



BE THE CHANGE

*ISSUE 003 / OCTOBER 2014

DONOR DIGEST

A quarterly newsletter of the Rhodes University Development Division celebrating our corporate donors who are integral to the complete Rhodes experience.



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CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEW VC



DR SIZWE MABIZELA, THE NEW VC

Rhodes University this month announced Dr Sizwe Mabizela as the sixth Principal and Vice-Chancellor of Rhodes University. "Dr Mabizela is eminently worthy of his appointment as the Principal and Vice-Chancellor of this prestigious University," said Mr Vuyo Kahla, the Chairman of the Council of Rhodes University. "He enjoys a solid standing as a mathematician amongst his peers and his professional global contribution to the discipline of Mathematics is considerable. He has, amongst other achievements, been an FRD/NRF rated researcher for 13 years; served on the FRD/NRF Advisory Panels for the rating of researchers; chaired the NRF Mathematical Sciences Grant Applications Committee; and been a member of the Board of the African Institute for Mathematical Sciences (AIMS)."

Following a rigorous selection process, the Selection Committee, chaired by the Chairman of Council and consisting of members of Council, Senate, academic and non-academic staff, and students, unanimously recommended his candidature to the University's Senate.

Dr Mabizela is a leading scholar with impressive and extensive publications covering his research and teaching interests of Applied Functional Analysis, Approximation Theory, Topology, Real Analysis, Metric Spaces, Symplectic



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Geometry, Geometric Quantisation, Lie Theory and Differential Geometry. He was previously an Associate Professor and Deputy Head of the University of Cape Town's Department of Mathematics and Applied Mathematics; Visiting Professor of the University of Zimbabwe's Department of Mathematics; Professor and Head of Department of the Rhodes University's Department of Mathematics (Pure and Applied); and Rhodes University's Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Academic and Student Affairs since 2008. He is also the outgoing Chairperson of the Council of Umalusi, the Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training.

Dr Mabizela has the support and confidence of Council to lead the University and drive the finalisation of the Institutional Development Plan

Well attuned to the public and social roles and responsibilities of a higher education institution, he has made public addresses and other presentations on a broad range of topics, including issues of cultural diversity, mergers in higher education, leadership in the changing society, making South Africa a home for all, mathematics education, standards in education among any others topics that deal with the opportunities and challenges faced by young South Africans today, whom Rhodes hopes to mentor into the ethical leadership of our country.

"Dr Mabizela has the support and confidence of Council to lead the University and drive the finalisation of the Institutional Development Plan intended to address the grand challenges faced by the University, to sustain Rhodes University, where leaders learn," said Mr Kahla.

His term will run for a period of seven years from 1 November 2014 with possible extension for a second term at the Council's discretion.

For an inside look on Dr Mabizela's vision for Rhodes, the academic project and the challenges of financial sustainability and the transformation imperative visit: <http://mg.co.za/article/2014-10-14-rhodes-university-appoints-new-vice-chancellor>

THE **RANKING** DEBATE

The trend for universities to chase rankings is causing much debate both in academic circles as well as out in the market. It also calls those universities who do not feature in these so-called global measures of academic success into question and this is particularly true in the South African context. We spoke to Dr Sizwe Mabizela, the incoming Vice-Chancellor, about which side of the debate Rhodes is placed.

"Global rankings are fuelled by the notions of 'marketisation of higher education' and the commodification of knowledge and that really trivialises the role and purpose of a public university. They constitute a frontal attack on the very core of what knowledge is and what purpose it is meant to serve," said Dr Mabizela. "Public higher education is a public good and we should be educating and nurturing young minds to become thoughtful, engaged and critical citizens and agents of social change and societal transformation rather than simply responding to the market demands."

He describes the methodology employed to arrive at global rankings as deeply problematic, using fundamentally flawed logic tied to the developed world's notions of 'globalisation'. The danger in subscribing to this logic is that institutions of higher learning are forced to abandon the important roles and purposes for which they exist. This is particularly problematic in developing countries such as South Africa where an integral function of a university is to help grow our own solutions to the socioeconomic and educational issues we face, among many other challenges.

Dr Mabizela argues that you cannot take a complex entity such as a university, with its many complex operations, and reduce it to a simple number. Global rankings somehow suggest that all universities, private institutions with their rich endowments and public institutions alike, fulfil more or less the same purposes and missions in a society. They also use certain indicators and weightings for comparison that have been established in developed countries and frequently are not relevant or appropriate to universities in developing countries.

