



RHODES UNIVERSITY



EXPAT CHAT

THE RHODES UNIVERSITY TRUST (USA) Newsletter No.2 December 2007

Letter

FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES



Dear Fellow Old Rhodian,

I have great pleasure in including with this letter the second U.S. edition of ExpatChat. I hope that you enjoy the articles we have assembled for you and welcome any future contributions and input for upcoming editions in 2008.

Having glanced through the newsletter, you will, I am sure, come quickly to the conclusion that our University is in good hands under the wise and experienced guidance of the new vice chancellor, Dr Saleem Badat, who is completing his first full year of leadership at Rhodes. Not only has he stepped in the very large shoes previously filled by Dr. David Woods, but he has ably steered Rhodes to the point where a clear vision for the University's future is emerging together with detailed plans helping it achieve its goals. In this regard, I urge you to pay special attention to the article entitled "Future Direction of Rhodes."

As Old Rhodians abroad, we can certainly help the University achieve its full potential. A number of possibilities have been outlined in Guy White's project list and I encourage you to consider contributing to a cause that interests you. Whether this is helping needy students, donating to the exciting new library campaign or to an academic research project, your contribution will make a difference and help ensure that the University continues to thrive and prosper.

In the hope that you will agree to help the University, we have provided a simple online transactional facility at www.rhodesalumni.com. You can also contribute stock through our new account at Citigroup SmithBarney. Donations made via the Rhodes University USA Trust are largely tax-deductible, making this an attractive option for you to consider. Please use the link below to learn more: <http://www.rhodesalumni.com/donations.html>

In closing, may I wish you season's greetings and my very best to you and your families for the new year.

Donovan Neale-May

Chairman, Board of Trustees
Rhodes University Trust USA

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Ubuntu Student Profile

CONTRIBUTORS

We would like to recognize and thank the following U.S.-based alumni for their contributions to the Rhodes University Trust and specific projects, programs and bursaries at Rhodes University in Grahamstown:

- **E. Desmond Goddard**, PhD (Goddard Bursary)
- **Mr. and Mrs. W. A. Little**
- **Mr. Gareth Howell** with the Microsoft Giving Campaign
- **Doug and Marsha Torr** (Joan Harding & Una Poulton Honors Bursaries)
- **Mr. Jean Gruss**
- **Donovan Neale-May** (Ubuntu Education Fund Student & Neilen Locke Annual Coaching Awards)

ALUMNI NEWS

Old Rhodian, Khwezi Magwaza, Named New Seventeen Editor

Khwezi Magwaza has been appointed editor of seventeen magazine, effective November 5, 2007, publishers 8 Ink Media, have announced. Previous editor Justine Stafford has been promoted to editorial director of 8 Ink's Youth Division. Khwezi Magwaza, seventeen celebrates its fourth birthday this year and according to 8 Ink, remains South Africa's biggest selling youth title. This is largely attributed to the strong leadership of Stafford, whose new portfolio includes seventeen, National Geographic Kids, Phatstuff, DeLUXE and the newly launched Digital department. Magwaza, who has relocated to Cape Town from Johannesburg to take up this position, brings with her a wealth of experience. Born and raised in Pietermaritzburg in KwaZulu-Natal, she attended the



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Wykheam Collegiate School for Girls before studying Journalism at Rhodes University in Grahamstown. She started off in fashion PR, working with clients such as Elle Magazine, before moving to youth radio station YFM, where she worked as events manager. Magwaza then returned to her first love of print journalism as a senior reporter at Heat magazine, as well as on-air host of Global Soul on YFM. In 2007 she was approached to launch SABC's very first celebrity news and gossip show, "The Real Goboza". At the end of the show's first season, Magwaza now moves on to take over as editor of seventeen.

Old Rhodian "Spike" Pike Rides the Wave of Publishing Fame

Global Surf News

Q&A with **Steve Pike**, Author of the Newly-Released *Surfing South Africa* Book

Surfervillage Global Surf News, 15 November, 2007: Double Storey Books is stoked to announce the release of *Surfing South Africa* by Steve Pike (known to many as Spike). *Surfing South Africa* is an indispensable resource for locals and visitors, packed with new information on South African surf spots, lore, history and culture, and illustrated by stunning photos and art from some of South Africa's most eminent photographers and illustrators.

