



# NEWS

December 2011

A bumper year filled with teaching and learning, engagement and research activities

## Reflecting and celebrating

The Faculty of Education's year end function was held recently to reflect on and celebrate the work undertaken during the year, to remember and acknowledge the host of achievements and accolades, as well as to bid a fond farewell to several of our colleagues. It was also a time, in Prof Denise Zinn's words, to "be done with all the seriousness, and take the point at which we started this year, with a focus on wellness, joy, and celebration to its fullest conclusion in 2011".

At a glance... Some of the highlights and achievements of 2011:

- Faculty welcome back gathering: *"It starts with Us"*
- Dr Carol Rodgers joins our Faculty in the capacity of Fulbright Scholar for 2011
- Dr Mathabo Khau joins our Faculty as postdoctoral student
- 4<sup>th</sup> Revisioning Journey workshop at the Red Location Museum; attempting 'face the present situation'
- 1<sup>st</sup> year student orientation and (staff) fun extravaganza
- Centre for the Community School (CCS) approved; plans for getting it up and running start
- The first university-wide Humanising Pedagogy Hub established (with Carol Rodger's help)
- Another bumper year of graduations - 5 new doctor members of our staff!
- The first Faculty Hub Colloquium - significant in terms of our collective thinking about how to engage, teach, learn and research in new ways, with new communities of practice
- The 5<sup>th</sup> Revisioning Journey Workshop held at Missionvale Campus
- Settling on our final version of the *Vision and Mission* of the Faculty - the platform and the lenses through which we will continue our curriculum renewal journey
- The launch of the new Centre for the Community School – a glorious and significant event that has started us down a path which is groundbreaking in so many senses
- New staff: Drs Kathija Adam, Al Witten and Didi Geduld, Mr Deon Swartz, Mr Vuyani Matsha, Ms Ndileka Jacobs and Tash Dolley
- Visitors Prof Pedro Noguera and his wife Dr Allyson Pimentel who inspired, stimulated and delighted
- Proliferation of the work in the *Integrated School Improvement Project* (under CERTI)
- Involvement of many staff members in a variety of outside Engagement and Community Outreach work
- A team of truly committed administrators
- Top achievers in Research: Prof Naydene de Lange and Dr Christo Pienaar
- Top achiever in T&L: Dr Andre du Plessis who was also honoured as the University Excellent Teacher of the Year
- Foundation Phase Research Project (with the EU) under Dr Noluthando Toni
- Incredible research outputs... 13 book chapters, 30 articles in accredited journals this year, 41 conference presentations, ...
- Prof Paul Webb tops the 2010 NMMU Research Per Unit Value List!
- Dr Christo Pienaar and Prof Bill Holderness also in this top 20
- Three writing retreats
- Thinking Environment 2-day leadership course
- Two visiting Scholars – Prof Anne Hickling Hudson (QUT) and Sheila Graham (Jamaica)
- 2011 Curriculum Colloquium – a significant turning point event for the faculty



Prof Denise Zinn delivers her year-end speech



Saying farewell to special colleagues... Retiree, Hester Adam pictured with Carmel Mahomed (our MC extraordinaire!). Acknowledgements were paid to retiree's Dr Charles van Renen, Dr Laetitia Greyling and Dr Lonnie King. Moving to new ventures are Dr Noluthando Toni, Mpumie Maliti and Bronwyn van Rooijen

# Making headlines

Two faculty staff members made headlines recently about their individual, and invaluable, contributions to education.



**Dr Charles van Renen** (pictured left) was awarded a Thomas Pringle Award by the English Academy of Southern Africa for his article *"Dahl's chickens: How do they roost in the 21st century?"*, published in the Journal for Language Teaching.

Charles not only honoured PE by bringing this esteemed prize to the region, but also the NMMU and indeed our faculty!

The Thomas Pringle is awarded annually for work published in journals, periodicals and newspapers and is named in honour of Scottish poet and abolitionist Thomas Pringle.

As Charles remarked in his interview with The Herald, "I had no idea they were looking at my work. As I am retiring from NMMU at the end of this year, it is very affirming to have one's work recognised, work that has so much to do with my approach to teacher education in the field of English and children's literature."

(The Herald, 29 November 2011)



**Joe Slingers** (pictured left), part time lecturer in the B Ed programme, is acknowledged in Jonathan Jansen's book *"Great South African Teachers"* for the contribution he has made to Education in the Eastern Cape through ex-pupil Ghauderen Coetzee-De Vos's submission as one of the books chapters.

As Prof Denise Zinn remarked in her email about the function held in his honour, "... It was a fitting celebration of your contribution to our profession, to democracy and to nation-building through Education. You have always taken a principled stand on everything, including education – this is what stands out for me about you – a principal with strong principles, and the courage to act on them! In particular, I want to let you know how moved I was by your address on this occasion – the words *'I bring you my child'* with which you started and ended resonated with and connected to a deep place in my soul, the soul of a teacher, and will stay with me always. It truly was an excellent speech, all of it informed by your convictions about the central purpose and obligation we hold as teachers and your deep understandings of our role and accountability, borne of a lifetime of experience of what good education is, and what good teachers do."

Joe has taught in both the pre-service and in-service programmes for many years and has contributed greatly, in particular to our student teachers. Dr Margie Childs, module coordinator of one of the modules Joe teaches, spoke of this, "The work you do to set our first years on their teaching journey is especially significant. You teach our B Ed 1s so much more than just Communication. You teach them about Teaching. You teach them about Life."

