

Faculty of Education students & staff excel at the recent NMMU gala awards evening

Education Academic Achievers

The prestigious **Academic Awards** evening was held recently at The Boardwalk where top students are recognised and honoured for their academic achievements. This year, three recipients are from within our faculty. Congratulations!

Ms Megan Jacobs (B Ed Foundation Phase, 2009) was awarded the **Initial (first) Degree Award** for Education. The first degree awards are made to the graduate in each faculty who had the **best** initial degree performance.



“Megan was an outstanding student. She gave of her best and made a strong contribution both in the lecture room and in the school classroom. Her innovative ideas and unique approach enabled her to make valued contributions during lectures and also during teaching practice.”

~ Dr Margie Childs

(left) *Top Education Undergraduate Student, Megan Jacobs, receives her award from VC, Prof Derrick Swartz*

Top Honours student

Post-graduate award to Education

Ms Caroline Lunn (B Ed Honours *Cum Laude*, 2009) was awarded the Best Honours Graduate in the Social Sciences and Humanities Category award. The prestigious award is sponsored by the Anton Rupert Family Trust.

The post-graduate awards are made to the best achievers within the different post-graduate categories. It is important to note that the post-graduate awards are not made at faculty level, but at institutional level.

Well done, Caroline!

The good news continues...

Heloise Sathorar, lecturer in the School for Initial Teacher Education, was awarded Best Master's Graduate by Coursework: Social Sciences & Humanities. Heloise graduated with her Masters Degree in Business Administration through the Faculty of Business & Economic Sciences.

We are proud of you, Heloise!



*From left to right:
Heloise Sathorar,
Caroline Lunn,
Prof Denise Zinn
(Executive Dean)
and Megan Jacobs*



NEWS

We bid FAREWELL to Dr Eileen Raymond, Fulbright Scholar July-2009 to June-2010

The View from the end of my year at NMMU...

It is hard to believe that my year among you is fast coming to a close, but close it must when my flight takes off on 07 June. As with all endings, one is prompted to look back on the experiences one has had and the learnings ... of which there have been so many.

Since the night of 15 July 2009 when Lesley and Joe Wood picked me up at the PE Airport, my life here has been full of so many experiences, all of which have exceeded my expectations of what this year would bring. The openness of the members of the Faculty and your willingness to share your lives and work with this newcomer has resulted in my finding a second family and home among you.

During my first semester here, my time was largely devoted to learning as much as I could about South African educational challenges, particularly in light of White Paper #6. The special needs faculty had set themselves the task of considering ways to update and enhance the ACE:SNE program as well as the PGED 301 module taken by all BEd and PGCE students. By December, we had created a new curriculum outline and study guide for PGED 301 focused on strategies for teaching in inclusive classrooms, and leaving behind the medical perspective on disabilities. We also had a completed proposal for the ACE:SNE revision which, once approved, will most certainly allow us to prepare our ACE students more appropriately for the world they now inhabit. All of this was at times a challenging collaborative process, and I learned a lot about myself and about collaboration as a result of that work. As the process played out over the semester, Christo Pienaar and I as co-facilitators became more conscious of the ways we could support the team to keep the process moving and of the importance of having clear and direct communication. We also learned that there is actually a benefit from having members who have a variety of backgrounds, philosophies and experiences to bring to the table, and as co-facilitators, we learned how to see those differences as positives rather than problems. Christo and I had the privilege of sharing the results of our team's collaborative work at the April 2010 Convention of the Council for Exceptional Children in Nashville, TN, US, where we discovered a number of folks with current or former South African connections!

This semester, I have had the experience shared by all of you teaching in our BEd and ACE programs. With two sections of PGED 301 (90 students total) on South campus, and sections of PRED 208 (45 students) and PRED 210 (45 students) at Missionvale, I experienced first hand the difficulties of using active learning activities in large classes in small venues. I also confronted the challenges of delivering instruction in English to students for whom English is a second or third language. I experienced the difficulty of evaluating large numbers of performance-based assessments designed to enhance the relevance of our teaching to our students' professional goals. Our collective challenges will continue to be how to implement active learning pedagogies under these conditions, because succeed we must if we are to model what we want our students to do when they become teachers.