What are some of the highlights of your book?

The Other Side of the Coin story - about the growth of black surfing in South Africa. This is a neglected area of our history that deserves its rightful place in any mainstream account of our culture. What these guys had to do to surf begs belief. Another highlight is Harry de Zitter's beautiful portraits of surfers, while another is an article on *Beautiful*, a film that draws attention to the huge growth in surfing amongst women.

In the history chapter, the book unearths what are regarded as the first known photos of surfing, by a woman riding boards brought to Cape Town by US Marines during the First World War! Then there are the quirky descriptions of surf spots, a funny slang glossary, and the latest developments in shark research that help us understand these much maligned creatures.

Describe yourself in five words.

Erratic, fast, forgetful, artistic, friendly.

How would you describe your personal philosophy to life?

When the surf is perfect, a voicemail bursting at the seams is worth the risk.

In what ways can surfing be likened to life?

To borrow from my book: Surfers liken the tube ride to those fleeting moments in life when we feel fulfilled, and the harder the road that ends in such fulfillment, the greater the reward when we reach it.

Surfers don't agonise over heavy existential issues. There are only two questions: What is the swell doing? What is the wind doing?

How did you find the process of writing the book?

For the most part enjoyable, but it was a long and sometimes arduous process. It was fun writing, but difficult to enforce structure and coherence. The hardest part was deciding what to include and what to leave out.

What inspired you to do this book?

The need to express our uniquely South African surf culture as separate to the "big brand - big bucks" mentality that has tainted the soul of what it should be about. I wanted to make everyone even remotely connected to surfing feel part of an inclusive, transparent collective. For too long, our surfing culture has been colonized and commandeered by a conservative elite who make the rules just because they surf well.

What are some of your projects at the moment?

The second iteration of my surfing website (wavescape.co.za) and teaming up with a global weather provider to build a uniquely South African marine data service for ocean users.

Aside from surfing, what are your other passions?

Writing, gardening, rugby, my family, hiking and playing soccer.

What comments have people made about your book?

The comments have been positive and passionate. To use surfing parlance, people are 'stoked' with the book. It's a good read, and contains some uniquely South African surfing images and stories. The book is a huge step up from my first book *Surfing in South Africa*, published in 2000.

Tell us about the contributors to the book.

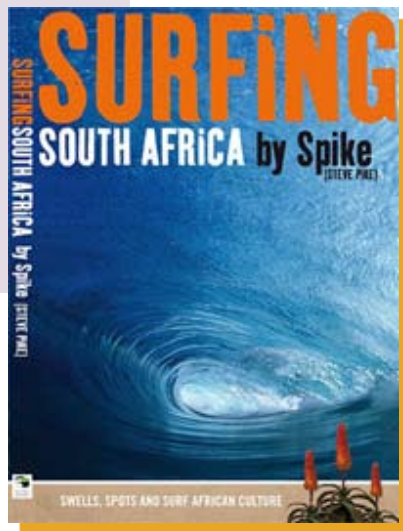
The full-colour 280-page book contains top surfing imagery from some of South Africa's most eminent photographers and

illustrators, including Barry Tuck, Harry de Zitter, Tom Peschak, Andy Mason, Lance Slabbert, and Brenton Geach.

A range of articles by journalists, writers and scientists enrich the book with mixture of culture and science. Veteran surfing promoter Paul Botha kickstarts a detailed history chapter. Marine biologist and author Tom Peschak adds gravitas to issues around sharks and conservation. The brave life of the father of surfing John Whitmore is poignantly remembered by former Cape Times editor Tony Heard.

Veteran writer Tony Weaver eloquently tackles the challenge of sharing the sea with sharks, while Argus journalist Henri du Plessis contributes a profile of a committed surfer. Cape Times columnist Ben Trovato romps through issues around surfing evolution and lifeguards in skimpy Speedos.

