

NEWS



Nelson Mandela
Metropolitan
University

for tomorrow

Port Elizabeth & George

February 2014



Top Scholars Choose Education

The Vice-Chancellor's scholarship has been awarded at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, since 2009. Established by Professor Derrick Swartz, the VC's Scholarship aims to attract top scholars from around the country to NMMU. Each year 30 excelling matriculants are chosen out of thousands of applications. These students enter a variety of disciplines and leave our university as leaders of their various fields. The bursary requires students to maintain an overall distinction – aggregate above 75% - in order for the scholarship to be renewed their in second and third years of study.

The 30 VC's scholars are efficacious students and include Eastern Cape's 2013 top matriculant Matthew Walker. The 2014 recipients comprise of 26 students from the Eastern Cape, 3 from the Western Cape and 1 from Kwazulu-Natal. These students represent all 7 faculties, with Business and Economic Sciences having the largest number. The other disciplines chosen include Pharmacy, Construction Economics, Mechatronics and Electrical Engineering.

This year (2014) two of the Vice-chancellor scholarship recipients, chose to study Education in order to develop themselves and their society respectively. Robynne Macfarlane and Samantha Swanepoel astonished their peers by choosing to study Education above other professions. When asked why they chose teaching, both scholars described the need to change perceptions about the teaching profession.

Robynne Macfarlane, matriculated from Collegiate Girls High School in 2013, as a top academic achiever. An avid water polo and netball player, Robynne had to manage her time, balancing her academic performance, sporting career and extra-mural activities. Her extra murals include Interact, First Aid, Student Christian Association (SCA) and volunteering at the Animal Welfare Society.

With all of these humanitarian interests, Robynne knew that education would be the career to "help the future and make a difference". She is inspired to become an Intermediate Phase (IP) teacher (teaching learners in grade 4-7) as – learner's in this phase have wonderful personalities and are becoming individuals in their own right.

When asked why she chose education, Robynne explained "I don't want to die and not have made an impact here. I want to have a purpose, or else life would be pointless". After recognizing her inexplicable connection to children, Robynne realized that she had a calling which would allow her to affect change. Her aim as an educator is to "change the perception of teaching as a senseless degree to study and make known the power of teaching". She also hopes to make mathematics and science fun for learners, in order to make them want to study further. Robynne believes that teachers should embody the noble qualities of humility, integrity, approachability, equality and service above self, which makes her the perfect candidate for the scholarship.

... continue to page 2

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The second recipient to join the Education Faculty, Samantha Swanepoel matriculated from Riebeek Girls High School last year. She explains that her time spent serving her student body as a first team captain, computer lab assistant and tutor helped her discover a love for education. Coupled with her experience as a holiday club leader and Christ 24/7 leader, she realized her unique gift for dealing with children and learned that they are far smarter and more mature than she expected. Samantha chose to study Further Education and Training (FET) in mathematics and business, as it would allow her to interact with young people and really expand the learners capability, as she considers "the development of the learner is not just about education, but also [about] building them as a person". When asked why she chose teaching over journalism, Samantha explained "so that future generations could receive the same level of education and opportunities as I did". Samantha believes that educators should help children develop and she considers education to be the most important profession because. Samantha also believes that, "if it was not for teachers, there would not be doctors, lawyers and other 'fancy' positions, as it all starts with the teacher". Through her time in education, she hopes to change the perceptions of the role of teachers, by leaving the legacy of a good the teacher.

Both Robynne and Samantha believe that education can change the future, better humanity and uplift South Africa as a whole. When asked to share words of wisdom with their peers – Robynne hopes to impart the message that her fellow students should "never be afraid of sticking out and being different – as it is more fun being different than being part of the crowd". Whilst, Samantha wants to inspire her peers to put 100% dedication into all of their actions, as "even when things feel like they are going nowhere, there is a door that you don't see – hope". The faculty welcomes these bright scholars and wishes them all of the success with their studies.

