

# FACULTY FOCUS

A MONDAY MONTHLY SUPPLEMENT

CENTRE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT





# ENABLING PATHWAYS

A word from the dean

This issue of *Monday Monthly* profiles CHED's work from the student point of view, with a special focus on how we strive to provide 'enabling pathways' that extend from school right through to the world of work.

The importance of providing students with supportive 'pathways' is highly topical in higher education discourse, as institutions around the globe are wrestling with the challenges of high drop-out rates, especially in STEM areas of study (science, technology, engineering and mathematics). While CHED has a good national and international reputation, it is important that we continue to benchmark ourselves in a rapidly evolving area of scholarship and practice.

CHED's wide range of services – from FYE to Extended Curricula, Global Citizenship to Career Expos – recognises two important realities about UCT's students. The first is that our students are amazing – they are some of the most talented and academically capable students in the country and from across the continent. They bring with them immense cultural and social capital, given their diversity of background and experiences. As you will read in the write-ups, many of CHED's services seek to draw out these strengths and to provide opportunities for students to flourish. As they flourish – as students, leaders, activists, researchers – they contribute to UCT's excellence. They are in fact an essential contributor, if not *the* essential contributor, to UCT's excellence.

The second reality is that many of these very same students arrive at UCT against great odds given the ongoing legacy of unequal provision of education. Even though most of our

students come from good public and private schools, the pernicious effects of inequality continue to manifest in feelings of alienation and frustration, and unacceptable differentials in academic performance between white and black students. This is unacceptable. If UCT's commitment to redress in its admissions policy is to translate into equity of outcomes then there must be unequivocal support for students all along the pathway.

This is what CHED is about.

CHED (through its ADP programmes based in each of the faculties) has focused predominantly on the transition from school to university, but increasingly the pathway extends further up the curriculum. More recently we have begun to work at the postgraduate level, providing intensive support for the writing that is so critical to the success of postgraduates. Many of CHED's services extend to all students – FYE, Writing Centre, Career Services, Vula and its 'products' – ensuring the continual improvement of the teaching and learning experience. CHED's reach includes the diverse audiences of Summer School and its extension programme, which seeks to make the intellectual resources of UCT available to those beyond its walls (extra-mural). Most recently through MOOCs our 'students' are all around the globe.

CHED's contribution to transformation – to helping UCT meet its commitment to equity of access and equity of success for students, both at university and in their chosen careers – is as relevant now as it has ever been.

**Assoc Prof Suellen Shay**  
Dean of CHED



To find out more about the Centre for Higher Education Development, visit [ched.uct.ac.za](http://ched.uct.ac.za) and follow @CHED\_UCT on Twitter. Alternatively, get in touch directly on 021 650 2645 or [ched@uct.ac.za](mailto:ched@uct.ac.za).

PHOTO BY MICHAEL HAMMOND

"The importance of providing students with supportive 'pathways' is highly topical in higher education discourse, as institutions around the globe are wrestling with the challenges of high drop-out rates, especially in STEM areas of study."

### A few things about CHED you might not know:

- 1 Of CHED's total budget, half of its income is from externally generated revenue: foundations, corporate donors, government grants and external sales. Because CHED's academic staff teach and do research, they also generate revenue – but the teaching revenue (fees and subsidies) goes to the faculties in which the teaching is located.
- 2 Half of CHED's total complement of staff is PASS and half academic. Of the PASS complement, more than half of these are in pay class 10 and above. All of these contribute to UCT's core business through professional services; for example, educational technology, data analytics, career advice, graduate recruitment, and employer partnerships.
- 3 CHED's services, including its teaching, are underpinned in some cases by decades of research in key areas – academic literacy, educational technology, testing, curriculum, numeracy, multilingualism, to name only a few.
- 4 It is the complementarity of academic and professional services that contributes to the strength of what CHED has to offer and makes CHED unique internationally.



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# FACULTY FOCUS

Over the course of 2014 and 2015, UCT's newsroom has been bringing out special supplements to *Monday Monthly* focused on the university's six faculties as well as the Graduate School of Business (GSB) and the Centre for Higher Education Development. Coming up later this year is the Faculty of Engineering & the Built Environment, as well as the GSB.

To read past editions, head online: [www.uct.ac.za/faculties/faculty\\_focus](http://www.uct.ac.za/faculties/faculty_focus)

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## 01 NATIONAL BENCHMARK TESTS TESTING FOR PLACEMENT

One of the first interactions students might have with CHED comes well before they even set foot on campus – in the form of the National Benchmark Tests (NBT).



These multiple-choice tests, developed to assess applicants' academic, quantitative and mathematical literacy, are one of two national assessments in South Africa, the other being the national school-leaving examination, the National Senior Certificate (NSC), which is a statutory requirement for entry into higher education. The NBT consist of two papers. The first (AQL) tests a student's levels of academic literacy and quantitative literacy competence, while the second (MAT) tests the student's level of mathematics competence.

While the NBT project is an initiative of Higher Education South Africa, it's run by

CHED's Centre for Educational Testing for Access and Placement (CETAP). Launched in 2006, NBT help universities interpret applicants' school-leaving results (especially where there have been curriculum changes), decide what level of support first-year students might need, and address any changes needed to entry-level curricula. The NBT therefore assist in addressing low throughput and high drop-out rates – and their associated costs.

UCT is among other leading South African universities that use this test to supplement the information from an applicant's performance on the National Senior Certificate.

### DID YOU KNOW?

While the NBT launched in 2006, the process of re-evaluating UCT's admissions process so as to identify talented students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds (whose school-leaving results might belie their potential to succeed at university) and increase their access to the university is two decades older. The Alternative Admissions Research Project, established in 1986, provided over 20 years of evidence-based research on identifying academic talent, which ultimately went into the formation of the NBT project.

## 02 100UP PLUS FROM APPLICATION THROUGH FIRST YEAR WITH 100UP PLUS

In 2011, 100 promising grade 10 students from schools in Khayelitsha were chosen by UCT for a mentoring programme, to help prepare them for university. Ninety of those students, who matriculated in 2013, were offered places at UCT for 2014, with 73 taking up the offer. To support their student journey at UCT, CHED started the 100UP Plus programme.

Story by Yusuf Omar

"The university needs you."

This was Assoc Prof Suellen Shay's message to the trailblazing cohort that graduated from UCT's 100UP schools programme and was accepted for first-year study at UCT last year.

She was speaking at the launch of 100UP Plus in 2014, which supports 100UP students enrolled at UCT. During their time at the university, and as part of 100UP Plus, students are supported by a mentor from within CHED and participate in a peer-mentorship support structure that includes workshops and social meetings.

"In order for us to be an excellent university, you've got to actually be here," Shay told the students. "You've got to be in this place. What I want you to remember, even in those dark hours, is that this place needs you. It needs you to be here; it needs you to succeed; it needs you to walk across that stage and make a powerful contribution in our society."

### A TWO-WAY TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Mentorship forms an important part of the 100UP Plus programme. Each student is assigned a CHED staff member, with whom they meet once a month to talk about the challenges and triumphs of university life.

Anita Campbell is one such mentor.

"The programme aims to smooth the transition to university for students from Khayelitsha schools in recognition that students from these schools have been under-represented in the UCT student body, and

that most are first-generation students, who may be less familiar with what is expected of university students, as a result of not having family members who can pass on first-hand experiences of being university students," says Campbell, who teaches mathematics.