My other major research project this semester involved working with a small group of teachers at a Motherwell primary school to explore ways they could support each other in finding solutions to their pedagogical and curricular challenges. Together, we explored the challenges relating to implementing the national policy of additive multilingualism in our schools and other challenges. Over the semester, it was gratifying to see them gradually taking ownership of the group, exploring alternative ways to do the difficult tasks before them despite significant resource challenges. They are on their way to developing a more differentiated approach to their own classroom work, using principles of active learning and Response to Intervention to guide their educational planning. One of them said to me recently that by the time I left for the US, I would be part of Motherwell, and Motherwell would be part of me. That is true in so many ways, and I am so appreciative of the efforts of Cordelia Mazomba who put me in touch with the school, and to the six teachers who gave of their time to meet with me every other week all semester.

My interests in inclusive education and Universal Design for Learning finally began to move out of my own work in the Faculty this semester as well. My public lecture in April, followed by presentations to the Teaching and Learning Committees of the University and the Faculty helped me begin some larger conversations about what inclusive education might look like at the tertiary level. I certainly hope to continue those conversations long distance, and may even find them an "excuse" to return to NMMU to continue our collaborations in the future.

People often ask me what I have learned this year... well, I have learned that:

- We are all so much more when we work together than separately; 1 plus 1 is way more than 2!
- The languages we speak can be barriers if we let them, but with care, we can bridge the spaces between us.
- Living by the spirit of *ubuntu* is the best way to have a good life and to leave more than footprints behind when you leave.

As you welcomed me with your open generosity of spirit, I learned what it is that is so special about your beautiful land and people. In so many ways, I will always carry South Africa with me and will hold memories of you in my heart... and I know that I will return for visits in the future. With the miracles of technology, I do expect to have ongoing collaborations with many of you even through we are so far apart. Of course, you all have an open invitation to visit my northern New York community as well; although it is very cold by South African standards, our people have warm hearts and will welcome you with open arms. Please write down my "forever" email address (raymoneb@potdam.edu) somewhere safe and keep in touch! ~ Eileen



NEWS

Short research visit by an internationally recognised scientists to NMMU: Faculty of Education

Professors Mariana and Peter Hewson visited NMMU from Monday 24 May until Friday 4 June 2010 as guests of the Faculty of Education. Their visit was made possible by a travel block grant offered to host internationally recognised scientists at the NMMU. Professors Hewson are seasoned scientists working the field of Science education, Indigenous Knowledge Systems, and Research Supervision. They are familiar with the South African and Eastern Cape contexts. The aim of the visit was twofold: addressing capacity building in research supervision in the NMMU and working with the staff in the Faculty of Education around aspects of Indigenous Knowledge Systems and teacher education.

Professors Hewson offered a two day workshop on **Group Supervision**, attended by 32 people from 14 departments in the NMMU. The workshop included topics such as Strengths and Weaknesses of the Supervisory Process; Eliciting Research Problems and Negotiating Supervisory Agendas; Giving Feedback to Students; Getting it all together - Simulated Supervisory Experiences. The feedback on the workshop was very positive with a need to provide support to novice supervisors being identified. The international perspective on supervision was supplemented by a presentation done by **Dr Robert Gerber** on the scaffolding model he designed for preparing prospective DBA students to submit acceptable research proposals.

Mariana Hewson, who did her PhD in the area of **Indigenous Knowledge Systems**, met with a group of staff interested in IKS and the impact it has on our teaching and the learning of our students. Possibilities for future collaboration were discussed, as well as collaboration in integrating IK in our curriculums. These ideas are closely link to the transformation of the HE curriculum, an initiative the BEd Hons group started with, as well as the Action Research Unit.