Taryn Isaacs



Yolande Marx (3rd Foundation Phase student teacher)

From the Right: Vuyelwa Sogcwayi, Hlubi Nolisi, Yolande Marx, Valrica Rademeyer, Robin Notshulwana, Monica Nzongwana, and Nadeema Musthan

A couple of students and I had the wonderful opportunity of attending the South Africa Research Association for Early Childhood Education (SARAEECE) conference which was held on 4-7 February. The main 'theme' of the conference was Taking Early Childhood Education into the Future through Research. The focus was on preparing future teachers and strengthening current teachers in their as students role of Early Childhood Education. We also had the privilege of meeting Dr. Whitfield Green from the Department of Higher Education and Training, who also attended the conference.

One of the sessions that stood out for us was the one by Dr. Randa Grob-Zakhary, the CEO of the LEGO Foundation. The 'title' of her session was, Call to Action: Re-imagining learning by re-defining play. 'Interestingly' she discussed the importance of play in learning for the development of children. As we sat on the floor in the conference room, like grade 1 learners, with our 8 LEGO blocks, she engaged us in playful examples of using LEGO in the classroom for mathematics, language, and life skills activities.

There were many other interesting sessions presented as well as fun hands on workshops. We only wish that we could have attended all of the sessions. This opportunity opened our eyes to the fact that there is support for us future student-teachers and that we must work together for the future of our children.



Pictured here performing at the SARAEECE conference at the Boardwalk Convention Centre is the Sapphire Road Primary School choir (of the Manyano Network of Schools) conducted by Mrs Gwaqa and accompanied by Fermater (founded by Anathi Jindela of the Centre for the Community School).

PGCE ORIENTATION PORT ELIZABETH AND GEORGE



When students hear the word 'orientation', several images are constructed in the mind. In 2014, the PGCE Team wanted to change the students reactions towards orientation, from an 'ah' feeling to 'wow'. In order to achieve this, a totally new programme was developed to transcend the traditional one of just providing information. Hence, we sat down and started to reflect on how we can link orientation to being a teacher. We also generated outcomes for the orientation period and linked it to our vision and mission of our faculty. Two sessions were planned. The Port Elizabeth students had theirs on 5 to 6 February and the George students had theirs at the Saasveld Campus on 8 and 9 February.

DAY 1: It is vital that students spend time getting to know one another. 'Therefore' we designed activities to assist students in getting to know fellow students that they had not met before. This was done by means of an interview based upon set questions. However, it is also important to have students feel relaxed in order to maximize this experience. In order to create a relaxed learning space, we lit a candle and started with some relaxing breathing exercises. Students were asked what the light of the candle symbolizes and how they could relate it to teaching and learning. It was amazing how the atmosphere changed after these exercises and how this set a very positive tone for the 'Get to know your students' group activities. Students were engaged and within 45 minutes, each group of approximately 7 to 8 students, were talking to one another as if they were 'old' friends!



The listening exercise, presented by Prof Denise Zinn (our Dean), really achieved what it was intended for. Students were made aware of what a 'Thinking Environment' entails, based upon the work of Nancy Kline, whose book *Time to Think* was used as a reference. In addition, students had to listen to a peer by using their 'head', 'heart' and 'feet'. This exercise proved to be extremely helpful and also set the scene for good listening throughout the orientation programme.

Lastly, students engaged in discussions and readings pertaining to relevant questions, such as 'Who are our learners?', 'How does our society really look?', 'From which generation do you come and from which do your learners?' and 'What experiences do you have at school and from your teachers?'. These discussions were further enhanced by using video clips and reflective writing.



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DAY 2: Students received extracts from Paulo Freire and Parker J Palmer to read for homework at the end of day one. They had to read it and engage in free writing, a writing skill that they were exposed to and taught how to do during day 1. The feedback was wonderful! Students also viewed video clips of Ken Robinson Changing Education Paradigms and How to Escape Education's Death Valley. The discussions, tweets, poem writing and drama presentation activities based upon the engagement, highlighted the fact that our PGCE students are not only very creative, but extremely collaborative.



