



Next Generation Professoriate

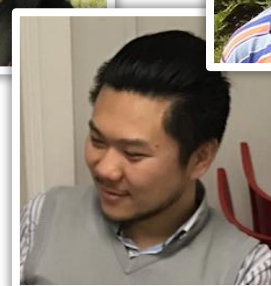
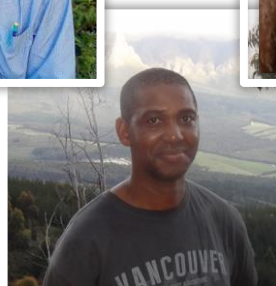
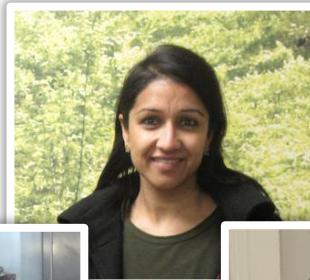
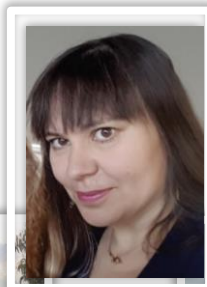
Newsletter #1
January 2019

The Next Generation Professoriate enters its fourth year on a high note with six members successfully applying for ad hominem promotion and another one achieving promotion by applying for an advertised post. Let me take this opportunity to congratulate: Emese Bordy, Freedom Gumedze, Chun-Sung Huang, Ameeta Jaga, Anwar Jardine, Kate le Roux and Bob Osano on their elevation to Associate Professorship.

Seven promotions in one year is evidence that gaining promotion is not quick and easy work and that, on the other hand, dedicated efforts to support the development of a new, demographically equitable, professoriate bear fruit. The successes are also a tribute to NGP members who have worked hard not just on their own accounts but also collectively to contribute to a friendlier, collaborative, inclusive institutional culture. I am also very pleased to announce the success of two cohort members in gaining NRF ratings. Both Waheeda Amien and Anwar Jardine were applying for rating for the first time.

In this newsletter, some of the new Associate Professors comment on their recent success. Professor Loretta Feris, DVC for Transformation, leads off our first newsletter for 2019 with a welcome and some UCT context. We then are invited to travel around the world with NGP members to Seychelles (Frank Matose) and Turkey (Salona Lutchman). We travel far back in time to be introduced by archaeologist, Deano Stynder, to the African bear. We hear from prize-winning Anthropology Professor, Francis Nyamnjoh, about the excitements of writing and finding meaning and we share prize-winning successes with Sedi Namane (Family Medicine) and Phumla Sinxadi (Clinical Pharmacology). We conclude with a photographic record of some of NGP's activities at the end of 2018, a writing retreat at Zevenwacht and the annual end of year lunch at the River Club.

Robert Morrell, NGP Director



Welcome from Loretta Feris, DVC (Transformation)



Image supplied by UCT

Dear Members of the NGP

Welcome back. I hope you had a productive and restful festive season. The Next Generation Professoriate is aimed at ensuring your personal success and career development while at the same time ensuring that UCT is on track in meeting its stated goal as set out in Vision 2020, i.e. to “invest in growing the pipeline of black, women and disabled academics and managers”.

In 2018 my office had a major focus on employment equity and on developing a new employment equity plan. This plan was approved by Council in December 2018 and has been submitted to the Department of Labour. It is a three-year plan with annual targets. Our aim with this new plan was to set more ambitious goals and targets for ourselves as a university. In developing goals and targets, we focused particularly on what the UCT professoriate should look like by the end of 2021. The goal is to be 24 % black (up from 18%) with Black African professors projected to grow from 5.3% to 9%. For UCT this is clearly a necessary trajectory. My office will work with deans and HoDs to ensure that this happens. Meeting this goal will also depend on the success of the NGP programme as the next generation of black and woman professors will come from the current cohort of participants. As DVC Transformation I am committed to meeting this goal, not because it is a numbers game, but because I fundamentally believe that a transformed and inclusive UCT must have a black professoriate. It is important for students, staff and for the academic project that the university reflects the demographics of the country we live in.

Wishing you success for 2019.

Associate Professor Anwar Jardine, Chemistry

I joined the NGP in 2016 after struggling for years to get direction and momentum. The lack of pace in reaching the required goals before Ad Hom application was partly due to my character and mindset, somehow shaped by years in Industry. In the scientific discipline, it helps a great deal to establish an academic career quickly when you are lucky enough to be the successor of an established mentor. This type of infrastructure was something I was not privileged with, which makes me more proud of my progress. I soon realized after numerous poorly managed academic collaborations that you must choose your research projects and themes wisely. I learned the hard way that you need to take some control of your destiny, almost alone, selfish in time management and bold in pursuit of your targets.