About the Author. During a journalism career spanning 25 years, Steve Pike worked graveyard shifts at newspapers so that he could surf. He has sub edited, written, illustrated, designed and edited for newspapers and magazines in Cape Town, Johannesburg, East London, Hong Kong and Melbourne. In 1999, Spike, who has an Honours degree from Rhodes University, got wise by combining his two passions - words and waves - into a lifestyle career as a writer and creator of the surfing portal Wavescape.co.za. In 2001, his book *Surfing South Africa* was published, the forerunner of this title.



Get Involved: Role of Rhodes U.S. Trust and Trustees

Perspective from **Guy White**,
Director of Communications & Development



RHODES UNIVERSITY
TRUST USA



The U.S. Board of Trustees is keen to find additional Old Rhodians who have time to devote to alumni relations and communications in the U.S. If you have talents, experience or inclinations in fundraising, online publishing, public relations, business administration, and contact networks, do let us know. Here's a brief overview of potential and current roles and responsibilities for U.S. board members.

As a starting point, we as a University should clearly state that we recognize that Rhodes Trustees are volunteers and it is therefore our responsibility to do everything possible to ensure that we do not exploit their time or their goodwill. With this in mind, we must also take into account the realities of living and working in the U.S. – the distances, the time-zones and the pace of life for busy people. There is also an important fundraising reality to consider. Based on our recent experience and ongoing research we feel that our expectations of donated money from the U.S. should be limited to a handful of Philanthropic Foundations and a few alumni.

So taking the realities into account perhaps the next step should be to determine what the benefits are of having the Trust in place. Then we should consider how we can structure this in such a way as to benefit the University without having to impose on the goodwill of our loyal and dedicated Trustees.

From the perspective of the University there are a few important aspects to consider:

- **Firstly**, the preservation of the 501(c) Tax status is critical-particularly as we embark on the R25 million Library campaign.
- **Secondly**, having Trustees to assist with communications and logistical support for the times when the VC is visiting for fundraising or reunions has proven to be very valuable and should be preserved.
- **Thirdly**, we believe that Trustees are very useful as “barometers” of opinion and sentiment. Having access to local insight is very important in terms of potential “pitching” or “flavouring” proposals or messages to a U.S. audience.
- **Fourthly**, is it realistic and practical to request Trustees to be active fundraisers? As mentioned we do feel that the primary job of fundraising belongs to the University. However, we

value any help Trustees can give us in identifying possible donors and using their influence to ‘open doors’ or to make connections. Obviously we would welcome the efforts of any individual Trustee who wishes to become active in this area but this should not be seen to be a requirement!

One of the issues which does appear to be a burden to the Trust is the administrative requirements. Perhaps a stipend should be considered if necessary and this should be covered by the University although it is not sure if this will make much sense in dollar terms! If it is practical to provide administrative support from Grahamstown we would gladly do so.

A further aspect to consider is whether the chair of the Trust should be a member of the Board of Governors, which is the case with the chair of the UK Trust. From a development perspective we support this idea as it “closes the loop” as far as our key volunteer groups are concerned. If this is accepted then it would be good if we could get the chair to attend at least one of the Governor meetings each year (Johannesburg or Grahamstown). This would ensure that both Trusts as well as the Board are all working in the same direction and are fully conversant with the University’s plans and programs.

Finally, it may also be helpful to think of some form of board rotation policy. This could include durations of service, re-election procedures and time-tables, period of service for the Chair position and perhaps even specific portfolios for each board member in line with agreed roles and responsibilities. This may help embed a “sense of purpose” as well as some form of a “target” to aim for. In view of the current chair having fulfilled his two-year commitment, this is perhaps one of the first matters to attend to!