The orientation has definitely made a positive impact on the students. Regarding the activities and programme, one student commented, "if it does not challenge you, it does not change you!", and she added that the orientation challenged their thinking regarding education and society on many different levels. Another student stated, "it was indeed a challenging and fun experience". A group of students wrote the following as part of their reflection, "it opened our minds about teaching and education for school pupils. It made us realize that we are not only teachers but we are also going to change, shape their way of thinking and how they view the world. An introduction to such readings can benefit our incoming-students presently and in future. We have to be careful about how we teach them - we are light bearers.". The orientation has definitely set the scene for our Port Elizabeth and George PGCE students as light bearers and agents of hope.



Alternatives to Violence Workshop



The following piece was written by parent volunteer at Sapphire Road Primary School and active community member, Mauna Japhta. Mauna recently joined the Community Scholars Writing Circle at the Centre for the Community Schools, and wrote this piece about her experience of the Alternatives to Violence training that was covered in the January 2014 edition of the Faculty Newsletter.

My name is Mauna a mother and volunteer at Sapphire Road Primary School. I was given the opportunity by the Centre for the Community School to represent our school at the Alternatives to Violence training in January 2014. The Alternatives to Violence Project began in prisons in the USA in 1975. It has since spread to over 55 countries worldwide. Mrs Shena Lamb-du Plessis is responsible for the PE chapter and she has offered us the training.

I am going to tell you about the experience and what I learnt. I never in my wildest dreams could have imagined that one can learn so much in only two days.

The first day at the workshop I felt out of place. I felt that all the other attendees were well educated and that I didn't fit in. We were different races, ages and genders ('n "regte mengelmoes" soos ons kleurlinge sal sê). The facilitator's introduced themselves and made us feel at ease.



The facilitation of the workshop was different to your usual facilitation- facilitators standing in front of a group without interacting or participating in the activities. These facilitators were as much part of the activities as we were.

The first activity was called "crossing over". It changed my perception of the other attendees who I thought were so different to myself. I don't think that anyone of us knew what we are going to do, but it was something we did not expect. At least I did not expect it.

The facilitator drew a line across the middle of the room. He made different statements and asked the participants to cross over the line if the statement applied to them.

One of the statements involved witnessing an act of violence, particularly domestic violence. Everyone crossed over the line. South Africa has shown us all violence in some way. It was surprising and interesting what kind of people crossed over. We always judge people by their looks, the way they are dressed or the cars they drive. At the end we all have our own ghosts of the past. I was not so different to them after all. Violence affects us all, regardless of our backgrounds.

The other important lesson I learnt is that we all play a vital role in our communities. But to make a difference in society, we have to first start to fight our inner battles and make peace within ourselves before we can help to fight against violence in our communities.

I am looking forward to the next AVP workshop.



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Mauna Japhta

Diarise... RASA will be hosting

A *Writing to Learn* workshop for teachers and students on Saturday 15 March from 10:30-12:00 in N1, North Campus
 RASA AGM on Saturday 15 March from 12:00- 13:00
 Meet the Author, Beverley Naidoo, winner of Carnegie and Smarties medals & author of *Journey to Jo'burg* and *The other side of the truth* Monday 31 March
 The National Reading Association conference at Rhodes University from 12 to 14 September

RASA update

RASA hosted two very successful SHINE workshops on 2nd avenue campus and are working with Walmer Angels in developing a SHINE chapter in Walmer township primary school. Reading volunteers, who can give an hour a week are needed to ensure that as many learners as possible in the foundation phase benefit from this reading support. Students / staff who are interested in becoming a reading volunteer can contact Karlien de Klerk at 0823669821 (sms only) karlientien@gmail.com.

Super Ed South, super amped!!



With the start of 2014 and our academic year (first few weeks done and dusted), the feeling of fresh, renewed energy and drive can be found throughout the buildings and corridors of the Education Faculty from both staff and students. There's a special kind of bustle in the pipeline from the Class Representatives for this year; the start of a new year, new challenges and a new type of "family" to be introduced to the faculty.

What better way to announce the start of Super Ed South. Branching out from the NMMU George Campus and with their assistance and guidance to a successful venture, we have managed to give rise to our very own Education Society at South Campus.