"If students have questions or concerns that we can't help with, we use our knowledge of the UCT systems to refer them to where they could get help. We encourage them to persevere through their challenges and we celebrate their achievements. I've been very impressed by my mentees. I'm definitely benefiting from being their mentor!"

The mentoring programme often ends up being a two-way teaching experience. In speaking with their mentees, mentors learn about what aspects of the university are most challenging, and where improvements can be made to the culture of the university system.

Tandie Nkosi is reading for a bachelor of social sciences degree, majoring in film and media, international relations and public policy and administration.

She says being part of the 100UP and 100UP Plus group has had its highs and lows.

"As part of the group you feel less alienated in this strange and new place ... [UCT] has a different culture completely to what we know as students who are from Khayelitsha," she explains.

"This programme has taught me that sometimes being part of a group of individuals who understand your struggles and background can be incredibly beneficial for your academic survival here at UCT!"



Students shared a light moment with Vice-Chancellor Dr Max Price at the launch of the 100UP Plus programme last year. Photo by Michael Hammond.

### The 100UP story

The jump from school to university – with its linguistic challenges and daunting deadlines – is intimidating for many new students. The 100UP initiative – launched by UCT's Schools Development Unit in 2011 – aims to settle learners' nerves and prepare them for university with tutelage in languages, mathematics and science, as well as exposure to campus life and activities.

Preparation includes a week-long stay at a UCT residence during the winter holidays, plus regular Saturday tuition for grade 11 and 12 learners, and exposure to UCT events such as career open days, science expos and the Minquiz (regarded as South Africa's top annual science competition for matrics).

One of 100UP's longer-term objectives is to build institutional knowledge, which it's hoped will better inform how the university prepares itself to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student body.



03

FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE

# HOW UCT HELPS YOU OWN YOUR FIRST YEAR

Applying and being accepted into UCT is the first big hurdle students face. Treading the minefield of big classes, massive campuses and an even bigger workload can trip up even the brightest freshers. This is where UCT's First-Year Experience (FYE) steps in.



Story by Yusuf Omar

Launched in 2012, UCT's First-Year Experience (FYE) aims to put new students on a firm footing, in the knowledge that a good grounding during their first year of study can prevent them going down a slippery slope when the going gets tougher later on.

FYE has four main objectives: strengthening pre-admissions support and first-year careers advice; providing a welcoming and supportive environment for prospective and new students in all faculties; promoting a renewed focus on first-year teaching; and promoting an integrated approach to student development, linking initiatives that respond to students' academic, affective, social and material needs, explains FYE director Dr Danny Fontaine.

The project has a four-pronged approach to realising these goals, and has launched pilot projects in the faculties that focus on early assessment of new students, specialised Vula sites, extended orientation programmes since 2014 (think essay-writing and time-management workshops) and nuanced digital literacy training for freshers. The latter two are particularly interesting, as they enlist the services of senior students to guide their new colleagues through the labyrinth of tertiary education.

"Every student entering higher education has a first-year experience," says Fontaine, who took over the directorship of FYE nine

months ago. "For some it is a good experience that is characterised by independence, a growth in confidence, intellectual and personal growth. But for others it can be an experience that is characterised by loss of confidence, failure, and feeling despondent."

FYE is CHED's commitment to making new students' overall experience a positive one. It's work they can't do alone; to ensure a network of support for students, they partner with the university's faculties and support services. This means a student's experience is unique to their faculty and department.

"Since coming into this position, I've spent a lot of time listening (deliberately so) – really trying to get an understanding of what is already taking place in the faculties under the umbrella of FYE," says Fontaine. "The interesting (and sometimes frustrating) thing is that while the term First-Year Experience sounds like it refers to an experience that all first-year students are going to have when they arrive at UCT, the reality is that while there are certainly some common elements to the FYE for students across campus, a student's actual FYE can look very different depending on which faculty they're in," she adds.

Fontaine, a UCT alumnus, compares the last nineteen months of her life – in which she's moved back from the USA to take up her post at UCT, and had a baby daughter

– to one's first year at university, a time of constant transition.

"But that said, it is exciting times for the FYE in SA," she says. "May saw the launch of the South African National Resource Centre for First-Year Students and Students in Transition at the inaugural FYE Conference in SA. This centre – while

located at the University of Johannesburg – is a resource centre that is here to support institutions across the country with their FYE programmes."

The establishment of this resource centre – only the second of its kind in the world – suggests there's growing recognition of the importance of the first-year experience.



One of the help desks dotted around campus at the beginning of the year, to help new students settle into campus life.



One of critical ports of call for new students is the library – in this case, the Chancellor Oppenheimer Library, as commerce first-years are guided along by their yellow-clad orientation leader. Photo by Michael Hammond



Noluyolo Ngomani, a 2014 orientation leader in the Faculty of Humanities, getting UCT freshers ramped up. Photo by Raymond Botha



First-years are exposed to the social side of campus life during O-Week, for example, when sports clubs and student-run societies set out their stalls on Jameson Plaza. Photo by Michael Hammond

04

ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

# STUDENT SUCCESS, NOT JUST ACCESS

Fifty percent of South Africa's university intake does not graduate, at a cost of some R5-billion in subsidies, a massive waste of human potential, and a severe drag on transformation.

Story by Helen Swingler



Only 10% of the country's black youth get into higher education. UCT enrolls the top end of these students – and yet, in a number of our undergraduate programmes, only one-third graduate in regulation time, and a similar proportion do not graduate at all.

It's a revolving door that sees many talented individuals leaving with nothing but debt.

"It's an indictment on our higher education system," says Emeritus Professor Ian Scott, former director of UCT's Academic Development Programme (ADP).

"We must ask the question: Why are UCT's performance patterns still so skewed by race when we're attracting an elite?"

The answer goes to the heart of transformation, which is not just about access, but critically, about success among a group of students rendered vulnerable by the articulation gap between school and university, says Scott.

The central challenge of transformation in the student sector lies in substantially growing the number of black graduates, with the ultimate aim of achieving "equity of outcomes".

## TWIN GOALS OF ACCESS AND SUCCESS

This challenge has been at the heart of the mission of the ADP since its establishment in 1980, when the then-government was entirely opposed to such work and the resources for it had to come from anti-apartheid donors and UCT itself.

Scott notes that the ADP's original mandate was twofold: to ensure that places were available for talented black students, the great majority of whom were then from disadvantaged educational backgrounds and did not meet UCT's admissions criteria; and, in partnership with the faculties, to establish or promote teaching-and-learning structures and approaches that would facilitate these students' success.

Over time, against the backdrop of wide-ranging social and institutional changes, the

ADP has introduced a range of educational development initiatives to pursue the twin goals of equity of access and equity of outcomes.

The key elements have been: the establishment of the Alternative Admissions Research Project (AARP, now CETAP, an independent unit in CHED), which pioneered innovative pre-entry testing to identify talented students from a range of backgrounds; the development of foundational courses and 'extended programmes' to enable students who are underprepared as a result of educational inequalities to acquire sound academic foundations for completing their degrees; and the provision of interventions in key academic literacies, particularly in language and numeracy, that are essential for successful university learning.

The ADP staff establishment now comprises some 50 academics from a range of disciplines who have specialised in educational development. They are located in the faculties, where core teaching and learning takes place, and in two inter-faculty units, the Language Development Group and the Numeracy Centre. They're supported by 12 PASS staff.