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Projects Available for Funding

by **Guy White,**
Director of Development
& Communications

The Rhodes University Development Office has spent the better part of the last three years positioning fundraising as a structured activity which supports University strategies and ambitions. With the University just about to complete its final long-term “size and shape” review, the project priorities which will support its ambitions are becoming far more clearly defined. At this current moment, the following projects are the main focus of Rhodes fundraising efforts:

- Library Renewal Project
- New residences
- Student Financial Aid at all levels of study
- The Rhodes Sports Trust – an initiative which was established by a generous donation from Donovan Neale-May, a U.S.-based alumnus
- Development and implementation of an Alumni Annual Fund. This is a long-term project to develop ongoing alumni giving to the institution, the proceeds of which will be used to support University projects.

Whilst these represent current Divisional and Institutional priorities, we have to recognise that there are many other so-called ‘second-tier’ projects and needs which are important to the various Faculties. In terms of the project process outlined above, these needs will be tested against a number of criteria prior to the University agreeing to them as defined projects. If they are not deemed to be of ‘institutional importance’ they will remain as second tier projects and whilst we as a Division will guide the fundraising activities, it will remain the responsibility of the project champion to secure funding. As it stands we have the following projects on our lists:

Faculty Projects

Rhodes University academics together with their senior management colleagues are currently at a critical stage of Faculty ‘Size and Shape’ debates. Each department has been requested to critically review their current offerings and then to suggest changes and additions in these as part of their overall vision for the future. These will then be debated at Faculty and institutional level – eventually informing the overall University strategic plan for the next five to 10 years. The conclusion of this intensive planning period is scheduled for the end of November and eventually will translate into a clear understanding of project priorities within the Faculties. Features that have emerged throughout all faculties so far are the urgent need for student bursaries – both for undergraduate and postgraduate, with the Honours year highlighted as most necessary; also required are staff salaries which are compatible with national university standards (if not market levels), staff accommodation to house them when they come to Rhodes, and office space on campus.

New programs will emerge from these debates, as well as the need to support existing ones in order for them to maintain standards of sustainability and excellence. Until these priorities are finalized, the following represents a sample of the kinds of projects requiring funding, particularly in the largest Faculty of Humanities.



International Library of African Music (ILAM): Housing the largest repository of African Music data in the world, this unit requires significant funding to complete digitizing the music, as well as funding to further academic engagement with the

music through the teaching and research in ethnomusicology.

Digitizing Project: *R450,000 for completion of project*

Ethnomusicology: *R300,000 p.a.*

isiXhosa Bursaries for isiXhosa First language program: Promoting isiXhosa language development and engagement in a more rigorous way than has been attempted at Rhodes before. Undergraduate bursaries are required to attract the right students to this course.

Bursary per student: *R50,000 p.a.*

Psychology Masters Program With Township High Schools: Providing intervention workshops to the Makana Schools will provide this community with problem-solving and transformative solutions to the many social problems, while providing Masters students with the opportunity to engage with the community in meaningful ways.

Project funding: *R190,000 p.a. for three years*

Environmental Education: A three year program to bring Bio-cultural Diversity training to the learners of the Makana district will provide them with awareness of environmental factors affecting their own environment, and draw on indigenous learning to find synergies.

Project funding: *R140,000 p.a. for three years*

First Physical Theatre Company and Ubom! These theatre companies form an important aspect of academic Drama development in South Africa, and provide excellent opportunities for students of drama to be involved in skills development and company experience in Grahamstown.

Company support: *R 2 million p.a.*

Fine Art Masters Bursaries: To facilitate ongoing academic engagement with Fine Art in an African context, bursaries to suitable students will contribute to the scholarly development of Art on the continent.

Bursary per student: *R40,000 p.a.*

Art Gallery: Vital to the preparation of Fine Art graduate students is an accessible and dedicated gallery space where they can exhibit as well as learn the curatorship skills required in their field.

Gallery refurbishment and extension: *R(negotiable)*

Ubuntu Education Fund & Rhodes: Working with a particularly impoverished community in Port Elizabeth, UEF mentors and supports pupils throughout their high school careers, until they are ready to come to Rhodes. Bursaries to support residence and tuition, as well as living costs, are required to facilitate this partnership.

