

Next Generation Professoriate

Newsletter #3

August 2018

Hamba Kahle, Bongani

In this newsletter we say hello to new NGP members and farewell to others. But the dominating mood as I write these words is of sadness. We have lost Bongani Mayosi, Dean of the Health Sciences Faculty. This is not the place for an obituary but it is the place to acknowledge, celebrate and learn from him.

Before his appointment to the position of Dean UCT's Health Sciences Faculty, Bongani was an inspirational Head of Medicine in, building it up into a powerhouse of scholarship and research. He was also a world-leading, A-Rated Scientist. In his being, in his actions, he embodied everything that is worthy in the pursuit of knowledge and which underscores the importance of Universities as places of knowledge production. Bongani was a model of excellence. He pursued it unapologetically. He believed that Africa could be the site of global intellectual and research leadership and he dedicated his life to this goal. He was well aware of the legacy of apartheid and was committed to redress. So he pursued his vision of excellence through developing a new cadre of black researchers. It was his belief that he and his colleagues would take UCT and South Africa forward to a new and promising age. I have found this vision inspiring.

Universities are, by their very nature, competitive. Scholars compete with one another but also with themselves in order to unlock potential, to push the boundaries of knowledge, to be the best that they can be in order to make the world a better place. The danger in this is that universities can become unfriendly, combative places, where it is easy to be pushed aside, trodden on and alienated and maybe difficult to find a safe place, support and the comfort of friends. It has been one of my major goals for NGP that our cohort provides comfort and safety. And so it is with great sadness that I contemplate Bongani's death. As a scholar of masculinity and men's vulnerabilities I reflect on the finding that men, particularly, have difficulty in sharing their fears, anxieties and worries and this exacts a heavy toll. So I dedicate NGP to continuing with its project of seeking excellence and to providing the safety and comfort that are prerequisites for a healthier institutional climate and therefore, essential for transformation.



Dr Phumla Sinxadi with Prof Mayosi at her graduation

The cohort has, as always been busy and productive. Below we showcase a number of achievements and doings: Yumna Albertus's work with spinal cord injuries, Mantoa Motinyane's work with isiXhosa poetry, Emese Bordy's interest in fire, fynbos and geology in the Western Cape, Shari Daya's reflections on what is (really) important. We have Joel presenting a paper in China, Alan Cliff giving of his time and expertise to help develop teaching portfolios for the ad hominem promotion exercise, Corrinne Shaw flying the NGP athletic flag in London and Ameeta Jaga developing her work-family balance and breast-feeding work at UCT and abroad. Finally, I am proud to say that we have over 10 NGP members applying for ad hominem promotion. Let me close by wishing them luck (but I don't think luck is needed!).

Editor: Robert Morrell, NGP Director

Welcome to Yumna Albertus



Dr Yumna Albertus is a Senior Lecturer in the Division of Exercise Science and Sports Medicine. Her research focus is on neuro-muscular physiology, where she is the lead researcher investigating the neuromuscular effects of exercise rehabilitation in certain conditions. Her research has ranged from rehabilitation using robotic over-ground walking in spinal cord injury, exercise-based rehabilitation in cardiovascular disease, elite para-athletes with Cerebral Palsy, injury risk in running using different shoe conditions.

Dr Albertus uses innovative technology to monitor neuromuscular changes over time. She measures neuromuscular patterns using electromyography and recently more specialized high-density electromyography (HD EMG) and muscle fibre conduction velocity. In building the HD EMG system with the help of UCT Biomedical engineering, she heads the only research group using HD EMG in Africa. Dr Albertus has an established collaboration with the world-leading researcher in HD EMG, Prof Ales Holobar, and will be measuring motor-unit activity in spinal cord injury. This allows for a deeper understanding into the physiology of muscle and the ability to investigate the effects of rehabilitation and exercise on neuroplasticity in activation of more motor units.

She has published 19 manuscripts with an H-Index of 7 and 315 citations. She holds positions on the following University of Cape Town committees: Faculty of Health Science Postgraduate Student Task Team, Student-Supervisor Portfolio, Employment Equity representative, Postgraduate funding and internationalization committee, Department Human Biology EXCO Committee, Post Graduate Student Affairs Portfolio, Divisional EXCO Committee Departmental Research Committee and Secretary of Experimental Biology Group.

Welcome to Nomonde Mbatani



“I really like it when I come and I meet with my patients, and we laugh, and I hear their stories.” This is how Nomonde describes her passion for her work in gynaecological oncology. Based in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology she has worked at UCT for many years. Her job involves working with sick patients diagnosed with cancer. There is satisfaction and joy when patients are cured or in remission and regaining their quality of life. On the other hand, says Nomonde, the job has taught her to

accept death and dying as part of life. To be part of the team that supports the families of a person that is approaching the end of life can be trying, but rewarding as “that on its own is a lesson and reminder of our trials and vulnerabilities”.