"If you talk about ranking universities you have to first acknowledge that different universities have different functions that are vital for any society. It would serve no useful purpose for all 25 of our South African public universities to pursue exactly the roles and fulfil the same functions in our society" said Dr Mabizela. "Universities exist within certain social, economic, political and cultural contexts and public universities, in particular, have an obligation to respond to the socioeconomic and developmental needs of a country according to their own areas of strength."

In Dr Mabizela's view, what is most pernicious about global rankings is that they are created within a neoliberal free-market logic that elevates market choice above everything else: "Global rankings are premised on the deeply problematic notion that knowledge is just another tradable commodity and you see universities tailoring their offerings in order to attract more of the 'global market share!'"

"It is on this principle that Rhodes does not participate in rankings; once you play into a market logic you will have to abandon the most important roles and responsibilities that a university has to fulfil — one of nurturing and developing young minds, creating room for research to respond to societal challenges and encouraging curiosity driven research in contribution to creating a more just and equitable society."

"If you talk about ranking universities you have to first acknowledge that different universities have different functions that are vital for any society. It would serve no useful purpose for all 25 of our South African public universities to pursue exactly the roles and fulfil the same functions in our society"





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THE RANKING DEBATE (continued from page 2)

Dr Mabizela further questions the heavy emphasis that global rankings place on research: **“Most rankings place a higher weighting on research much to the detriment of teaching and learning and that is very problematic because if you want to cultivate the intellect, you must pay particular attention to teaching and learning.”**

Much of Rhodes University’s good standing has been built on the qualities that allow this small university to create a caring and nurturing environment that has a hands-on approach to student supervision. “We have a huge reputation in our teaching and learning, we have a huge reputation in our research, and we are making significant contribution through our Community Engagement projects and activities,” said Dr Mabizela.

“Global rankings are nothing more than a marketing gimmick and anyone who chases that, I wish them well, but I don’t think that it is something that Rhodes should do.”

“As a matter of principle, I believe the neoliberal free-market logic creates huge distortions by reducing the human and social elements of universities to numbers. Chasing rankings would entirely refute the core values of Rhodes University that lead to much of its success; its contribution to creating a more just, a more equitable, a more caring and a more humane world.”

SHOULD WE TAKE THEM SERIOUSLY?

Stuart Pennington takes a different view of global rankings and gives us his measure.

“There are two remarkable measures of academic achievement at Rhodes,” Prof Badat claimed at a meeting with the Gauteng Alumni, “the first is that, per capita, we have the greatest number of research reports published in reputable academic journals than that of any other South African university, and the second is that we have the highest undergraduate pass rates in the country.” In September 2014 *City Press* published an article ranking South African universities on the number of research reports, publications, and papers presented — the five best and the five worst. UKZN, UCT, Wits, Tukkies and Stellenbosch were named in the top five – Rhodes didn’t feature. The report claimed to ‘measure’ our university academic prowess in a global context. I understand Prof Badat’s aversion to rankings (*Go Well Dr Badat*, published in *Rhodos*) but as the old adage goes “if you don’t measure it, you can’t manage it” and “what’s important is measured, and what’s measured becomes important”.

Clearly the issue in the *City Press* article was the method of measurement. It would seem that the absolute quantum is used, not that which takes account of student numbers.

METHODOLOGY

If one Googles the QS World University Rankings 2013/2014 there are some 20000 universities worldwide that form part of the survey. Some 60000 academics and 30000 business personalities participate in the evaluation process.

A range of both quantitative and qualitative measures are used. What counts most against Rhodes is the size of its student body and the number of faculties it offers.

So is the QS Ranking credible, and should we in South Africa be proud of the fact that we have seven universities in the top 600 (top 3%) of universities worldwide, an improvement from the previous year (with some up +200 places), and none in the bottom 10000?

QS RANKING	
UCT	145
WITS	313
STELLENBOSCH	387
PRETORIA	471
KZN	501
RHODES	551
UJ	601

John O’Leary, executive member of the QS Global Academic Advisory Board has the following to say: “The volatility of some international university rankings has been a frequent source of criticism, but in the QS World University Rankings for 2013/14 the average movement among the top 100 universities is less than 3.5 places, down from 4.6 last year.”