Mariana (front right) with Marilyn, Elsa, Sindi, Carmel, Percy, Helena and Lesley



Peter, Tulsu and Mariana

Peter Hewson met with a few interested staff members and shared with them three models reflecting **how learners learn** and the impact that has on our teaching, called: "Ideas, Activities and Interactions". He linked these three ideas to learning seen as achievement, as task or as interaction. For each of these views of learning he posed the following questions: Is learning individual or social? Is learning durable or temporary? Is learning rational or non-rational?

~ Elsa

Research Briefs

A FIRST FOR THE FACULTY!

We will be hosting post-doc student, **Dr Yvonne Nsubuga**, for the remainder of this year and part of 2011. The provisional title of her study is: *Integrating environmental issues into the Grade 10 Life curriculum: Analysing and monitoring teachers' classroom practice*. From her study, Yvonne aims to produce 2 academic papers and present her findings at the 2011 annual conference of the Environmental Education Association of Southern Africa. She hopes her study will enhance community engagement between NMMU and local disadvantaged schools, as well as enhance collaboration between NMMU and Rhodes University (one of her supervisors is from RU).

NATIONAL RESEARCH COLLOQUIUM

Tulsu and Sylvan attended this event in Johannesburg, where pertinent issues pertaining to the future of educational research were thrashed out.

SAARMSTE RESEARCH SCHOOL

Tulsu attended the national SAARMSTE research school that took place at Haga Haga from 7-11 June. (see pg 4)

HERS-SA ACADEMY

Dr Noluthando Toni has been selected to attend this prestigious programme. *Congratulations!*

WELL DONE CORDELIA!

Cordelia has been accepted for the 6th InWent Blended Learning Course, 'Teaching and the AIDS Pandemic', organised by InWent and UWC.

FAREWELL EILEEN - Fullbright July-2009 to June-2010



Farewell speeches were given by Prof Alette Delpont (DoS), Dr Christo Pienaar (ACE SNE Prog Coord.) and Prof Denise Zinn (Executive Dean), while Ms Gishma Daniels handed over Eileen's farewell gift; a small token of our appreciation for both her presence and contributions this past year.



Eileen returns home to Potsdam NY after spending a year with the faculty as a Fulbright Scholar. She contributed tremendously to the faculty during the year, but most especially on the recirculation of ACE SNE.

Eileen was hugely impressed with NMMU's Choir after seeing them perform the first week she arrived. Thus we felt it fitting that their DVD form part of her farewell gift, along with that quintessential African souvenir; a hand painted african motif tablecloth.

Hamba Kahle, Eileen

Science, Mathematics and Technology Research School

Dr Tulsi Morar and Mr Percy Sepeng attended the **Southern African Association for Research in Science, Mathematics and Technology Education (SAARMSTE) Research School** held June 7-11 at Haga Haga on South Africa's Wild Coast. The school was attended by about 40 doctoral and post-doctoral researchers in science, mathematics and technology education, drawn from some 10 universities in Southern Africa. International facilitators namely, Professor Julie Luft, from Arizona State University, Professor Eduardo Mortimer from Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais and Professors Peter and Mariana Hewson from University of Wisconsin, Madison presented aspects of research.

The VC from Walter Sisulu, Marcus Malusi Balintulo attended the opening function and expressed his support for the Research School that focuses on supporting young researchers in mathematics, science and technology education.

Research School sessions concentrated on various aspects of the research process such as theoretical frameworks, data analysis, writing for publication, and supervision. These provided opportunities for participants to learn new approaches, discuss issues in small groups, have one-on-one consultations with experienced researchers, and work individually on their writing.

Dr Morar, who is the Chair of the SAARMSTE Research School said, "The Research School provides students with time and space for discussion, and a mixture of challenge and cooperation that engage them. Everybody, including the facilitators learned a lot and had a memorable experience".