The committee consists of 12 capable and enthusiastic members. With the support from various leaders in the faculty, and the interested individuals who eagerly acknowledged our launch at the Societies Expo, we are sure to make this society as successful as we intend. We, the committee have used this medium as well as the expo to spread the word while we get things going and finalise all the necessary details and procedures. There are loads of interesting ideas and events in store, such as the Working World Exhibition (WWE) in March. These marketing events coupled with engagement and outreach projects, are bound to start the group in good stead.

Executive Committee

Chair

Deputy

Secretary

Treasurer

Public Relations Officer

Events Co-ordinators

Committee Members

Khuselo Minnie
Lesley Hammond
Nicole Ruhmund
Irma Rademeyer
Chantelle Reeder
Trudie Van Olm
Rifqa Moosa
Kurt Japhta
Cindy Coetzee
Chesnè-Dene Nelson
Xolani Ndzungu
Sally Mey



Super Ed South
The change starts now



Meet the editorial team

The Faculty of Education Newsletter has become the tool for communication and innovation sharing. Founded in February 2009, the newsletter was the first of its kind at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University and set the trend of creating faculty newsletters. By 2014, the editorial team has grown to a total of 5 interesting and hardworking members. This month's edition allows the reader to meet the editorial team and learn about their vision for the future of the newsletter. The 5 members Jackie Hitchcox, Kelley Felix, Ansuya Naguran, Kholisa Papu and Taryn Isaacs are featured here.

The founder Jackie Hitchcox, started the newsletter 6 years ago, and worked tirelessly to get it off the ground. Jackie firmly believes that the publication should function as a community news bulletin – presenting a range of people, stories and voices. It is this sense of inclusiveness which invites entire faculty to publish their stories and enjoy the information shared here. For her, the newsletter provides the opportunity to showcase “the vibrancy and diversity within the faculty, a place where we share what we are passionate about and what moves us”. In the future, she is confident that the newsletter could become a space where “student involvement and contribution (is regular); where they also see themselves as a part of the faculty as a whole”. When asked what most excites her about the newsletter, Jackie responded “I love that I now work with a whole editorial team of great women who all bring unique talents and views on things!”.

The second member to the team is the layout and design specialist Kelley Felix. Joining in 2012, Kelly added to the design of the newsletter, which speaks to the readability and user-friendly nature of the bulletin. Kelley hopes that the newsletter will become an instrument which contributes to “informing and engaging [with] students, academics and administrators on the activities taking place within the faculty”. Mostly, she values the newsletter as “a tool to connect everyone involved in the faculty”.

The third member Kholisa Papu, a M Ed student and administrator in the faculty, joined the publication in 2013. Kholisa enjoys writing interesting pieces for the newsletter that “reflect the variety of activities that the students and staff of this faculty are engaged in, from an educational, engagement, scholarly and social perspective. Kholisa believes that the faculty newsletter is there to preserve the ‘lifeliness’ of a faculty that contributes towards an internationally recognized African university”.

In the future, Kholisa expects that internally, the “newsletter will strive to make vivid [the] students’ role in co-creating the teaching and learning process”, whilst externally “ignite[ing] other faculties and societies to yearn to keep a record of the moments that define the ‘lifeliness’ of their existence”.

The fourth member of the team, Ansuya Naguran, joined the team in 2013 and focuses on Missionvale Campus events and engagement projects. As a Theatre for Development practitioner and researcher at the Centre for the Community School and a practitioner at the Theatre for Development – she is at the cutting edge of community based initiatives and is pleased to share these experiences with her colleagues. Ansuya believes that “the newsletter should keep students, staff and friends of the Faculty of Education abreast with the diverse activities in the faculty as they happen” and is “always inspired by the range of activities the Faculty of Education is able to engage in month after month”. Ansuya also hopes that in the future, “the newsletter will be accessible to all interested stakeholders on the Faculty of Education webpage [allowing for] more contributors to the content of each edition.

The final member of the team, Taryn Isaacs joined as the content editor in January 2014. As one of the newer staff members, she shares her media expertise as the Resource Centre Manager. Taryn believes the newsletter to be “a space where staff and students learn more about the events and exciting undertakings of their leaders and peers, allowing the publication to become a tool for communication and unity in the faculty”. Taryn values the vast array of contributors which add to the significance and authenticity of the publication and appreciates joining a team comprising of intelligent, young professionals. “It is an honour to work with this team, they have taught me so much and inspire me”, says Taryn. In the future, she hopes to see the newsletter evolve into an online interactive publication with links and videos to share with a larger public.