Nunzio Quacquarelli, founder and managing director of QS, said: “The extra stability in this year’s rankings will be good news for the countless students across the world who rely on them to narrow down their choices.”

However not all agree, as one commentator, a Mr Adesuyi explains, “I really am querulous of the authenticity of these rankings. Ranking universities that are specialised such as MIT or Caltech (for Engineering) with comprehensive universities that research and teach in most endeavours just does not make any intuitive sense to me.”

My view is that ‘measurement’ is increasingly becoming part of the global narrative, the way we

think, and compare, internationally. The World Economic Forum’s (WEF) Global Competitiveness Report is a good example of this. SA’s overall ‘competitive’ ranking has dropped from 36th to 56th out of 144 countries in just 10 years, but paradoxically our business school ranking and availability of research and training services has constantly improved over the same period.

Are we going to dismiss these slippages/ improvements as irrelevant to our own perceptions of the journey we have made over the past 20 years, or are we going to take them seriously as we compete for foreign direct investment and gaining the confidence of the investment community?

We dismiss these findings at our own peril.

The same applies to university rankings, as students and academic staff become increasingly aware of what’s on offer globally, so they will make decisions. To dismiss international rankings as an ‘obsession’ or as an irrelevant ‘measure’ is to jeopardise both the standing and the reputation of our beloved Alma Mater, and our universities in general.

Again, at our own peril.



STUART PENNINGTON



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IN MEMORY OF LELONA FUFU

The Vice-Chancellor's office to allocate a further R350 000 from the Stella & Paul Loewenstein Trust to the Fufu Fund in memory of Lelona Thembakhazi Fufu, a student who was tragically murdered while hitchhiking from Port Elizabeth to Grahamstown for her graduation in April 2012.

The Lelona Thembakhazi Fufu Memorial Prize is awarded annually at graduation to a student graduating in Science with a BSc or BSc (Hons) who has overcome educational hardships to achieve very good results.

This year the prize was awarded Mr Masakheke Mafu, a student in Mathematical Statistics. The final Honours results at the end of this year will determine who the recipient will be 2015.

Since its inception, various Rhodes staff members have contributed to the fund and, in addition, a Lelona Thembakhazi Fufu Scholarship Fund has been established.

The full Scholarship, which will be awarded for the first time next year, amounts to R90 000 and includes a contribution towards the student's travel expenses for graduation.

"Where there are suitable recipients at both BSc and BSc (Hons) levels, two awards may be made," said the former Dean of Science, Professor Ric Bernard, who donated his retirement bonus to the Fund prior to departing from Rhodes University.

Ms Fufu had come through the Science Foundation Programme to complete a BSc in mathematics and mathematical statistics and in 2011, a joint Honours in mathematics and mathematical statistics. The Scholarship will be awarded to a student of mathematics and mathematical statistics.



LELONA THEMBAKHAZI FUFU, A STUDENT WHO WAS TRAGICALLY MURDERED WHILE HITCHHIKING FROM PORT ELIZABETH TO GRAHAMSTOWN

FAREWELL TO PROFESSOR RIC BERNARD

At the end of September Rhodes said farewell to Professor Ric Bernard, the Dean of Science, as he took up the post of Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Academic at the University of Mpumalanga. Professor Bernard provided an example of the leadership philanthropy for which Rhodes University is known by donating his retirement bonus to the Lelona Thembakhazi Fufu Memorial Prize which is awarded annually to a Science graduate who has overcome educational hardships to achieve very good results.

Noted for his open door policy and nurturing yet professional approach as a lecturer, he was described by Professor Martin Hill as a "very good postgraduate supervisor who loved nothing better than getting into the field with his students."

Considered a world expert on bat reproduction, Professor Bernard has published more than 100 papers and achieved a B-rating by the NRF. In his leadership as Dean of the Faculty he brought common sense, compassion and understanding to his role: "I believe that during his tenure the deanship was humanised, people felt that they could reason with Ric and not just be policed by policy."

He leaves an exciting legacy to the University in the Life Sciences Building Project which he led with large amounts of enthusiasm and wisdom and which will see research in the life sciences at Rhodes assume a space and environment more in fitting with the high productivity levels of its academics. "Ric was in the current Biological Science building since 1983 and has seen so many changes, and yet none of them met the needs of a burgeoning department," said Professor Hill. "So, he motivated and put all of his weight behind the new Biological Science Building and, despite some detractors, it is becoming reality."