In the NGP organisation, I discovered a family of people from diverse disciplinary backgrounds with common grievances. Being part of the NGP help me mentally and psychologically to deal with the stress coupled with this journey. I'm happy to be able to continue this journey with this amazing group of colleagues. I enjoy sharing the successful moments with my colleagues and I like to be there to encourage those who were not so lucky the first time to persevere. I'm also happy not to have to correct students anymore where they used to assign the assoc. professorship title prematurely.

"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." —African Proverb

A successful NRF rating application, ad hom promotion topped off with the Cape Argus cover pic of the VC's inauguration. What a year!



Cape Argus, front page (Fri 14 Dec 2018): UCT VC Mamokgethi Phakeng robing ceremony (with Anwar Jardine top left).

Associate Professor Emese Bordy, Geological Sciences

Applying for promotion meant for me, most of all, reflection time on what I achieved since the last one, at what costs, and where I am heading as a mid-career female academic in South Africa. My promotion to Associate Professor was considered an event in the Department, where I am the second female to achieve this recognition in well over 100 years. For me, however, the promotion is a milestone in my never-ending academic development process. Of course, just like any UCT Science Faculty academic, having been subjected to a robust, demanding and meritocratic promotion system did give me both confidence and sorrows, and resulted in some tense (and even teary!) moments. However, with the moral support from my postgrad students, departmental colleagues, friends, NQPer peers, and last but not least my small family, I was able to keep going, and celebrate the successful outcome with all of them on multiple occasions (as shown below).

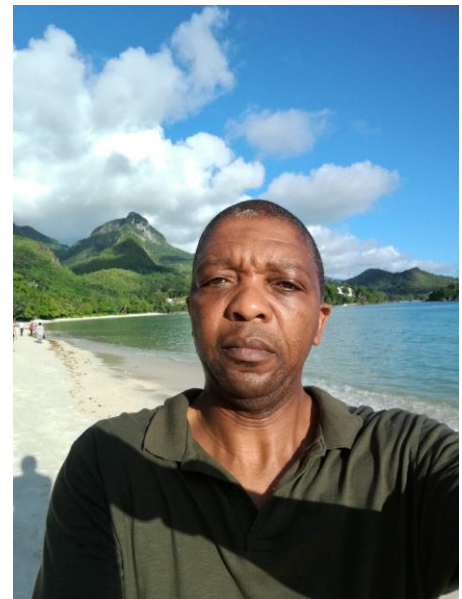


Image supplied by Emese Bordy

Frank Matose: Africa, Climate, Land Grabs and the Protection of the Commons

In the last two years, Frank Matose has been a key part to the Environmental Humanities South Centre at UCT. Together with Lesley Green (Social Anthropology), Frank has developed this initiative to the point where they have 20 Masters students (10 graduated already) and 16 doctoral students (1st graduated December 2018) and is now a fully-fledged centre. The centre now has two full-time directors, 1 administrator, 5 core staff, 6 partners across the humanities faculty. The research in the centre seeks to deepen interdisciplinary studies across the bio-physical sciences on the one hand, and humanities, social sciences, literary studies and creative arts in shaping discourse about environmental and climate related crises.

Recognition of the importance of this work came when Frank was invited to present a keynote at the African Union, Southern Africa Regional Office, “Regional Conference on Climate Change and Structural Transformation I n Southern Africa”, in November. The conference was held in the Seychelles which Frank described as beautiful but hideously hot. Frank’s presentation challenged Southern African delegates to be wary of the politics of climate change. He noted that foreign and local investors sometimes used the scare of climate change to appropriate communally held land and natural resources. And African states have been complicit with this process. Climate intervention cannot be seen as separate from the broader struggles over the commons where the rights and lifestyles of rural inhabitants are often overlooked on the argument that climate change is more important than their rights. Matose provided examples on the other hand, of climate change interventions which did not threaten local livelihoods but instead, adopted a holistic approach, working with local people to promote adaptive technologies and climate change mitigation. Amongst these examples were the REDD intervention in the Democratic Republic of Congo by Guy-Patrice Dkamela and Green Energy in Tsitsikamma by Michelle Pressend, work on threats of extinctions in Mt Mabo in Mozambique by Anselmo Matusse and north-west Zimbabwe by Tafadzwa Mushonga and on variable weather due to dams on the Lesotho Highlands project by Kefiloe Sello.



Frank addressing the AU conference in Seychelles and on a Seychelles Beach. (Images supplied by Frank Matose)

Salona Lutchman raises Children's Rights issues in Istanbul

Over the winter break (June/July) of 2018, Salona Lutchman taught a short course at the Summer School at Koç University in Istanbul, Turkey. She offered a course - "Critical issues in Children's Rights" - to postgraduate and undergraduate students. The course provided a basic introduction to the normative Child Rights framework at an International, regional and domestic level.

