful support. The Deans, despite not directly reporting to me, as it should be in a system of Faculty Board-elected Deans, have shared in and contributed to the leadership of the University. I am grateful to them for the counsel, advice and support they have provided over the years. Rhodes is fortunate to have hardworking and dedicated senior managers that ensure that by and large the University is effectively and efficiently managed.

The Rhodes that I will leave is in very good shape. The process to formulate an Institutional Development Plan as an institutional compass for the future, which

I have emphasised the need to advance social equity and justice, uphold the dignity of all, embrace, respect and appreciate difference and diversity as powerful fountains of intellectual, scholarly and institutional vitality, confront unacceptable aspects of our institutional culture and practices and make Rhodes genuinely a Home for All. I am excited by the next and new generations of young scholars who combine wonderful intellects and values and have joined Rhodes committed to its development and transformation.

I have sought to ensure that financially the University has been managed prudently rather than recklessly is currently underway, will table and seek to address some of the key challenges that face Rhodes. If these challenges are wisely and courageously addressed, Rhodes has a great future and will continue to be one of Africa's outstanding universities.

There should be no anxieties about my departure. Effective transition arrangements will be put in place, and I am confident that all relevant Rhodes constituencies will work cooperatively to ensure that a new Vice-Chancellor that befits Rhodes takes office as soon as possible.

There are no specific reasons that compel me to

Dr Saleem Badat, outgoing Vice-Chancellor



leave Rhodes. I have enjoyed the intellectual and institutional challenges of the past years and hope that I leave the University a better place. I am thankful that I have been able to continue to undertake research and write and publish. I have also welcomed the opportunities to contribute in various ways to building the national higher education sector. The Eastern Cape, with its major developmental problems, has grown on me.

This is the right time to move on. The demands on me have been great. The 80 hours plus per week that I have worked these past eight years have taken a toll on my family and I wish to devote more time to my partner and sons. I also look forward to time to write a personal yet hopefully dispassionate and critical account of my eight years at Rhodes, including the travails of being the first black vice-chancellor in 102 years.

I am grateful to the various local and international institutions, universities and individuals that during the past year have approached me to join them. I have now committed myself to an institution that has offered me an exciting opportunity to use my knowledge, expertise and experience to continue to contribute to the development and transformation of South African universities.

With gratitude for entrusting me with the privilege of leading Rhodes University between 2006 and 2014

Dr Saleem Badat



Vice-Chancellor, Dr Saleem Badat opening the new Education Department building in 2013

### Dr Badat to head Andrew W. Mellon Foundation International Higher Education and Strategic Projects

New York, NY (March 4, 2014): The President of The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Dr Earl Lewis, today announced the establishment of a new post of Program Director for International Higher Education and Strategic Projects.



He also announced the appointment of current Rhodes post and the appointment of Dr Badat in the twentieth year of South Africa's transition to democracy express The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation's commitment to continued support for its South Africa program."

Over the past 20 years the Mellon Foundation has provided over \$118 million of support to South African universities and cultural institutions. Its main goal has been to develop capacity in higher education by providing opportunities for individuals who were previously disadvantaged and individuals who have demonstrated a commitment to the previously disadvantaged. his post in late-2014. He will travel to South Africa regularly as part of Mellon grantmaking activities.

Dr Lewis stated that Dr Badat will also join a distinguished advisory panel assembled by the Mellon Foundation to guide a multi-year effort to develop knowledge and collect and disseminate information about the value of diversity in various domains.

The overall effort, which will be called Our Compelling Interests, will produce an annual summary of the best research findings on the value of diversity from

President of The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Dr Earl Lewis University Vice-Chancellor, Dr Saleem Badat, as the first Program Director. Dr Badat will oversee and direct the Foundation's international grantmaking and the ongoing programs in South Africa.

According to Dr Lewis, "the new Dr Lewis indicated that "support for South African higher education and specifically for the arts and humanities will continue to be a major priority, which Mellon grantmaking will continue to reflect."

Dr Lewis said he was "extremely pleased to have an intellectual, university leader and scholar of Dr Badat's calibre join the Mellon Foundation. He will bring a wealth of knowledge, expertise and experience and we are excited to have him as part of the Mellon team."

Dr Badat will be based at the Mellon Foundation headquarters in Manhattan, New York, and assume a variety of perspectives. This annual summary is intended to provide scholars, academic leaders, legal experts, policy makers, business executives and others with a "state-of-the-field" assessment.

Until recently, Dr Stuart Saunders, the former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cape Town, served as a Senior Advisor of the Mellon South Africa program. Dr. Lewis thanked Dr. Saunders for his contribution to Mellon and South African higher education over many years.

Apart from its grantmaking in South Africa, Mellon supports grantees in the United Kingdom, Canada, France, China and other parts of the world.







Ms Gwenda Thomas, former Director of the Library, Dr Blade Nzimande, Minister of Higher Education & Training, and Dr Saleem Badat, Vice-Chancellor of Rhodes University unveiling the plaque in 2010.

#### Dr Saleem Badat to Assume newly created post as Program Director: International Higher Education and Strategic Projects at The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

Dr Saleem Badat holds Bachelors and Honours degrees in the Social Sciences from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, a Certificate in Higher Education and Science Policy from Boston University (United States), and the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology from the University of York (United Kingdom).

After a decade at the University of the Western Cape, where he was the Director of the Education 2012; Brill 2013).

He has contributed numerous chapters and articles

"Outstanding achievements in the shaping of policies In 2004 Dr Badat was awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Free State for "outstanding achievements in the shaping of policies and practices of the higher education environment." In 2008 he received another honorary doctorate, from the University of York, his alma mater. In the same year he was honored with the Inyathelo Exceptional Philanthropy Award in recognition of Excellence and Leadership in Personal South African Philanthropy.

He is the current Chairperson of Higher Education South Africa (HESA), and has served

Policy Unit, in 1999 he became the first CEO of the Council on Higher Education, which advises the Minister of Higher Education & Training on higher education policy issues. In June 2006, he became vice-chancellor of Rhodes University.

Dr Badat is the author of Black Student Politics, Higher Education and Apartheid (2002) and Black Man, You are on Your Own (2010); co-author of National Policy and a Regional Response in South African Higher Education (2004), and co-editor of Apartheid Education and Popular Struggles in South Africa (1990). His most recent book is The Forgotten People: Political Banishment under Apartheid (Jacana and practices of the higher education..."

to books, scholarly journals, and magazines and has directed and authored various policy reports on South African higher education. He has also made keynote and other addresses at conferences and seminars around the world. on the executive committee of HESA and as Chairperson of its Funding Strategy Group and Teaching and Learning Strategy Group. He was previously Chair of the Association of African Universities Scientific Committee on Higher Education.

Dr Badat is a board member of the Centre for Higher Education Transformation, a member of the World Social Science Forum 2015 Scientific Committee, serves on the Think Tank of the Third Carnegie Enquiry into Strategies to Overcome Poverty and Inequality, and is a trustee of the Harold Wolpe Memorial Trust.