Bursary per student: *R45,000*

The Future Direction of Rhodes University

by Saleem Badat, Vice Chancellor



The University has spent the better part of the last year reviewing its goals, structures and future strategies. This period of introspection has tested our role and anticipated contribution in both a national and local context and has resulted in greater clarity in terms of important issues such as size and shape, the infrastructural needs required to support this future size and shape, as well as the challenges and opportunities which will affect our ability to reach our goals.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank each of you who have contributed to these discussions thus far. Whilst there are a number of studies and investigations still under way, we have resolved a number of the key issues and I would like to inform you of some of these:

- We have identified our aging academic population as a major threat and a concerted effort will be required to recruit replacement staff for key positions. Important in this process will also be the need to address historical equity imbalances.
- Barriers for many who are contemplating entering the academic profession are the low salaries as well as the affordability of suitable housing in our city. Significant work has already been done in addressing these issues which will require innovative and creative solutions if we are to resolve the situation in the immediate future.
- The reliance of the city of Grahamstown on the University and the University on adequate and reliable service provision by the City has led us to establish close and collaborative relationships with the Makana Municipality and the Business Chamber. We believe it to be our joint responsibility to address issues of common concern such as infrastructural deterioration, capacity building and living standards.
- How we contribute as a higher education institution to South Africa and beyond has raised questions around our academic offerings, what is meant by concepts such as 'Where leaders learn', 'An African Identity' and, most critically, what our size and shape will be. Many of these issues will be addressed on an ongoing basis.

However – and as a direct result of the work we have done in the past year - there are a number of critical decisions which we have already made including:

- We will grow the University to no more than 6,500 students by 2010, a maximum growth rate of 3% per annum. Within these parameters we will be seeking to optimise the make-up of our departments and faculties to ensure that we are providing graduates equipped with relevant knowledge and skills.
- We will pursue a trajectory of increasing our postgraduate to undergraduate ratio.
- In order to attract more black South African learners – some of whom we hope will be retained to provide for the next generation of young academics – we will need to provide extensive financial aid. This issue is critical to the University's drive to become more representative and I have directed our Development office to view this as a priority fundraising project.
- Allied to increasing the accessibility of the University to individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds will be the need to provide suitable accommodation and we will be building a number of new residence complexes over the next few years. Innovative financing solutions to cater for this need are under discussion at present. In addition, and tied to the concept of 'the Rhodes experience', we will attempt to cater for all first-year undergraduate students who wish to be accommodated on campus.
- Critical to the future of any university is the quality of its teaching and research. In an effort to retain and attract young academics to replace our current staff, we will seek innovative ways in which to assist them to enter the housing market in Grahamstown.
- Teaching, research, interaction and collaboration are critical activities at any University – many, if not all of these tasks, taking place in the modern library. It is clear that we cannot hope to attract the best students, the best academics and exploit research opportunities if we do not invest immediately in this core asset. Therefore we will re-furbish and extend the main University library which will involve a substantial capital investment backed by extensive fundraising activities over the next few years.
- Finally, and recognising our responsibility to our stakeholders, we will strive for greater efficiencies in all of our activities, including the utilisation of our physical infrastructure and facilities. Whilst this may require compromises to be made, this will not be done at the expense of academic quality – an aspect of this University which I am sure we are all very proud of.

As stakeholders, and hopefully active participants in the future development of the University, I wish to thank you for your contribution to our planning processes and look forward to your continuing support of the University in whatever way possible in the exciting years ahead.

Saleem Badat
Vice Chancellor
Rhodes University
July 2007



Old Rhodian and Anti-Apartheid Stalwart Legum

Business Day (Johannesburg)



HUMAN rights advocate, economist and chairman of the South African New Economics Network, Margaret Legum (74), died in Cape Town in late November, following surgery for cancer. Born Margaret Roberts in Pretoria, she studied economics at Rhodes University, Grahamstown and at Cambridge.

A committed anti-apartheid activist, she went into exile in Britain in 1962, returning 30 years later to become a prolific contributor to South African newspapers on poverty eradication, tax reform and social justice. Professor George Ellis of the

University of Cape Town paid tribute to her as a passionate fighter on behalf of the underprivileged.