We salute you Joe Slingers, one of our own South African Great Teachers!

## briefs

### Wall of Hands - SAHARA

At the SAHARA conference the delegates were requested to: 1) Use their hands, 2) Take a photo of their hands, 3) Print it out, 4) Write a message on how to 'Turn the tide against HIV and AIDS'

Over the four days more than 200 photos were taken, capturing critical messages in turning the tide.



From left: Claudia (Canada), Denis (Nigeria) and Naydene, in front of some of the pictures.

The photos will be placed on YAHAnet website <http://yahanet.org/>

### EASA Conference 2012

A reminder that the Education Association of South Africa (EASA) 2012 conference will be held at Mpekweni Beach Resort from 17 – 20 January 2012. Theme: *Criticality, Creativity and Connections: In Pursuit of Educational Innovations*. As the organizing faculty, many of our staff members will be attending and participating. We look forward to the news of this event in the new year!

### Bronwyn's baby shower

Bronwyn and Jacques are expecting their first child soon! Colleagues held a surprise baby shower for her (see below) before she left.





Living and working her Ubuntu values

## Not slowing down

Recently, Dr Laetitia Greyling returned from completing a three week course in *Community and School Development* at the COADY International Institute in Antigonish, Canada.



At the training sessions Laetitia got to work with a fellow SA team hailing from KZN. She is pictured above, 3<sup>rd</sup> from left, with them in their Proudly SA rugby shirts!

While participating on the COADY course Laetitia was invited to take part in the annual Thanksgiving weekend "Tip-to-Tip" cycle event which takes place each year on Prince Edward Island.

The event is held to raise funds for two projects in Africa, one being for orphans here in South Africa. A substantial amount was once again raised this year and, Laetitia commented on her participation, "I am very blessed to have been part of this worthy initiative."



An inspiration to us all. Laetitia pictured after completing the Tip to Tip cycle event on Prince Edward Island. Who would guess that she retired at the end of 2011? We are proud of you Laetitia!

## Joyous Fun & Laughter at staff function



**The Diva's wow audience...** Dancing and singing *REFLECT* (to Aretha Franklin's 'Respect') were Prof Alette Delpont, Prof Naydene de Lange, Prof Nonnie Botha and Dr Carol Rodgers



**Remembering the 'good ol' days...** Performing a variety of songs from the 60's and 70's, under the supervision of Logan, were colleagues Carmel, Naydene, Logan and Charles (pictured). They were joined by Issa, Marilyn and Annaline.



**Putting the dancing shoes on!**

Photo's: g/drive/photo archive/year end function

Invitational conference on the arts, youth and HIV and AIDS

## What difference does this make?

A conference entitled '*What difference does this make? The arts, youth and HIV & AIDS*' was held at the Salt Rock Hotel in KwaZulu-Natal from the 4-6 December 2011. The conference, which was an invitational one, specifically focused on the use of arts-based approaches to facilitate HIV and AIDS awareness amongst the youth. The conference was co-hosted by the NMMU (Naydene de Lange), University of KwaZulu-Natal (Relebohile Moletsane) and McGill University, Canada (Claudia Mitchell).

Some of the arts-based approaches that were highlighted at the conference included participatory visual methods, performance art and digital media in the age of AIDS. One of the highlights of the conference was the *Drama for Life Playback Theatre* performance presented by students and staff from Wits University under the directorship of Warren Nebe and others. The delegates at the conference were afforded the unique opportunity to gain insights into the implementation of an interactive dialogic process form which engages the participants in a meaningful manner throughout the presentation.

Papers were presented by Naydene de Lange, Mathabo Khau, Lesley Wood and Logan Athiemoolam at the conference:

*'And so, how do we know what our arts-based 'doing' does?' – Naydene de Lange*

*'Empowering young people to protect themselves against HIV: Challenges and possibilities' – Mathabo Khau*

*What are we teaching our children? Youth views of gender inequalities – Lesley Wood*

*Using drama-in-education to create meaningful contexts for HIV and Aids awareness amongst the youth: A Case Study – Logan Athiemoolam*

Naydene, Mathabo and Lesley also served as chairpersons for a number of sessions. A huge success, the conference showcased a range of arts based approaches adopted by delegates in various institutions to promote HIV and AIDS awareness, and furthermore created opportunities for them to network with each other in the foreseeable future with a view to the enhancement of collaboration and forging joint ventures.



From left: Dr Logan Athiemoolam, Dr Mathabo Khau, Prof Naydene de Lange, Prof Lesley Wood and Prof Claudia Mitchell (MacGill University, Canada)

### HELTASA Conference presentation

The Heltasa Conference, which was hosted by the NMMU and held at the Missionvale Campus from the 30th of November to the 2nd of December 2011, was attended by over 350 delegates representing all the universities in South Africa. The conference theme was: *Crossing Borders for Change in Southern African Higher Education*.

Logan Athiemoolam (pictured alongside) presented a paper at the conference entitled '*Using Creative approaches in classes to foster effective student learning: A Case Study*'. The paper focused on the incorporation of drama-in-education into a third year education module (PGED 302: Issues and Challenges in Education) as a vehicle to facilitate effective student learning and provided a detailed account of the findings of the implementation of the strategy on the basis of students' written accounts, observation and open-ended questionnaires.



**Wishing  
all staff  
and  
students  
safe  
and  
happy  
holidays**