## MAINSTREAM THE INTERVENTIONS

As the ADP's main purpose has been to redress historical educational inequalities, its work has focused on black students as the group most affected by the legacy of apartheid. Given the demographics of UCT's intake, ADP interventions have generally been limited to a minority of the student body.

However, it has become clear that educational development approaches now need to be expanded into UCT's 'mainstream' teaching-and-learning processes, for two reasons: first, to strengthen UCT's capacity to deal effectively with the wide diversity that exists in students' educational and linguistic backgrounds (an essential condition for

"We must ask the question: Why are our performance patterns still so skewed by race when we're attracting an elite?" IAN SCOTT



accelerating transformation); and second, because it's evident that the need to strengthen learning is not confined to a minority of black students.

This need is making additional demands on all ADP staff: to work not only with students, but increasingly in partnership with the faculties and academic departments, on tasks such as course and curriculum design, inclusive teaching approaches, and integrating academic literacy development into regular programmes.

Establishing a curriculum structure that allows diverse educational backgrounds to be successfully accommodated – with the additional and different forms of teaching and learning this entails – has been a key ADP objective, says Scott.

"This is shown in the growth of extended programmes, as an adjunct to the traditional curricula, which have already contributed to producing many hundreds of black graduates.

"However, add-on foundation courses are not enough to address the problem. These interventions must be mainstreamed."

## CHANGE AT NATIONAL LEVEL

But changing mainstream structures is largely beyond the power of individual universities. Scott therefore believes that a key element of the solution lies in establishing an extended and flexible higher education curriculum framework at national level.

Supported particularly by his long-time colleague and dean of CHED, Professor Suellen Shay, Scott was involved in a major Council on Higher Education study that culminated in a proposal for such curriculum reform published in 2013.

"An extended framework, as the norm, would create the curriculum space needed for educational innovations designed to facilitate success among students who are not well served by the traditional curricula – who already constitute the majority of the student intake nationally," says Scott.

"Flexibility in the framework would help to accommodate diversity, enabling students to progress at their own pace, including allowing those who are able to graduate in a shorter time to do so."

"The CHE proposal argues that the waste of human and material resources arising from current higher education attrition calls for decisive policy change to meet the needs of the majority.

"Our current system, inherited from colonial times, was designed for a small, largely homogeneous and well-off group," notes Scott. "The system is not well geared to meeting the genuine learning needs of students outside that 'traditional' group.

"The outcome, that only 5% of black youth are succeeding in higher education, is disastrous in today's world, and is blocking transformation."

Facilitating transformation through mainstream educational development is now a key challenge, Scott concludes – for the ADP, CHED and the academic community at large.

05

ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

# WRITING CENTRE

Writing has been described (by the likes of American novelist Don DeLillo) as a form of concentrated thinking. It's also central to any student's progress in the university.



PHOTO BY MICHAEL HAMMOND

That's where the Writing Centre comes in: a student-orientated, one-on-one consultancy service, the centre helps students improve their writing (and their thinking about writing).

Designed as a learning experience, not an editing service, the Writing Centre is geared to help students at any stage of the writing

process, whether they need help identifying the requirements of an assignment; understanding how to use readings; sorting out ideas; planning, organising and structuring assignments; clarifying grammar; spelling and referencing; or revising drafts. Consultants – who are trained postgraduate

students – also help with general academic conventions such as proposal formats, report writing and poster design.

An average consultation lasts 30-60 minutes. Departments can also request writing workshops for students in their courses.

writingcentre.uct.ac.za





06

## GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP PROGRAMME

COMPASSIONATE,  
ETHICAL, ENGAGED

Can our university system evolve to teach students about the world they face in the 21st century? Can it teach them how to be compassionate, ethical and engaged citizens in an increasingly interconnected and complex world?

Story by Helen Swingler

These questions are at the heart of UCT's Global Citizenship Programme, now in its sixth year and aimed at creating civic-minded 'modern intellectuals' through a "different knowledge project".

These are graduates who are socially engaged and concerned with social injustice and who think and debate differently about local and global issues.

Funded by the vice-chancellor and the DG Murray Trust, the Global Citizenship Programme is a free, non-credit course for all students.

The programme's mainstays are three interlinked but separate extra-curricular short courses: Global Debates, Local Voices (GC1); Service, Citizenship and Social Justice (GC2); and voluntary community service, 60 hours of self-organised community service followed by structured reflection (GC3).

TEACH STUDENTS ABOUT  
'BEING' IN THE WORLD

Each is designed to teach students three key things: knowledge beyond their degree or discipline; skills such as leadership and critical thinking, active listening, and argument and debating skills; and values such as social justice.

"Universities need to move beyond the 'mantra' of knowledge and skills – knowing and doing – and equip students for 'being' in the world in new ways," said Dr Janice McMillan, a senior lecturer in the Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching, and convener of the Global Citizenship Programme.

Global citizenship is an essential part of what McMillan refers to as "cultivating humanity": teaching students to critically examine their own traditions and beliefs, recognise their community and fellowship with human beings around the world – and consider what it's like to walk in someone else's shoes.

While it draws from the academic disciplines, it is knowledge as an "enablement of 'being' in different ways".

"All the work on these courses gives students a slightly more complicated lens with which to engage the world. It helps them make sense of their knowledge and how they enact it."

While few could argue the merits of this kind of 'depth' learning, it's been an uphill battle for the team, because it's potentially disruptive of mainstream learning.

"It asks different questions," said McMillan.

## ADDING BREADTH TO DEPTH

Their challenge is how to bring relevant aspects of the programme to bear on the formal curriculum in a more sustainable way. In an already crowded curriculum that must also address poor student preparedness for university, it's a tough ask.



As part of the Global Citizenship Programme, students help out and have one of their classes on the GC2 short courses at Mothers Unite in Lavender Hill, where over 150 children have access to books, computers, art therapy, sports and play – as an alternative to the gangsterism they're witness to on the streets. Photo courtesy of the UCT Global Citizen Facebook page

One way has been to align the programme more closely to the university's four strategic initiatives: Safety and Violence; African Climate and Development; Schools Improvement; and Poverty and Inequality.

All four themes are evident in the GC1 short course (global debates, local voices) but also serve to frame aspects of the GC2 short course (service, citizenship and social justice). In both GC2 and GC3, students critically reflect on their community service in the context of poverty, inequality and social justice.

"Initiatives like these provide core contexts through which students can engage with key issues in service work and service organisations," said McMillan.

In its six years the programme has developed crucial partnerships with the faculties, each of which has taken up the programme in different ways.

One coup is the credit-bearing course on social infrastructures introduced in the Faculty of Engineering & the Built Environment, and held during the June/July winter term. The course has grown from 60 to 100 places.

"It helps students locate their emerging engineering knowledge within a much bigger societal context," said McMillan.

It's this context that's so valuable to learning.

In the commerce faculty, the GCP has been very popular with first-year students, starting in O-Week when students debate some

complicated issues on poverty, education, gender inequality and climate change, all global citizenship themes.

In addition, each of the core commerce courses (evidence-based management, information systems (IS), economics and maths) offers a GC lecture as part of their first-year programme. And the IS honours community service component requires their students to complete the GC1 and GC2 modules.

In the law faculty they're working with colleagues to link up with the faculty's community service block, to help students think about community service in specific ways.

In the health sciences faculty the team has offered potential space in the MBChB curriculum for research projects, elective models and co-teaching.