Nomonde was born and grew up in the Eastern Cape. With some irony, she comments that the leaders of the Transkei “homeland” believed in the education of children to advance knowledge and improve their futures. This helped her to enter the field of health sciences, first working for a few months as a nurse in Namibia. She was then assisted by the Otto Benecke Stiftung, Germany, to achieve her dream of becoming a doctor. “I remain eternally grateful to the sponsors”.

As an Obstetrician, nothing is more exciting as being part of the delivery of a new-born, says Nomonde. And then to see them growing up is something beyond explanation. Her own experience is particularly personal: “I have a beautiful daughter, Siphokazi, my one and only “favourite child”. She remains my best gift!”



“I enjoy teaching as it ensures that I am surrounded by the young generation, they keep me stimulated, I learn a lot and would really miss them when I do require. My knowledge of Medicine as practiced in other disciplines and current technological advances, continues to be updated by these young people. I get introduced to new Apps almost every month”. Nomonde continues to give back to the community, by remaining and being part of the public sector. “I continue to love this job. We work with wonderful, and caring colleagues. I sometimes feel that we as professionals often neglect to praise each other, for all the wonderful things we do, despite a sometimes trying environment”.

She finishes with words of encouragement: “Don’t be afraid of putting yourself out there and facing the unknown”. For a story on Nomonde and NGP, see: <https://www.news.uct.ac.za/article/-2018-07-04-put-yourself-out-there-urges-mbatani>

Farewell Sharon Kleintjes



In March 2018, Sharon Kleintjes was appointed the third Vera Grover Chair and Professor of Intellectual Disability at UCT, in the Department of Psychiatry and Mental Health. As Head of the Division of Intellectual Disability (ID), she joined this team to provide strategic direction in teaching and training, research, service development and advocacy in Intellectual Disability.

Sharon worked in the Western Cape Province's Department of Health as a clinical psychologist and then as a programme manager for mental health between 1990 and 2004. From 2004 to 2006, she worked as a research manager at the Human Sciences Research Council before joining the Department of Psychiatry and Mental Health at UCT as a soft-funded researcher (2006-2010) and convener of the Postgraduate Diploma in Addictions Care (2011). From 2012-2018 she worked for the Western Cape Department of Health as the principal psychologist at Valkenberg Psychiatric Hospital, remaining jointly appointed to the Department of Psychiatry & Mental Health as a Senior Lecturer, then Associate Professor, and co-head of the Division of Psychotherapy. Her research interests include recovery-oriented public mental health policy and service development, and opportunities for self-determined involvement and inclusion for people living with psychosocial and intellectual disability. Her PhD focused on the participation of people living with psychosocial disability in mental health policy development in South Africa.

Sharon joined the NGP as part of its first cohort in 2015. "I was an undergraduate student at UCT from 1981-1983 when there were but a smattering of permit-holding black students on campus, I returned for part time study in 1988, in the wake of the quota system for black student admissions. I found myself reflecting on this - never quite feeling at home at UCT- as I received the invitation to join the NGP in 2015. The active interest in my academic development, a personalised journey with Rob Morrell and my fellow NGP'ers, evoked a first-time experience of "being seen and held" at UCT. I found this programme to be an excellent academic development incubator: Rob's institutional and academic knowledge and gentle, persuasive and insightful mentoring style was just what I needed to address fears and harness skills to move academically. Thank you, Rob! The informal collegiality of meetings with other academics on the programme, writing retreats and spaces and capacity development workshops provided opportunities to share experiences and challenges, and to learn from others' successes and example, which I have found immensely valuable. Thank you everyone!!" Well done to UCT for creating this treasure trove of a space....

Farewell Tolu Oni

The NGP bid farewell to Tolu at a lunch at the UCT Club in June. Ed February, the cohort's elder statesman, was on hand to read a speech written by NGP Director, Robert Morrell.

“I first met Tolu when I was working in the Research Office, must have been around 2012 or 2013. Tolu was one of those people who leaves an indelible imprint after a first meeting. It is something about the radiant smile and something about the positive energy and maybe something about the manic laughter that sometimes she issues.

Tolu leaves us for a position at Cambridge University. In the recent period she has conceived of a project to focus on urban health in Africa and, undaunted by the size of the continent and its complexity, is hoping to impact the major health challenges that confront policy makers and health practitioners. Her optimism is founded on her startling productivity and her ability to connect people to one another, to build a team and to inspire them with heroic dreams.

Tolu was a founder member of NGP. In her time as a member I came to rely on her for new ideas, for encouragement and the exfoliation treatment she provided for my sometimes not-very-good ideas. Tolu has a way of combining fearlessness with being-nice and supportive. An amazing combination.