Tulsi and Percy with the facilitators and participants at the Research School

Conference News

International Organisation for Science and Technology Education Conference (IOSTE)

Andre and Mary-Grace attended the IOSTE conference in Bled, Slovenia from 13 to 18 June 2010. The symposium was aimed to promote the development and dissemination of theoretical knowledge, conceptual research, and professional practice knowledge on science and technology education.



Andre, Mary-Grace and Peter J Fensham

Andre's topic, *The CRAR³FS² framework for developing teachers' ICT skills for Science Education through Cyberhunts*, ensured full attendance during his presentation. And, what Andre found interesting was that many other ICT speakers referred to his paper during their presentations, thus acknowledging certain issues that he raised.

Mary-Grace's presentation titled, *A South African Perspective for Improving Learners' Fundamental Sense of Science*, was rather fitting as the emphasis on scientific literacy was prevalent throughout the various conference strands and continues to be a key focus area in science education research.

They were fortunate to meet Peter J Fensham, Professor at Queensland University of Technology and Emeritus Professor at the Monash University in Australia, and one of the leading intellectuals on scientific literacy. Peter's keynote address, *"The Science Curriculum: A Contest of Values, Purposes, Interests and Possibilities"* set the scene for engaging and insightful discussions.

The next IOSTE conference will take place in 2012 in Tunisia and we are happy to announce that Andre was elected as the Southern African regional representative. Our South African colleagues Moyra Keane (WITS) and Angela James (UKZN) were also elected as Chairperson and Secretary-Treasurer (respectively) of the IOSTE board.

14th World Congress of the World Council of Comparative Education (WCCES)

Prof Zinn, Drs Blignaut, Toni and Pillay attended and presented papers at the 14th World Congress of the World Council of Comparative Education (WCCES), 14 to 18 June 2010. The conference was held in Istanbul, Turkey at Bogazici University, an incredibly beautiful city, rich in history, culture, diversity, vibrancy and with such warm, extremely kind people. The overarching theme, **Bordering, Re-Bordering and New Possibilities for Change in Education and Society**, was both critically challenging and inclusive of several approaches to and angles on the issues involved.

This was a big conference with 14 thematic groups, the following of which captured the majority of attention of most delegates: *Educational Governance, Policy Within and Across Borders, Comparative Education: Rethinking Theory and Method, Education, Conflict and Transitions Within and Between Societies, Demystifying Quality in Education, Re-imagining Curriculum, Critical Perspectives in Teacher Education and Development, Identity, Space and Diversity in Education, Education, Human and Social Development, and Capabilities, and New Technologies and Accessibility to Learning.*

Prof Michael Apple delivered a powerful keynote address on **Power, Knowledge and Educational reform**. "I was intrigued by the depth of his explication of *Education as a Political Act*", Noluthando commented. "Shervani could not help but satisfy her quest for intellectual indulgence by hijacking the renowned scholar in the university corridors for a quick debate! We even persuaded him to pose for a picture with us!" (above).

Another highlight was the presentation of past WCCES president, Ann Hickling-Hudson, and her colleague from Jamaica, Sheila Graham, and their exposition of the use of drama in education as a pedagogical tool – "... very exciting, and I hope we can get them to come and visit us on an international grant sometime soon, with a focus on the use of drama and other interactive methodologies in education", Denise.

There was a large contingent of South African academics, so besides learning from international colleagues, there was a great opportunity to bond, network and learn also about South African colleagues in Education faculties around the country. Socially, the experience of multi-layered discussions, dining, and dancing with fellow academics in the streets of Istanbul and on the gala dinner cruise viewing 'the heavenly landscape of the Bosphorus' each will long remember. Memories will inevitably include dancing the 'Bus Stop' in the middle of Taskim Square to a live band!

"As a last word, this was an academic conference, and all the NMMU colleagues did us proud, with papers well and cogently presented and argued, with good discussions and debate following each of their presentations. We are looking forward to their articles being ready for publication soon." Denise.



Noluthando & Shervani with Michael Apple