"These students are already learning in the community as part of their practice learning. The faculty is keen to do things in a more transformative way by introducing global citizenship-thinking to their curriculum."

With its very full curriculum and student throughput demands, the science faculty is a challenge. There's little space to introduce the breadth the Global Citizenship Programme brings to academic programmes.

But it's also essential to get science students to think differently about the application of their knowledge in the real world, says McMillan, who is working with the faculty to make this possible.

BEYOND ACADEMIC  
DEPARTMENTS

Outside the academic departments, the GCP team has forged links with departments such as student affairs, careers services, student residences and SHAWCO.

Taking this a step further, the programme has piloted the GC-Act project this year, providing an opportunity for students to development activation campaigns on campus. For this, the GCP has made contact with four activist-oriented student organisations on campus: Amnesty International (themes of war and peace); Equal Education (public schooling); InkuluFreeHeid (equality and democracy); and the Green Campus Initiative (climate change/sustainability).

As the programme gathers traction, other opportunities arise. McMillan is particularly excited by a new venture with the Global Network for Young Europeans (GLEN).

They have submitted a funding proposal for an international collaboration on the practice and understanding of global citizen education to bring youth to various global sites in several partner countries in both Europe and Africa. The GCP has asked to be a partner in the initial phase over the next 18 months.

Though it's been a battle to embed the thinking around global citizenship into the formal academic offerings, McMillan believes the time has come to take the programme to another level across the curriculum, "so that the GCP can contribute to the debate at UCT about what it means to be an African university".

"Hopefully, we've begun to lay the foundations for this over the past five years."

07

## MELLON MAYS UNDERGRADUATE FELLOWSHIP

SCHOLARS TRANSFORMING  
ACADEMIA

Recognising the need for transformation of the country's academic cohort, the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Programme identifies highly promising students at a very early stage in their academic careers, and through financial support, mentoring and stimulating academic activities, establishes them on an academic career track.

Story by Helen Swingler

There is no well-established pipeline of black or female academics in South Africa – or in Africa. It's one of the toughest challenges in transforming the university sector.

Among the recruitment challenges is insufficient infrastructural support for the long and expensive journey to PhD level.

Recognising the need for transformation of the country's academic cohort, US-based equity programme the Mellon Minority Undergraduate Fellowship Programme, funded by the Andrew W Mellon Foundation, extended its programme to South Africa and UCT in 2002.

In 2003, the foundation reaffirmed its commitment and broadened the MMUF's mission, changing its name to the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship programme to symbolically connect the mission to the stellar education achievements of Dr Benjamin E Mays (an American educator, minister and social activist who mentored Martin Luther King Jr).

The programme identifies highly promising students at a very early stage in their academic careers, and through financial support, mentoring and stimulating academic activities, establishes them on an academic career track.

Students who are entering the final year of a three-year degree or the third year of a four-year professional degree are eligible for selection as MMUF fellows. Students in a three-year degree programme are expected to apply for an appropriate honours programme as a condition of the award.

MMUF academic coordinator Gideon Nomdo says: "It sets up a holistic collaborative and supportive framework through which students are guided and nurtured into postgraduate studies towards achieving a PhD."

"A particular type of mentoring philosophy informs MMUF's key goal, which is to increase the number of black academics in higher education institutions."

BUILDING KNOWLEDGE BY  
FOSTERING COMMUNITY

May is always a red-letter month for students entering the programme. They gather for their last briefings before embarking on what for many is their first trip abroad: the MMUF summer institute in the US, held during the mid-year vacation.

This year's newly appointed fellows are Tasneem Amra, Ayanda Mahlaba, Aaron Mulenga, Qiniso van Damme, Jody van der Heyde and Marco Titus. Nasrin Olla (MMUF fellow 2011/2012 cohort), a PhD student at Cornell University, and Kathy Erasmus (MMUF co-ordinator) will accompany those headed for the summer institute at Williams College in Massachusetts, a small, private liberal arts college.

"What makes the MMUF programme unique," explains Nasrin Olla, "is that it recognised, from its inception, that scholarly

activity cannot be unbound from a sense of community and friendship. The programme emphasises support structures that are both objectively intellectual and socially conscious; it builds knowledge through a fostering of community.

"Above all, what I learnt from my MMUF experience, to paraphrase the philosopher Hannah Arendt, is that this activity we call 'thinking' is about being open to the world and presence of others."

MMUF fellow Ziyanda Ndzendze (master's, 2011 to 2012 cohort) reflects: "I think the biggest thing for me was that someone saw potential in me and was willing to invest in it."

"Mellon opened a space for intellectual debates, and spaces to converse with big, scary professors. They did a very good job of bridging the gap between myself as a junior student and academic staff, through talks and dinners and other kinds of gatherings – and also getting an academic mentor from my field."

"It also forced me to take my research seriously and taught me how to talk about my research confidently, and gave me the ability to engage with people who are not in my discipline about my research."

Initially, Ndzendze wasn't interested in a career in academia.

"For a while I felt like academia was selfish and only focused on using people (participants) to write papers and share them with the elite academic spaces. And when I started thinking about it, because of my interest in teaching and research, it felt a bit far-fetched for me as a black student because of the face of academia around me."

"A programme like MMUF addresses transformation, and with so many people passionate about social justice and community, I started to see more and more how one can make a career out of academia and still be a socially conscious citizen at the same time."

"[The programme] also made me realise that academia was not a far-fetched goal; and that even I, as a student of colour, can be a professor one day."

## OVERCOMING THE OBSTACLES

Ndzendze believes more internal programme are necessary to build a new, inclusive academic corps.

"Each university needs to take responsibility, acknowledge the problem ... and start creating space to cultivate academics of colour."

"The reality is that there are too many obstacles in the way for students of colour, when it comes to pursuing higher education, that are beyond their control. If the university claims to care about transformation, they need to take the mission of producing academics from diverse backgrounds seriously."

Advice to young black students interested in a career in academia?

"Believe in yourself, surround yourself with like-minded people, realise that you have an important contribution to make in academia – your experience is just as important as everyone else's. And read and read ..."

Dr Sean Samson is one of 12 candidates who completed his PhD on the MMUF programme (2005/2006 MMUF cohort). He now lectures in the Humanities' Academic Development Programme and works on the First-Year Experience project.

"I've met black academics from far afield who, through sharing their experiences, helped me do away with the 'myth' of the academy or my own naiveté. By this I mean ideas around a linear route to achieving the PhD, and an assumption about where obstacles would come from. In short, life happens."

"My own journey has been characterised by health concerns, funding issues, and family issues; not to mention the obstacles that come with the actual research (cue the violins). While these concerns have not made the journey easy, I knew that others, from similar backgrounds, had made it through."

"I had access to a network of supportive fellows, and black academics who had maintained their integrity (research and otherwise), especially in those cases where they are called upon to speak for the marginalised. I think that this network of black academics that MMUF creates has been the key resource for me."

## DID YOU KNOW?

Since its inception in 2002, the UCT-MMUF has helped 12 PhD students complete their degrees. Currently, 11 students are in PhD programmes, 15 students are doing master's degrees, five are honours students, and others are in undergraduate programmes.

"MMUF is focused on increasing diversity in the academy, but it has a development focus where the current calls for transformation require more immediate responses. I became a fellow knowing that the work the MMUF community produces will contribute to diversifying scholarship, but it is only recently that I began to think about what teaching for transformation would look like, what the classroom in which this kind of teaching takes place could 'feel' like."