I shall remember Tolu in many ways but for many, she will be the runner who fought off a pack of ravenous hyenas on an early morning run at Mont Fleur. Single-handedly and unarmed.

Farewell, Tolu.”



Frank Matose, Ed February, Phumla Sinxadi, Tolu Oni (Photo: Nceba Lolwane)

Helping Patients to walk again

Yumna Albertus tackles Spinal Cord Injury



Spinal cord injury (SCI) is a devastating injury that causes neurological damage that may temporarily or permanently alter a person's normal function. Generally speaking, the quality of life of a person who becomes a paralysed is low and therefore rehabilitation plays a crucial role in maximizing neurological recover and overall health. The Western Cape and South Africa as whole, offers no government rehabilitation facility that aims to improve the long-term strength and functional capacity of a person with SCI. What is more alarming is that, because of high rates of violence (a combination of gun shot wounds and stabbings) and road accidents, South Africa has 3.5 times greater incidence of SCI than in developed nations.

A study that brings together specialists from multiple disciplines in the Western Cape is trying to revolutionize the lives of paraplegics by using technology in rehabilitating people with SCI. They have introduced a wearable robotic suit that will allow a person with SCI to stand and walk, functions which after their accident they had no hope of performing. To provide an individual who is a wheelchair-user the opportunity to stand upright and walk with the aid of a robotic suit seems far-fetched and what we see in movies, but it's a reality where with the use this technology we able to help a person to stand up and hug another person or have a conversation face to face, which is priceless.

Dr Yumna Albertus, exercise physiologist leads the largest SCI research project in Africa. Her multi-disciplinary team includes staff members Sacha West from Cape Peninsula University of Technology and Leslie Swartz, Jason Bantjes and Wayne Derman from Stellenbosch University. It also includes the superstar students Robert Evans (PhD candidate) and Claire Shackleton (MSc candidate). The research team is setting out to test the efficacy of this technology compared to exercise-based therapy, by implementing the rehabilitation three times per week for 24 weeks on 16 individuals with SCI. It has taken 17 months to complete and we are currently analyzing data and working towards publications.

The team has faced many challenges in getting the research underway but none more so than providing transport for the participants. Individuals with disability and specifically wheelchair-users have no or limited access to public transport and if they do find transportation, the cost is exorbitant. With the help of Sport24Hrs Taxis and Shuttle, the cost of transport was reduced and the team was able to provide transport to and from the rehabilitation centre, based at the South African Sports Science Centre in Newlands.



[Pictures supplied by Yumna Albertus]

Mantua Motinyane promoting IsiXhosa Poetry



Mr Frik Rademan – AVBOB CEO; Nolusindiso Penxa (isiXhosa Competition winner); Dr Mantua Motinyane UCT (isiXhosa Editor) and general editor for African languages [Picture supplied by Mantua Motinyane]

The AVBOB poetry competition was launched in August 2017 and was sparked by the inability of a grandfather to express his loss at the death of his two-year grandchild from neuroblastoma. The idea was to use the salve of poetry to express emotion.

The project was funded by Frik Rademan (AVBOB CEO) and headed by Johann de Lange, Afrikaans poet and short story writer. Editors for each of the 11 official languages were selected. The idea was to create an online database of poetry covering the themes of birth, hope, love and death. At the end of the 1st year of the competition, AVBOB produced an anthology containing 100 poems in the 11 official languages and N|uu (one of the Khoi-San languages). The poems contained in the anthology “*I wish I’d Said*” are dedicated to all those who would have wanted to say something to their loved ones but had no words to express their feelings. The anthology also forms part of AVBOB’s centenary celebrations.

Mantua’s role in the competition was that of an isiXhosa judge as well as an overall co-editor. Mantua’s love for poetry started with a project that she worked on with Christine Lucia (Stellenbosch University). The aim was to transcribe Mohapeloa’s solfa score into staff notation. Although Mohapeloa was a music composer, the oral influences (particularly folklore and poetry) were evident in his works. The experience from this project, as well as the training in linguistics, came in handy as she had to grapple with different orthographies for the related South African Bantu languages.

[Picture supplied by Mantua Motinyane]



Corrinne Shaw completes the London Marathon

Here is Corrinne (far right) with her sister, Nazlie (on the left) and a fellow runner from Johannesburg (in the middle). They were competing in the London Marathon which was held on Sunday, 22 April. It was officially the hottest London Marathon on record with temperatures peaking at 24C. The race was started by Queen Elizabeth and nearly 40 000 runners took part. Corrinne is an NGP running regular, frequently leading out the pack for the morning runs that are a feature of the writing retreats. And, on another athletic note, congrats to Freedom Gumedze on completing the Comrades marathon (his first) in 10 hours, 27 mins.