With her late husband, the journalist Colin Legum, she played an influential role in the campaign for economic sanctions against the apartheid regime, particularly through their book *South Africa: Crisis for the West*, published in 1964, which resulted in her being banned in South Africa.

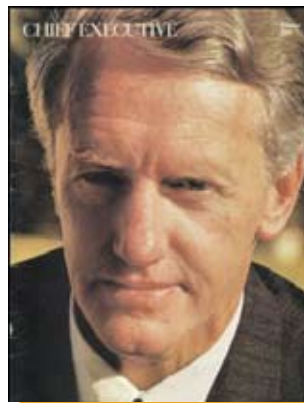
Colin and Margaret Legum provided support for the South African exile community in London and for African refugees arriving in Britain. On her return to South Africa, she campaigned and ran workshops on issues such as racism, and fought an unrelenting battle for a fair international economic system and for a basic income grant (BIG) to be introduced in South Africa.

As a founder of the SA New Economics Network, she published a book titled *It Doesn't Have to be Like This* – published by Ampersand Press – arguing that there was something wrong with the global system of trade and finance, “where money for its own sake is valued above jobs and people’s lives”. As Clem Sunter wrote in his foreword, Margaret Legum was arguing for an economic system built around ordinary, decent human values and where the health of families and communities, and the environment they lived in, was the priority.

Typical of her writing was an article on the right to food, which starts with the statement that one in 10 children under five years old die every hour in SA. She was outraged by the effects of the economic system, which she argued could be changed – and had to be changed because it was bringing catastrophe. It was clearly wrong that waste on a huge scale should coexist with people scavenging for food on rubbish tips or dying quietly in rural destitution. As a member of the Iona Christian community, she was active in the JL Zwane Memorial Presbyterian Church in Guguletu, near Cape Town, taking part in their ministry among AIDS orphans and people who are HIV positive.

She moved in many social circles with relentless energy, and recently published a delightful poetry collection called *Learning to Saunter*. Legum was a bright and generous spirit who will be sorely missed.

Ian Smith – Old Rhodian and Former Prime Minister of Rhodesia



HARARE, Zimbabwe (AP) — Ian Smith, Rhodesia’s last white prime minister whose attempts to resist black rule dragged the country now known as Zimbabwe into isolation and civil war, died November 20, at age 88.

Smith, who recently suffered a stroke, died at a clinic near Cape Town where he spent his final years with his family, said longtime friend Sam Whaley, who was a senator in the former Rhodesia.

Smith unilaterally declared independence from Britain on November 11, 1965. He then served as the prime minister of Rhodesia from 1965 to 1979 during white minority rule. The country failed to gain international recognition, and the United Nations imposed economic sanctions. He finally bowed to international pressure, and Robert Mugabe’s Zanu-PF party won elections in 1980.

To many white Rhodesians, he was “good old Smithy.” To most blacks, his rule symbolized the worst of racial oppression. Smith had imprisoned Mugabe in 1964 for 10 years, calling him a “terrorist” intent on turning the country into a one-party dictatorship. Despite their bitter differences, Smith and Mugabe shared one common bond — their deep dislike of Britain, which they saw as a meddling colonial power.

Just as Mugabe accused former British Prime Minister Tony Blair of interfering in Zimbabwe to protect the interests of whites, Smith poured vitriol on the government of the late Harold Wilson for pressing him to hand political power to the black majority.

Smith was born to Scottish immigrants in western Rhodesia on April 8, 1919, but renounced his claims to British citizenship in 1984. He was, in his own words, “an absolute lunatic about sport” most of his life. He graduated with a degree in commerce from Rhodes University in Grahamstown, South Africa.

NANO TECHNOLOGIES

Big Plans for Nanotechnology in Tiny Grahamstown

Rhodes University will soon be the host of a Nanotechnology Innovation Center (NIC) for development of medical sensors under the leadership of Professor Tebello Nyokong of the Chemistry Department, assisted by Dr Limson from the Department of Biochemistry, Biotechnology and Microbiology. “I’m very excited

In South Africa, we do a lot of research in laboratories but it never gets to the public.