"I've also been reminded of the issues (outside of the classroom) that affect academic success, and that are still racialised. Interestingly, this is reflected in my own student experience – but in my memory I had made it the experience of a minority, which it isn't. I'm finding my feet at the moment; this is the kind of consciousness I'm trying to develop as a teacher, and I believe that MMUF has contributed to this thinking."



New UCT MMUF fellows will spend a month in the US and are (from left) Qiniso Van Damme, Monique Henry, Ayanda Mahlaba, Jody van der Heyde, Tasneem Amra, Nasrin Olla (MMUF fellow 2011/2012) and Aaron Mulenga. Photo by Je'nine May





## CAREERS SERVICE

## 08 GUIDED JOURNEY FROM SCHOOL TO WORK

Story by Helen Swingler

The 2014 Graduation Destination Survey conducted by the Careers Service in CHED showed that 44% of UCT's graduating class\* was already employed by the time they stepped up to the graduation podium to be capped. And those with postgraduate degrees fared better in the employment stakes, with the employment rate for PhDs at 63% at the time of graduation.



According to the survey, 55% of the students who had found jobs would be earning in excess of R15 000 a month. And gratifyingly, 79% of the respondents said their degree was directly related to their job.

These statistics are encouraging against a macro-economic picture of persistent unemployment in the country. In the first quarter of 2014 the national unemployment rate was 25.2% (Stats SA Quarterly Labour Force Survey).

The statistics for youth are even more sobering. According to Stats SA, 67% of all unemployed South Africans are youth. They face the most difficult challenges in South Africa's labour market.

But it's not just a local problem; a global phenomenon, unemployment has become more acute since the financial crisis of 2008.

A degree may give students an advantage, but despite expanding access to universities in sub-Saharan Africa, there are concerns about the quality of these qualifications and graduates' preparation and readiness for the workplace.

It's in this space that the Careers Service works, helping students to make the most of their university experience. (In the 2014 survey, 90% of the respondents reported they were satisfied with their learning experience at UCT.)

## DID YOU KNOW?

The Careers Portal can be accessed at [careers.uct.ac.za](http://careers.uct.ac.za), which allows students 24/7 access to the Careers Service offerings. MyCareer allows UCT students to book 15-minute careers advisory appointments, and search for full-time jobs, as well as vacation and part-time work, and bursaries or scholarships. They can also participate in employer networking events each semester, or sign up for events and skills sessions.

## SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

What makes a graduate (or anyone else, for that matter) employable?

Wikipedia describes employability as "... a person's capability for gaining and maintaining employment. For individuals, employability depends on the knowledge, skills and abilities they possess, in addition to the way they present those assets to employers".

Much of this statement is embodied in the unit's work. Here, students learn that it takes more than a solid academic record to succeed; they also need to develop some relevant work experience and extra-curricular activities, such as socially engaged or volunteer work. Their mission is to support students' careers by helping them realise their potential and contribute to their communities in a meaningful way.

Careers Service director David Casey says, "We take students through the paces of developing career management skills by providing information, advice and opportunity services, achieved through a well-resourced Careers Information Centre, workshops, part-time work opportunities, employer events and recruitment programmes".

The unit offers a wide range of services and resources to help students at any stage of study with all aspects of career and job-search planning.

"We can help students from first year explore their career options, expose them to personal and professional job development opportunities such as part-time work, internships, graduate jobs, careers expos and employer showcases," said Casey. "We also help them compile job search material such as CVs and cover letters."

In a 'bottom-up' approach, the unit is also looking to build career awareness into the university curriculum. In commerce, for example, there's a credit-bearing course, Careers Discoveries, aimed at helping first-year students think through their career choices and possibilities.

Careers advisors deliver seven other careers-related modules in partnership with academics in other courses.

For many students, the help they get goes beyond addressing statements such as "I don't know what I want to do when I graduate" or "I like what I'm studying but I'm not sure where it's taking me".

The service extends from helping students prepare good cover letters right through to tips for interviews, even going as far as holding mock interviews to prepare students for the real thing.

The Careers Service also helps high school learners make more informed decisions for their lives after school – through one-on-one sessions, large school talks as well as interactive workshops for smaller groups. Aply called Beyond School, this service helps learners consider what goes into building a career (as opposed to choosing a career), are equipped to make more informed career choices, and gain a better understanding of the complexities of the 21st century working world.

Their vision is simple, says Casey: to be the leading African careers service, recognised globally for innovation, quality and impact.


workshops for teachers and youth workers (and UCT students) that look more specifically at key issues learners face (and how to help them), the current world of work, and aspects of career development theories.

The Careers Office also helps high school learners make more informed decisions for their lives after school – through one-on-one sessions, large school talks as well as interactive workshops for smaller groups. Aply called Beyond School, this service helps learners consider what goes into building a career (as opposed to choosing a career), are equipped to make more informed career choices, and gain a better understanding of the complexities of the 21st century working world.

Their vision is simple, says Casey: to be the leading African careers service, recognised globally for innovation, quality and impact.



*"While 44% of UCT's 2014 graduating class were already employed, 19% were enrolled in further education, 14% were seeking further education, 18% were seeking employment, 2% were travelling and 2% were undecided about their plans. Photo by Michael Hammond"*



## 09 NAVIGATING RESEARCH WRITING GUIDES FOR POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH

Postgraduate research and writing can seem daunting to the freshly initiated; so CHED stepped in with a map and compass – of the scholarly sort.

Story by Yusuf Omar



Researchers engage at the first Navigating Research Writing course in 2012. Photo by Morgan Morris

Aimed at prospective postgraduate students from any discipline, CHED's pioneering short course, Navigating Research Writing, seeks to orientate students to the unique demands of conducting research towards a master's or PhD degree.

Originally called Navigating Research Literacies and started in June 2012, the non-credit-bearing course helps students understand and articulate their research interests, develop a research identity, sustain a strong writer's voice, and formulate sound arguments; and also introduces them to the finer details of citation and information literacy.

Previously, CHED had offered once-off or tailor-made writing workshops and writer circles, but a focused, comprehensive course hadn't been available before this. The course design blends an intensive, one-week face-to-face component with online components before and after that week.

It's been offered twice annually since its 2012 launch, and the plan is to make it a regular part of the UCT calendar.

Most students have very limited exposure to research during their undergraduate

degrees, explain course convenors Assoc Prof Lucia Thesen and Dr Mathilde van der Merwe. Those who are in transition between countries, languages or disciplines, or are returning to study after an extended time in the workplace, have a particularly tough time.

"These students often find adapting to postgraduate studies (with a research component) challenging," says Van der Merwe.

The course guides students through expressing an initial interest in a research topic, thrashing out research questions and articulating an argument. "The focus of the course is on writing," says Thesen. "Each student writes a 1200-word pre-proposal concept paper in which they express how their research thinking has progressed."

A highlight of the course is a day-long workshop facilitated by Dr Sharman Wickham, who guides students deeper into their research interest.

There's been an even spread of students registered, with honours, master's and PhD students from a range of backgrounds, disciplines and age groups all signing up. Not all of the students are based at UCT and

some do not intend pursuing postgraduate studies here, report the convenors.

To keep classes small, a maximum of 24 places are available per edition. And every course has been well supported, says Janet Small, who is the course development officer at CHED's Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching.

"An online version is being developed to offer more flexible engagement with this kind of material – which should be available by the end of the year," adds Small.