Success for the NMMU choir at Fancourt!

The Faculty of Education is honoured to have two of its staff members, Marelize and Anathi playing key roles in the internationally acclaimed NMMU Choir.

On the evening of 20 February, the NMMU choir surprised professional sportsmen with a flashmob at the Fancourt Hotel in George. The opening ceremony of the Dimension Data Pro-Am 2014 golf tournament, welcomed professional sportsmen such as Jacques Kallis, Francois Pienaar and Mark Boucher to a golf challenge.

Junita van Dijk, lecturer at the NMMU Music Department and Marelize Marx who teaches Arts and Culture in our faculty, worked together to design a flashmob that would provide the audience with a truly 'proudly South African experience'. The choir members were disguised as waiters, barmen and guests in order to blend in with their environment. Subsequently, some students had to serve drinks and food for over 40 minutes as "under cover" employees of Fancourt hotel, before they were cued to break out into song.

The cue was an "electrician", Anathi Jindela, another fellow faculty member who walked into the elegant evening with a ladder to fix a light bulb. As he reached the top of the ladder, he broke out into song, and soon all the gentlemen of the choir joined in.

As the audience applauded the performance, they were surprised by yet another song, this time from a different corner in the room. The choir spectacularly grabbed the attention of the high profile audience, and drew everyone in to all the excitement. The event manager was particularly pleased, as he warned choir members that previous performers did not manage to hold the attention of this particular high society. The evening ended on another spectacular note as the choir performed Homeless and Pata Pata with polished and energetic choreography done by Marelize.

After the performance, choir members socialised with the professional sportsmen, among which Francois Pienaar expressed his gratitude and praise to some of the members of the choir. Others commented on the choir's professionalism, and others proclaimed it the best ProAm entertainment ever! The NMMU choir came home with an invitation to Dubai!

Congratulations!

As a 'scout' at the NMMU ...

Welcomed warmly by a very busy Prof Paul Webb, who I met through Dr Mary Grace Villanueva, we started our month at the NMMU in PE. In the first week I had the opportunity to attend the conference of the South African Research Association for Early Childhood Education (SARAECE). Many of the presentations and discussions highlighted, for me, the similarities and differences between South Africa and Switzerland.

The second and third week were filled with visits to different schools (government in townships and private, from day care and reception year up to primary school) and participating in lectures. I am impressed by the commitment of the teachers and lecturers under difficult conditions.

Also I started to teach in 4 groups (third and fourth year FP students) for two weeks in Nadeema Musthan and Robin Notshulwana's classes. I was able to share my expertise on the potential of learning through play and several educational challenges in different countries. I experienced a lot of critical thinking and creative ideas in these groups. This was good to see and I believe very important for South Africa's future!

Finally, an extremely valuable experience during my time here was the contacts with colleagues and the time spent discussing opportunities for research collaboration. Furthermore, the planning possibilities for students and lecturer exchange. This opportunity as a 'scout' of my School of Teacher Education in the University of Applied Sciences and Arts in Northwestern Switzerland was self-chosen. Other fruitful interactions with the faculty of education was the social gathering at Prof Denise Zinn's house, my presentation for the faculty on the 25th of February, the Global University workshop with our Swedish colleagues of the University of Gothenburg and some private meetings.

On behalf of my husband and me, we thank you all for these wonderful weeks! I look forward to joint activities in the future.

Prof Elke Hildebrandt



WELCOME



In what has become an annual event, the Dean, Professor Denise Zinn, opened up her home in February for a special welcome function for new staff members after the first Faculty Board meeting. All faculty staff are invited to welcome the new team members and to herald in the new academic year. Pictured are (from right) Prof Zinn with Dr Dave Edley, Ms Sanet Deysel and Dr Ron Beyers. Prof Elke Hildebrand and her husband (from Switzerland) also attended.

Mosaic of moments

FEBRUARY

1st Year Welcome



The Vice-Chancellor's scholarship



PGCE Orientation