Students were mainly at the 3rd year level of the LLB, but there were four dedicated PhD students and one exchange student from the UK who attended the course. The structure of the course allowed for interaction and debate between students on issues including armed conflict, child marriage, corporal punishment, child labor, child trafficking, education and adolescent sexuality. The varying nationalities of students (Turkish, Zimbabwean, Brazilian, British) generated a plurality of views. Salona reflected: *"This wonderful and dedicated group of students welcomed me so warmly and generously tolerated my appalling Turkish! My time at Koç University was a deeply rewarding teaching experience"*.



Salona, fifth from left, with her students at Koç University, Istanbul (Photo: supplied by Salona Lutchman)

Deano Stynder: A carnivorous bear from the African late Miocene, *Agriotherium africanum*

When we think of large African carnivores, bears (members of the carnivoran family Ursidae), are literally the last to come to mind. And yet bears were part of the African carnivore community until relatively recently. The Atlas bear (*Ursus arctos crowtheri*), a sub-species of the European Brown Bear, once roamed extensively across north Africa and was captured by the Romans who used them to fight gladiators. The Atlas bear hung on until the 1870s when the last specimen was killed by hunters.

Agriotheriinae was the first bear family to occupy Africa, approximately eleven million years ago. *Agriotheriinae*'s longevity and wide distribution (it occupied North America, Eurasia and Africa) intrigued scientists who began to speculate about the reasons for its success. Members of this family were unusual, in that they had significantly longer legs than modern bears. They were also amongst the largest bears that ever lived, with estimates of large males reaching weights of between 300 and 600 kilograms. Most intriguing though were their massive heads, large cranio-facial muscle attachment areas, short snouts and carnivorous dentition. These traits are suggestive of carnivory. Carnivory is uncommon amongst extant bears which are, with the exception of the polar bear (*Ursus maritimus*), omnivorous.

Agriotherium africanum (*Ag. africanum*) was a relatively recent African member of *Agriotheriinae*. The most complete skull of *Ag. africanum* was discovered at Langebaanweg, a famous late Miocene (ca. 5.2 million years ago) fossil site located on our own southwestern coast. Using a variety of modern analytical techniques, myself and colleagues from North America and Australia set about analyzing this skull to further clarify *Ag. africanum*'s dietary behaviour.

We initially applied a technique called finite element analysis to computed tomography (CT) scans of the skull. This allows an estimation of bite force (how hard it could bite). Comparatively, *Ag. africanum* had the highest bite force of all carnivores in our study, even higher than hyaenas. Its skull was also easily able to deal with its exceptionally powerful bite. However, analysis of its tooth root surface areas indicated that *Ag. africanum* had relatively small tooth roots, much smaller than expected for a carnivore with the ability to bite extremely hard. As teeth are the limiting factor in any masticatory system, *Ag. Africanum*'s teeth would not have been able to withstand the massive strain that its estimated bite force was able to impart on them.

With an apparent inability to routinely consume mechanically demanding skeletal elements, we proposed that *Ag. Africanum*'s focus was most likely on tough connective tissue, which it acquired by actively scavenging the carcasses of freshly dead / freshly killed animals. Mechanically less demanding skeletal elements were likely to have been a secondary food source, ingested and processed mainly in association with muscle and connective tissue.

Agriotherium africanum was unique. Not only was it one of the first bear species to make Africa its home, but it was also almost exclusively carnivorous. It's carnivory was likely the key to its successful occupation of much of Africa, at a time when ungulates were becoming more abundant and diverse.



Image supplied by Deano Stynder

Conversion or Conversation? Francis Nyamnjoh talks about writing

Francis Nyamnjoh, Professor of Social Anthropology at UCT, recently won the prestigious Fage and Oliver prize from the African Studies Association of the UK for his book *#Rhodes Must Fall*. In a seminar on **“Writing books, building a career, making knowledge (and exciting the imagination)”** Francis discussed the importance of conversing, of being open to multiple views and realities. He started controversially by referring to his award-winning book and explaining that Rhodes, often viewed only as a white, capitalist, racist colonialist, could also be understood as a model of success in the face of adversity, especially for foreigners (Makwereres) seeking to make a fortune against the odds in a foreign country.



Photo by Robert Morrell

To write is to activate oneself and one’s ideas”, said Francis. In order to do this effectively one must understand who one is writing for, the audience. One can in one moment be writing for one’s peers, and in another, for different, wider, audiences including oneself. There is a danger in writing for a strictly defined peer audience because this can lead to a mutually-affirming, circular knowledge that repels alternative world views. Such an approach can lead to conversion – the desire to convert others to one’s own view – rather than conversation where one is open to different views. What results can actually be a ‘celebration of ignorance’.