## WRITE SCIENCE

CHED also offers a companion course – aimed at science students and convened by Van der Merwe – called Write Science.

The popular course gives senior postgrads from science, health sciences and engineering a chance to get to grips with scientific writing beyond their thesis. Think writing to publish in academic journals or for peer review, as well as how to communicate specialist scientific knowledge to a public audience.

While postgraduate students work closely with their supervisors in writing their theses, many are not adequately mentored into the practices of publication. Disseminating your research through publications and conference presentations is a crucial skill for any researcher to master. Likewise, learning to communicate your research to the public is the responsibility of all researchers, but a skill that needs a lot of practice.

Mixing online peer-review tasks, contact days with lecturers and three assignments, the course encourages students to practise science writing and get feedback from academics and peers – a daily experience in the world of scholarship. The contact sessions not only deal with writing, but also provide space for lecturers to share their experiences of communicating science to various audiences.

Students are expected to write a "polished" abstract (says the course brochure), a journal article introduction (specifying which journals they will target for publication), and write a piece aimed at communicating a scientific message to a non-specialist public audience.

Write Science was offered for the first time in July 2013, and has since been offered every year. Classes are kept small (20-25) in order to provide all participants with thorough feedback on their writing.

But the demand for Write Science has exceeded the number of students it can accommodate, with over 130 applications streaming in every time. And the response from students who have completed the course has generally been positive. "I am more equipped with information to guide me in my journey as a scientist" said one. "Write Science was an eye-opener!" attested another.

Van der Merwe, a genetics PhD who won the 2010 NRF SAASTA Young Science Communicator of the Year award, enlists the help of UCT's scientists to facilitate some of the sessions. The library and writing centre are also involved.

**Vicki Heard, who works full-time as CHED's admin manager in the Office of the Dean, was curious to take up postgraduate study, but couldn't quite settle on a topic. She took Navigating Research Writing to help her figure this out.**

A goal I set myself years ago was to complete a major learning activity every ten years or so. Having completed my BA Honours 20 years ago and a significant but unrelated learning endeavour in 2007, I have been thinking about it seriously again for a while now. My stumbling block has been the 'what' (I knew I wanted to do something in social justice and transformation; organisational psychology was also a possibility) and whether I would cope with a full-time PASS job, parental responsibilities, and the demands of higher-level study.

I ran into Assoc Prof Lucia Thesen in the CHED tearoom and she told me about the NRW course, which she said would help me to find my topic.

So, feeling encouraged, I took a week's annual leave and did the course. And what a journey! The group ranged from those who, like me, had no firmed-up idea about their research question, to those who were already writing up their PhD theses. How that worked, I don't know, but it did.

The NRW course is far more than I had expected. It is an intense and emotionally and intellectually exhausting five days, masterfully constructed and presented. I enjoyed the trip through the 'Me-search', 'Re-search' and 'We-search'.

During this process, which included several free-write blogging opportunities that were extremely helpful, I started to understand how my subject interest in social justice was a thread that reached all the way back to my very young childhood and my upbringing.

This helped me understand why I wanted to pursue this subject, and it offered me some space in which to touch on the literature around the topic.

I also realised just how very far away I was from the knowledge, and that I had a lot of research ahead of me. However, learning about and working with the databases and search engines on the course helped me feel more confident about finding resources.

I completed the concept paper, but did not quite get to formulating my research question. But that, I expect, will come.



*"An online version is being developed to offer more flexible engagement with this kind of material – which should be available by the end of the year." JANET SMALL*



## 10 NEW ACADEMIC PRACTITIONERS PROGRAMME A HOLISTIC INDUCTION TO ACADEMIC LIFE

A safe, collegial space for new lecturers – those with no more than five years' teaching experience – to develop meaningful responses to the challenges facing them, their students and their classrooms. This is what the New Academic Practitioners Programme (NAPP) strives to be.

Story by  
Abigail Calata

"We want to create a climate that encourages and supports UCT academics. We aim to enable the holistic development of professional practices for new teachers in higher education," says Assoc Prof Jeff Jawitz of the Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching (CILT).

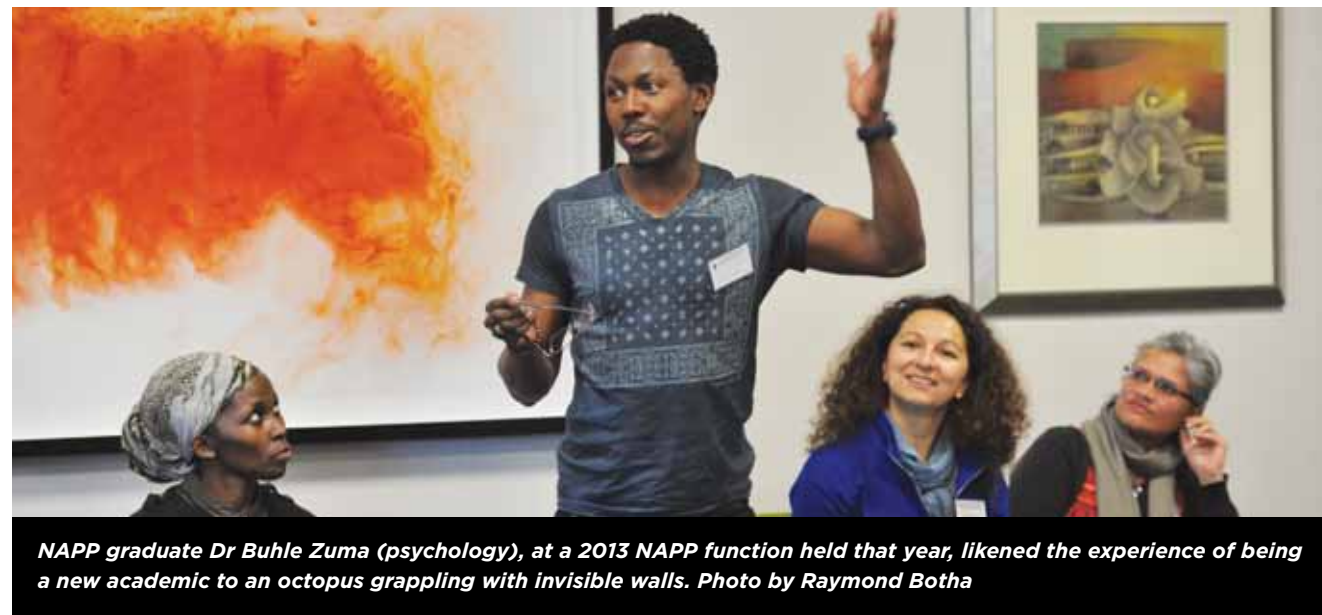
CILT spearheads the New Academic Practitioners Programme (NAPP) with input from the Research Office and the Transformation Services Office. The NAPP team works with new academics to equip them with the basic skills they need as educators, researchers and members of the UCT community. To do this, they focus strongly on teaching, learning, technology and assessment. Given the growth of and need for greater diversity within the student body and academic ranks, the issue of transformation is also high on the priority list.

Since its inception in 2004, no fewer than 400 academic staff members have come through this five-day programme (spread out over a semester) – which includes a three-day residential retreat at Mont Fleur Conference Centre and two one-day, on-campus workshops.

As a key component of the NAPP experience, participants identify critical teaching challenges they'd like to explore over the semester. To support these projects, the NAPP team consults with participants and visits their classrooms, to observe them teaching and offer constructive feedback.