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that Rhodes has been chosen as the host site," Nyokong said. "It's in the Eastern Cape, in the middle of nowhere, yet we are on the road to being the center of excellence in nanotechnology—that's exciting."

The center is funded by the Department of Science and Technology (DST) and is meant to bridge the gap between research and development. "In South Africa, we do a lot of research in laboratories

but it never gets to the public," Nyokong said. She hopes the center will allow people to actually enjoy the fruits of researchers' labour.



The world is going nano. It's important that Rhodes be leading the way in advancing new technologies.

The DST enlisted the co-operation of Mintek (one of South Africa's leading technology organizations) to take the research in the country on nanotechnology and bring commercial products to market. Mintek has set up three branches of the NIC - at Rhodes (for medical sensors), University of Johannesburg (for water) and University of the Western Cape (for Biolabelling).

Major pieces of equipment will be housed at Rhodes University for use by researchers around the country. The NIC is a national facility. Establishment of a Nanotechnology Innovation Center for medical sensors at Rhodes University will allow researchers to conduct fundamental and applied research towards the development of sensors for early detection of disease.

One example of possible research is in the field of oesophageal cancer. If successful, the team's work will enable doctors to detect people's susceptibility to developing the cancer, as a form of pre-emptive treatment. The nanosensors would do this by, for example, testing a patient's blood or urine for substances which might indicate the patient's vulnerability to the disease. The technology can do this because it allows scientists to view and analyse data on a molecular level. Such research would be hugely beneficial to rural men in South Africa, a demographic adversely affected by oesophageal cancer.

Samson Khene (a Masters student and part of the team) is researching how to make the electrodes used for the research more sensitive. "It's exciting research, I think the world is going nano," Khene said. "It's important that Rhodes be leading the way in advancing new technologies."

No expense will be spared on this endeavour. The first item on their list of equipment is already being ordered from Germany at a cost of R1,2 Million, and Professor Nyokong says students will be sent overseas for training. In addition, various world experts will travel to Grahamstown to assist. Professor Nyokong has been researching nanotechnology for over 15 years at Rhodes University but ultimately she gives the credit to her students: "I believe I'm the driver, but my students are the real agents of change. They are the ones doing the research work'.

Rhodes University through the eyes of a disadvantaged student

by Siphosethu Stuurman

Rhodes University is known as one of the country's most classist universities. This is indeed true; just one glance at the parking lots – which are full of students' cars – immediately confirms that most of the students here are indeed the children of South Africa's elite class.

Growing up in the dusty streets of Kwazakhele townships (Port Elizabeth) in the face of violence, drugs and going to reckless government schools puts one in the back foot in this very competitive world. Growing up in an environment where there is no one to get inspiration from or to look up to is tough and only the very self-motivated people make it through or see the world beyond their contemporary position. What's more demoralizing is the role that the family plays, or rather the absence of family support – and of course there is always HIV/AIDS that rips families apart.

Young people in the township are exposed to a lot of havoc which is a pity because a lot of talent and skill is lost through that. The ones that make it through matric are ready to give themselves to the working labour for petty cash remuneration, which means they will never make it beyond their lower class situation. The few that manage to go to varsities like Rhodes University face a new challenge in their lives.

Disadvantaged students feel like they are thrown in an enemy's land when they are in a university situation. One, they are not able to use the equipment at their disposal, i.e. computers, photo copy machines etc, which makes them the laughing stock of those in better positions. Two, they are suddenly judged by their accent and if it's not "white" enough they will struggle to make friends. Three, class also plays its role as the other wealthy students spend money on beach trips, shopping and going out.

On the academic side some struggle to understand the lectures (the majority being white males) and unlike in high school, lecturers do not "baby sit" students. Academic essays require one to write in perfect English and grammatical errors are penalized. This is rather sad as many disadvantaged students do understand some of the academic concepts in their own mother tongue and struggle to



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express themselves in English. What is also prevalent is that some students' mind-set still need to be liberated and come to the realization that they are not inferior by nature as was believed in the days of Apartheid.