[Picture supplied by Corrinne Shaw]

Preparing for Promotion

Alan Cliff helps develop Teaching Portfolios.



Alan Cliff (Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching (CILT)) has been a regular seminar and workshop presenter for the NGP. Alan's speciality is in the design of teaching portfolios and in the construction of teaching narratives. These are skills that are essential to the development of excellent Ad Hom Promotion applications. Alan guides the NGP through the maze and mystery of 'teaching philosophy' and brings them in the end to the terminus where evidence of teaching achievement is perfectly synchronized with the narrative. *[Picture – Robert Morrell]*

Publishing and Parenting – Shari Daya.

Shari Daya (Environmental and Geographical Studies) has been having a busy time. She published a chapter (due out in October) titled 'Modernity as ambiguity in Vikram Chandra's *Sacred Games*' in a collection edited by Jonathan Charley, *Architecture, Literature and the City* (Routledge). More publications will flow from her work as a member of an international research team (UK, South Africa, Brazil and China) which is looking at middle-class food consumption in the global South. The project, "Sustainable Consumption and Agri-food Ethics in the Global South" was launched in May 2018. But Shari's proudest achievement is a cake she baked for her son and her happiest moment was the party held to honour Asher's fifth birthday. Cake and son proudly together in the picture below. Well done, Mum! *[Picture Shari Daya]*



A long history of veld fires in the Western Cape

Emese Bordy, wildfires and floods in the Holocene

Emese Bordy with one of her former honours students, Devon Bowen, and local and international colleagues have recently published a paper in a highly-regarded specialist geology journal, *the Journal of Sedimentary Research*. In this paper, they documented the history of charcoal-bearing debris brought down by extremely powerful floods in the Huis River region (Western Cape). The paper also investigates how ancient wildfires and megafloods events resulted in the rapid erosion, transportation and deposition of enormous volumes of river sediments over ~1500 years. These events, which occurred from ~ 2000 to ~ 650 years ago, repeatedly destabilized the landscape in this fire-prone and fire-dependent fynbos region of South Africa (see image below).

While the study can resonate with those who experienced large flooding events in Laingsburg in 1981 and more recently in southern Lesotho or California, Emese and her co-authors hope that their study will bring awareness of the fact that such megaflood events did not only occur in the recent geological past but can happen again in near future in this part of South Africa.

Fynbos in the Huis River Canyon, South Africa. The foreground shows a Protea bush, which is not only the national flower of South Africa but also a prominent plant species (Proteaceae) of the evergreen fynbos (Afrikaans for fine-leaved shrubs and other plants of the Cape Floral Kingdom). This fire-prone and fire-dependent ecoregion is distinctive for its exceptional biodiversity and endemism, and has been well-established in this part of Africa for the past ~14 million years.



[Picture supplied by Emese Bordy]

Joel Chigada tackles Information Resources Management in China

In June Joel presented a paper at the IRM 2018 Conference – the International Conference on Information Resources Management, held in Ningbo, China. His presentation was “Evaluating Factors Contributing to Misalignment of the South African National Cybersecurity Policy Framework”. The paper derives from work towards his second (yes, Second!) doctorate degree in Information Systems-Cybersecurity.

[Pictures supplied by Joel Chigada]



Jet-setting Jaga – Ameeta at home and abroad



In June Ameeta headed off to warm Washington DC to attend the Work and Family Researchers Network Conference. On the first day of the conference she participated in three presentations. The first was with her research partner from Middlesex University, Bianca Stumbitz, on a project that supports breastfeeding at work among low income mothers in the Western Cape – this work is motivated by the low exclusive breastfeeding rates in South Africa and that return to work is a major obstacle to continued breastfeeding for employed mothers.

With Bianca Stumbitz [Picture supplied by Ameeta Jaga]

For the second presentation, I was invited to present on a panel about teaching Work-Family in different contexts, aimed at junior faculty interested in designing work-family courses. Here I had the opportunity to share examples of localising work-family ideas to be contextually relevant in South Africa and linking work-family concepts to the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals. And for the third, I had been invited to present on my experiences and insights on the data collection process in South Africa for a comparative cross-national work-family study among 35 countries across the globe. It was exciting to meet some of the project partners from other countries including Poland, Indonesia, and Ethiopia. I returned from the conference inspired and energized.



[Picture supplied by Ameeta Jaga]

In the last week of vacation, together with her masters and PhD students, she attended a qualitative research methods workshop in public health course at UWC’s School of Public Health. It was a wonderful learning experience to be in a course with students, academics and practitioners from diverse disciplines who brought a wealth of knowledge and experience to the classroom.

Ameeta with PhD student (Bongi Mabaso), Masters student (Gina Botha) and colleague (Chao Mulenga).

Robert Morrell
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