### GREAT FOR NETWORKING

Dr Connie Bitso from the Library and Information Studies Centre was part of



NAPP graduate Dr Buhle Zuma (psychology), at a 2013 NAPP function held that year, likened the experience of being a new academic to an octopus grappling with invisible walls. Photo by Raymond Botha

the 2013 NAPP cohort. She describes her experience as overwhelmingly positive: "It was not only about improving my teaching and recalling the learning strategies and theories that I learnt in education ages ago; and it proved to be a great networking forum. I connected with people that I did not know, with whom I still interact even today.

"NAPP reminded me that teaching and learning is about human development in totality – that it occurs in a social space that is characterised by an array of factors. Consequently, every aspect of it has to be meaningful and planned with care, because it is more than just achieving the learning objectives stipulated in our course outlines."

### A SPACE FOR CRITICAL REFLECTION

Through the programme, Dr Emma Fergus from the Department of Commercial Law learnt to reflect continuously on her teaching. "There is always something I can do to

improve my teaching. Time constraints, busy schedules and lack of technological knowledge need not be obstacles to better teaching. Prioritising teaching is absolutely part of my job, and so I shouldn't feel bad about setting research aside (if only for a while) in order to do so. Related to this and perhaps most importantly, I've learnt that teaching can be fun no matter how dull the subject matter!"

NAPP convener Kasturi Behari-Leak comments on how critical programmes such as NAPP are early on in any academic's career: "The sooner new academics feel enabled and included, the easier it is for them to contribute in meaningful ways to UCT and higher education in general."

## 11 SHORT COURSE ON TEACHING GRAPPLING WITH THE ART OF TEACHING

"We must accept that knowing a subject is different from teaching it. There are some fundamentals of teaching and classroom management that we, as experts in our fields, do not know. Teaching is a career on its own, and we must make the effort to learn about it for it to be effective and enjoyable."

Story by  
Abigail Calata

These words by Dr Samson Chimphango, a lecturer in UCT's Department of Biological Sciences, explain the importance of the Short Course on Teaching (TSCOT) offered by the Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching. Chimphango, a 2013 participant, found the course well-organised, a place for "mature discussion in a friendly environment".

"We were able to share our challenges and views freely, and at all times. It was a worthy investment of my time and boosted my confidence as a lecturer."

TSCOT runs over a semester and uses a mix of weekly meetings, one-on-one consultations, and peer and teaching observations to address teaching challenges. It aims to create a robust space for critical discussions on the dynamics of teaching in a transforming and diverse higher education classroom.

Dr Shane Murray, a lecturer in the Department of Molecular and Cell Biology and a former course participant, found advice on maximising student learning and how to solicit student feedback particularly

useful. "I advise all new lecturers at UCT to do the course as soon as possible," she says.

Since taking the course, Chimphango employs a lesson plan in developing lectures, and approaches the topic with his audience, the students, firmly in view. "For each topic and sometimes lecture, I do a critical analysis of my strengths and weaknesses that informs my teaching strategy and the supplementary material I use," he explains.

Assoc Prof Sa'diyya Shaikh teaches courses on religion, gender and sexuality,

and the psychology of religion, at the Department of Religious Studies. She found her participation last year in TSCOT "helpful pedagogically".

"It was great to be able to share teaching challenges and methods with colleagues. The careful reflection and conversation on teaching methods and classroom engagement were invaluable, and very educational." Her advice to course participants is to make enough time for reading the course material, and for reflection.

## 12 TEACHING WITH TECHNOLOGY TEACHING IN THE DIGITAL AGE

In our digital age, technology can be an effective teaching tool – provided the teacher has been equipped to use it.

Story by  
Abigail Calata

The Teaching with Technology initiative – run by the Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching (CILT) – works with UCT educators to develop their capacity to use technology more effectively in the classroom. The initiative goes beyond workshops and seminars to include design and teaching partnerships with academics who want to put what they have learnt at the workshops and seminars into practice.

"CILT also offers start-up grants from the Mellon Foundation to educators, to support the use of educational technology in their teaching. These grants can be used to address particular teaching and learning challenges faced by themselves or their students," says CILT director Assoc Prof Laura Czerniewicz.

Michelle Henry, convener of a course on numbers in the humanities, found the use of Google Drive invaluable when teaching her course. "We used Google Drive for online collaboration with students on an assignment in the course. (CILT's) Ian Schroeder and I ran workshops for students to teach them how to use Google Drive. We also trained the lecturers to use Google Drive and Doctopus [a Google Spreadsheet script that helps teachers manage the flow of shared work in their Google Drive account]." The most satisfying aspect of this collaboration with CILT was her greater acquaintance with the more technical side of technology, and the knowledge she gained of her students' digital literacy capabilities.

Andrew Petersen, an education specialist in the Schools Development Unit, praised the

CILT facilitators for their responsiveness "to the needs of staff as well as student groups. CILT provides good support for personal development, and serves as the perfect platform for innovative eLearning".

He also found that regular workshop attendance has greatly improved his digital literacy: "I now confidently use various applications such as Scoop it! (a curation tool), Hootsuite and Twitter, aggregation tools, Mendeley, and the Google suite of apps, which are management tools."

Dr Aditi Hunma from the Humanities Education Development Unit believes her interaction with the programme has made her more flexible and responsive in curriculum design. "I think that the programme

encourages innovation and creative design in developing, in my case, reading and writing pedagogies that are more fluid and responsive to students' needs (as opposed to a fixed and static course reader). There is also much support from CILT staff in terms of thinking through which technologies would be more viable, and how these would be implemented."

Her advice to ensure students get the most from interaction in the online environment is: "Students tend to be more actively engaged in online tasks when these have a clear purpose and outcome, when the tasks have a set deadline and are carefully scaffolded, and when students continuously receive constructive feedback on their submissions."

## 13 VIDEO LECTURES RECORDINGS ENHANCE STUDENT LEARNING

Lecture recordings are invaluable tools that help students better understand difficult concepts, learn at their own pace and focus on study material when they are best able to.

Story by  
Abigail Calata

These were some of the findings of a recent focus group made up of UCT students who regularly used lecture recordings in the course of their studies. Forty-seven venues on campus are equipped to produce digital recordings of lectures, which are uploaded onto the Vula site. Students use these supplementary resources to regular classroom teaching for revision, or catching up on missed sessions. The recordings are also accessed by students with disabilities.

"These recordings give students valuable flexibility in how they engage with lecture

material. Our students reported that they get more out of the lecture experience when they are in control of the pacing, and can review lectures when they are best able to concentrate," says Assoc Prof Laura Czerniewicz, director of the Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching (CILT), which manages this programme.

In 2015, 240 recordings were made per week, with up to 2 700 students accessing these recordings weekly.

The recordings allowed students to augment lectures by pausing to look up references,

work through examples or read supplementary material. One of the focus group participants spoke to this aspect:

"We deal a lot with current affairs, where lecturers will reference a case that's in the media; and if you don't know about it, it's easy to press pause, go and read about it, and then, whatever principles he's applying to that case, you pick up without having to learn the principles, read the case, and then try and put the two together after the lecture. So, there's a lot of learning that happens in one two-hour space that normally would've taken an entire day."



PHOTO BY JENINE MAY

## 14 MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION PROJECT TAKING VERNAC TO ACADEMIA

One would be wrong in thinking that the Multilingual Education Project (MEP) only offers courses in Xhosa communication skills for staff and students.