The antidote to narrow thinking is to rise above one’s own necessarily limited world and to embrace strangers. As one does this one acknowledges human commonality, worth and creativity. To illustrate this point, Francis drew on one of his recent books, *Drinking from the Cosmic Gourd: How Amos Tutuola Can Change Our Minds* (2017). Francis argues the value of bringing fiction into conversation with ethnography and of embracing uncertainty as a necessary part of identity-construction. The never-completed project of the self is captured in one of the abiding themes in Francis’s work, intimate strangers (the title of one of Francis’s novels (2010)). Amos Tutuola’s novels set in Nigeria - *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* (1952) and *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts* (1954) – explore African realities and uncertainties while blurring the distinctions between fact and fiction, tradition and modernity. Francis argues that it is important to be playful – like the cartoon of Tom and Jerry. There is ‘playful violence’ intended to provoke questions and mirth, and ‘in the end, everybody is ok” through an investment in conviviality by intimate strangers determined to get along.

Francis left the final words to Tutuola. *“Borrow the best ... in order to be the complete gentleman”* in the interest of your pursuits, but do not delude yourself on the permanence of your completeness by forgetting your debts and indebtedness.

Phumla Sinxadi, Inspirational Clinician

The South African Health Excellence Awards, which were co-hosted by the Clinix Health Group and the South African Clinician Scientists Society (SACCS), were held at Emperor’s Palace, Johannesburg on the 24th Nov 2018. The awards aimed to celebrate scientists, researchers, practitioners and administrators in the medical sector for their leadership, innovation and service to the country. Dr Phumla Sinxadi received the SACCS award, which was presented to the individual who is an inspiration to others pursuing careers as clinician scientists.



Image supplied by Phumla Sinxadi

Sedi Namane wins *Western Cape Government Premier's Service Excellence Award*

The Service Awards were created in 2014 to entrench, amongst other things, professionalism, dedication, responsiveness, care. There were 85 nominees for 5 categories of award (Best Innovator, Best Ethics Department, Best Leader, Best implemented project and Best Frontline Public Service Employee) across all the Government departments. Sedi was nominated by senior managers in Health and for her excellence in clinical governance, training of nurses and doctors and production of useful research for primary level care. In addition, reviewers identified her promotion of the rational use of medicine provincially, leadership in child care programs resulting in reduced morbidity & mortality in the Metro plus her consultancy-service for National PHC Standard treatment guidelines.

Sedi and husband Mandla Konile enjoyed the ceremony held at Lord Charles with Nik Rabonowitz as programme director. We left with a trophy, a beautifully framed certificate and a framed photograph with Helen Zille!



Sedi with Vanguard Staff (Image supplied by Sedi Namane)

NGP End of Year Lunch at the River Club

This is becoming a regular, year-ending event and the River Club provides a now familiar venue. But for how much longer? The area is now the centre of big development plans known as the Two Rivers Urban Park (TRUP). The scheme involves major capital investment, malls and both upmarket and mid-tier housing between the Liesbeek and Black rivers. It is a World Design Capital 2014 project, and amongst its aims is that “the park will be designed as an open space to trigger social inclusion, a new metropolitan tourism destination and to enhance ecological awareness”. (<https://www.westerncape.gov.za/general-publication/two-rivers-urban-park-%E2%80%93-towards-sustainable-integrated-urban-development>)



Pragashni Padayachee and Afton Titus



Maureen Tanner and Sylvia Bruinders



Yumna Albertus, Linda Price and Heather Marco



Lebo Mateane and Robert Morrell

Zevenwacht Writing Retreat

From 15-17 October 2018 NGP members once again gathered at the Zevenwacht wine estate for a writing retreat. As always, attendance was good and the appreciation was expressed of the productivity that the retreats encourage.

- “The retreat has been an excellent space for me to focus”
- “Overall, I had not worked on this manuscript since the last retreat in June, so it was very good to get back to this intellectual writing space in my own brain and realising the end is not that much further”
- “I am grateful for this uninterrupted research time. At UCT, it would have taken me about 10 days to do what I did here in 3 days, and I would have not been feeling so upbeat about having achieved the above. THANK YOU!”

But perhaps the biggest achievement of the writing retreats is to promote collegiality, collaboration and mutual-support.



Photograph: Nosipho Mzenzi

Back Row: Emese Bordy, Sylvia Bruinders, Bob Osano, Yumna Albertus, Pragashni Padayachee, Frank Matose, Lebogang Ramma, Sedi Namane

Front Row: Robert Morrell, Corrinne Shaw, Kate le Roux.

*Robert Morrell
Editor*