However, it's not all doom and gloom as some disadvantaged students, like myself, adapt quickly and make the most of the opportunities available. Some say I am very ambitious, a go-getter, self-motivated, creative and independent. But, I say I am no different from any other township student except that I've got self-belief and that I do see the world beyond my temporary situation.

Academically I have performed well and I have been very active in extra mural activities. I am proudly the Sports Editor for the OPPIDAN PRESS (a student newspaper), which is a great achievement for me because first year students are not usually recruited as section editors. My duties include coming up with story ideas, editing stories and managing my own team of writers (which includes students who are in their second and third years).

I have also worked for a short period on another student newspaper, ACTIVATE, where I was their senior news writer before I moved to my current job. I am also the task team head for OutRhodes (Rhodes University's Biggest Society). I am currently organizing a national LGBTI conference that they (OutRhodes) will host here at Rhodes next year in June.

What townships first years must understand is that it's not going to be easy. However they should not even contemplate giving up! It's all about self-belief and finding the inspiration within you. One must set goals, be curious, be everywhere. Most importantly, dream big. I have not yet achieved all my goals and I am only in my second year next year in 2008, but I know that my life is in transition for greater things and am brimming with confidence.

About the Author: Siphosiphiso is fortunate to have his tuition and residence fees paid through Student Financial Aid programme, as it is opening doors to him that never would have existed otherwise. Additional funding is required for Siphosiphiso and students like him, to pay for incidentals: toiletries, societies and pocket money are luxuries he might have had to do without were it not for our support. These important but secondary expenses are a grey area in funding, and difficult to request as a stand alone donation. Any support for Siphosiphiso and others in the same circumstances would be most welcome, and will be an excellent investment in promising young leaders.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE... UBUNTU EDUCATIONAL FUND

Ubuntu Education Fund Profile Story

By Corinne Knowles



Earlier this year, I met with Jacob Lief and Qondakele Sompondo of the Ubuntu Education Fund (www.ubuntufund.org) in Port Elizabeth. The UEF is set in the heart of Zwide, and is in a smallish maze of buildings made vibrant on the outside by murals, and on the inside by the friendly and buzzy environment. UEF employs 50 people to provide holistic interventions in the poorer parts of this PE township. Their mission is to provide the vulnerable of our communities with an empowering environment and help them access opportunities.

The non-profit provides Life Skills classes, food-gardening assistance and individual care for those who are vulnerable through their innovative case management program (25 child-friendly counselling centers). This program uses a child as an entry point to household intervention where UEF case workers provide VCT and ARV interventions and other services to ensure household stability.

Children who are part of the UEF program (www.ubuntufund.org) have:

- Individual case work from a trained counsellor for as long as this is necessary
- Attend their own schools where weekly life skills lessons are offered

- Use of computer labs and libraries where learners attend weekly computer and literacy lessons
- Participation in annual holiday camps which provide inspiration in a number of innovative and hands-on ways.

The UEF also works with other NGO's and are determined to take the organic and holistic route to problem-solving. It also has linkages with 24 junior and secondary schools in the area and because of the holistic work they do, have built up strong relationships with their beneficiaries. We spoke about possible synergies with Rhodes and its alumni networks, and feel that there are a number of ways in which we can collaborate.

1. Ubuntu is working with a group of Grade 11 students who have been through their program for a number of years, and who are blossoming under their guidance and support. These students will be ready for tertiary education in 2008, and a number of them will have outstanding results due to their engagement with the programmes offered by Ubuntu. Rhodes could offer bursaries for their further study.
2. The UEF executive director would like to work with local businesses to take bursary students on in a mentoring relationship while they are studying: meals in their homes, visits, and vacation work are some of the possibilities, and we will both explore these in the next year.
3. Summer camps held in Zwide are proving to be life-changing experiences for those who attend – as campers and as facilitators. Rhodes student volunteers could be engaged to help at these camps, which will provide opportunities to develop skills, teach and learn in a fun environment, and build up relationships, which demonstrate a diversity of language, gender, class and race.

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