Story by  
Abigail Calata

MEP plays an important role in helping UCT staff and students become more multilingual, offering language service courses in law, health sciences, psychology, social work and engineering, as well as Xhosa for students doing introductory philosophy and ethics courses (as part of which students don't just learn the language, but also study socio-cultural aspects relevant to their discipline). MEP staff run the Multilingual Signage project, which aims to translate all UCT signs into Afrikaans and Xhosa, and help with the translation of university

stationery and publications – anything from business cards and letterheads, to reports and websites. They also assist with the naming of university buildings, identifying names such as Hoerikwaggo, for example – or Kopano, Hlanganani or Masingene – and develop multilingual glossaries for specialist subjects (such as statistics and economics).

*Masithethe isiXhosa* can be considered the MEP's flagship initiative. The course aims to develop the Xhosa conversation skills of UCT staff and students over 12 weeks. Upon completion, participants can expect

to be able to converse in Xhosa in everyday situations and to respond to simple enquiries in the workplace.

Cindy Gilbert, departmental manager of the Centre for Innovation and Learning and Teaching, explains how, during the course, her knowledge of Xhosa "was built on in a manner which allowed [her] to be stimulated, but not overwhelmed".

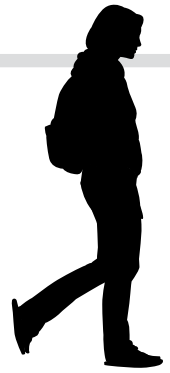
"The enthusiasm of the teachers made me feel excited about learning the language, as well as feeling that it was worthwhile even to learn the little bit I was learning."

The course also helped her in the workplace: her job at the time required regular interaction with students. "I think the students felt more 'met', and always enjoyed my attempts at greeting them and initiating a conversation in Xhosa," she adds.

Her number one tip to get the most out of the course is to have a real desire to learn the language. "Go home and review the work so that you build on your knowledge weekly. The course is structured in such a way that you are given an opportunity to use what you've learnt previously in each lesson, so [reviewing the work] always helps."







ROER4D

15

## OPEN RESEARCH

Eighteen research projects around seven clusters engaging 86 researchers and associates across 16 time zones, bent on investigating the adoption and impact of open educational resources (OERs) in 26 countries.

Story by Abigail Calata

This in short outlines the Research on Open Educational Resources for Development (ROER4D) project, which sets out to answer the following question: “In what ways, and under what circumstances, can the adoption of OERs impact upon the increasing demand for accessible, relevant, high-quality, and affordable education in the Global South?”

OERs encompass teaching, learning, and research resources that reside in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property licence that permits

their free use and/or re-purposing by others. An example of this is the OpenUCT portal launched last year.

This three-year project aims to undertake actual research as openly as possible. “In other words we are sharing our initial literature reviews, our bibliography, project and conference presentations and papers throughout the project – rather than waiting until the end to publish our findings,” says Assoc Prof Cheryl Hodgkinson-Williams, the project’s principal investigator.

“We have a long-term plan to share our data too, so that it can be used by other researchers. In other words, we are sharing our research materials as open educational resources themselves, with a Creative Commons licence that specifies the re-use permissions upfront.”

Communicating research in ‘the open’ will come in the form of visibility through the ROER4D website, which links to documents hosted on OpenUCT and social media. “The process of research is being shared through Facebook, Twitter and blogs, to

build credibility and invite feedback. We’ll also share our workshops and presentations regularly on hosting platforms such as SlideShare and/or YouTube,” Hodgkinson-Williams says.

She goes on to explain that “some of the benefits of this open research include increasing the breadth of readership (the result of having documents available openly), and invitations to collaborate with other OER researchers and be keynote speakers at conferences around the world.”

13

CENTRE FOR EXTRA-MURAL STUDIES

## SUMMER SCHOOL'S LONG HISTORY AT UCT

Celebrating its 65th anniversary, UCT’s annual Summer School has grown from seven courses and an enrolment of barely 120 participants in 1950 to well over 3 000 participants with over 60 courses to choose from in 2015.

Story by Abigail Calata



Madosini performing at a concert celebrating the end of Summer School in 2015. Photo by Michael Hammond

Summer School is organised by the Centre for Extra-Mural Studies (EMS) and throws open the hallowed halls of UCT to people from all walks of life – not just students. It has a reputation for attracting prominent South African intellectuals as lecturers – including Uys Krige, AC Jordan, Helen Suzman, ZK Matthews and Antjie Krog.

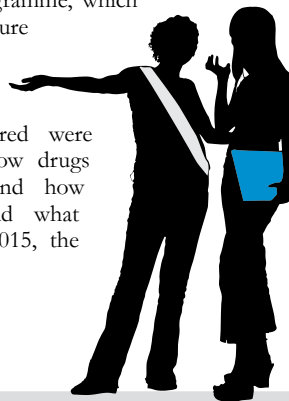
Making Summer School happen – usually in January, before the start of the academic year – is not the only service EMS renders. It is also responsible for the July School, a joint initiative between UCT and the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), consisting of a range of short,

university-level courses presented over two weeks. The first July School was held in 2013 with the third LSE-UCT July School taking place at UCT in 2015.

EMS also breathes life into the Summer School Extension Programme, which in 2014 included a lecture series on the human brain. Some of the topics that attendants of this series explored were sex and the brain, how drugs shape your brain, and how your brain ages (and what to do about it). In 2015, the

extension programme ranges across a wide spectrum, including lectures on the history of children’s poetry, Boko Haram, the novels of JM Coetzee, rare birds and the planet Ceres. EMS has also launched Fine Minds, a series of five annual lectures by outstanding academics presented on Fine Music Radio.

“We make available continuing education courses for working people and offer specialised programmes for visiting international students such as the University of York group who will join us in July,” says Medecé Rall, EMS director.



MASSIVE OPEN ONLINE COURSES

14

## UCT MOOCs HAVE WORLDWIDE APPEAL

More than 20 000 people from over 120 countries participated in UCT’s first massive open online courses (MOOCs) offered in the first half of 2015.

Story by Abigail Calata

MOOCs are free online courses in which classes can comprise thousands of participants from across the globe. In this regard, UCT’s first two MOOCs, ‘Medicine and the Arts’ and ‘What is a mind?’ did not disappoint.

“Significant numbers of patients, healthcare practitioners and artists signed up for our first MOOC, ‘Medicine and the Arts’, making for a rich exchange of experiences and perspectives. The high level

of social learning in both courses was both surprising and rewarding. Those logging on for modules actively participated in online discussions in response to video lectures, and reviewed each other’s assignments,” said Assoc Prof Laura Czerniewicz, director of the Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching (CILT).

‘Medicine and the Arts’ explored the intersections of medicine, medical anthropology and the creative arts, while

‘What is a mind?’ looked at four aspects of the mind – subjectivity, intentionality, consciousness and agency – in order to come to a fuller understanding of what a mind is.

CILT’s role has been to help academic course conveners design engaging learning pathways through an online course and to create short, powerful video lectures for use in this environment.

“The experience and skills gained in the partnership between the learning designers,

video producers and academics in the course creation teams have already been useful in thinking about mainstream provision of online courses at UCT,” explained Czerniewicz.

“A small percentage of those enrolled completed the entire course, but these numbers still add up to substantially more people than those who would normally take and complete these courses in their traditional formats,” she concluded.