PROFESSOR RIC BERNARD, THE DEAN OF SCIENCE

Kerry Peter
*WORD WEAVER

At Creatives on Click and Kerry Peter Word Weaver we are both independent professionals who believe in the power of creative collaboration. Uniting our skills and experience we add value to the products we offer our clients.

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BEIT TRUST VISIT

Major General Angus Ramsay, the Secretary to the Beit Trustees, recently made his annual visit to Rhodes to meet the current recipients of the Beit Scholarship.



BACK ROW: WALTER NHEMACHENA, EDMOND MUZINDA, MAJOR-GENERAL ANGUS RAMSAY (BEIT TRUST – SECRETARY) • FRONT ROW: ETHEL BHUMURE, FAITH MAGWENZI, YVONNE CHILIBOYI, FLORENCE MPOFU, VIMBAINASHE CHIKUKWA, PALMIRA PIO, KAWELU M'ULE.

SAYING THANK YOU

In August, Mr John Gillam, the Postgraduate Financial Aid Officer, received a letter from former Beit Scholar Madalitso Mlozen, an MSc (Biochemistry) graduate from Malawi who had difficulty with late accommodation charges when he first got to Rhodes University. Saying that he hopes his thank you words also speak for his friends who has also received help from donors, he demonstrates the spirit of gratitude and grace for which recipients of scholarships at Rhodes are known: "I would like to register my sincere gratitude to you for your unselfish help and support that you personally have rendered to me ... Your work [has] helped me so much that [the] financial aspects of my studies were swiftly taken care."

"Let me also take this time to ask you to extend my sincere gratitude to the Beit Trust for their tremendous help for seeing to it that I finish my studies at Rhodes without any financial constraints, that made me focus much on my studies knowing

that Beit was always there for me. I would like to ask Beit to continue helping the needy like me to fulfil their dreams like I have. Only God will continue to protect and bless Beit Trust.

Kind regards,
Madalitso Martin Mlozen

The Trust was initially set up in 1906 by the Will of Mr Alfred Beit, a brilliant financier and a director of the British South Africa Company. Although a mining magnate himself, he forbade his Trustees from investing in mining shares, other than preferred stocks. The Trust's benevolent mandate is for Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi, and in 1946 the Trustees switched from communications infrastructure to providing assistance in education, health, welfare, and the environment.

"Let me also take this time to ask you to extend my sincere gratitude to the Beit Trust for their tremendous help for seeing to it that I finish my studies at Rhodes"

FUNDING LEGAL ADVICE OFFICES IN THE RURAL EC

The CS Mott Foundation recently increased their funding to Rhodes University Law Clinic by \$150000, providing welcome relief to their advice office programme. Mr Terwin de Vos, the Clinic Administrator, gives us insight into the close working relationship the Clinic has developed with the CS Mott Foundation and what this means for their legal advice offices in the Eastern Cape.

The relationship between the Law Clinic and CS Mott Foundation started in mid-2006 and gave rise to an involved and holistic approach to the development of strong, efficient and effective Advice Offices in particularly the rural Eastern Cape.

The funding received enables the Clinic to regrant to 13 advice offices throughout the Eastern Cape. These grants enable advice offices to cover their basic cost and also to conduct community workshops on human rights issues.

We also provide Rhodes University accredited training to paralegals on pertinent legal issues prevalent in rural communities and in addition provide training focussing on administrative, financial and other organisational development topics. We also facilitate the National Certificate: Paralegal Practice to provide paralegals from advice offices with formal paralegal qualifications.

Visits to advice offices throughout the Eastern Cape three times a year constitutes our back-up legal services where attorneys and administrative staff assist advice offices with their case work and other administrative needs. The attorneys also consult with clients in need of a legal practitioner and provide legal advice. At times ad hoc mentoring and training take place if required.

Without the partnership with the CS Mott Foundation none of the activities discussed above would have been possible.

The increased funding for 2014-2015 will also allow us to host a much needed stakeholders meeting with all of the 45 advice offices that we work with. The main objectives are to review and evaluate our programme since inception and also to plan the future of the programme with the advice offices or beneficiaries.



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Nedbank's grace towards needy students



DIROSHNI GOVENDER (NEDBANK), DR SIZWE MABIZELA AND MPHONG NETSHIOMBO (HEAD: TALENT ACQUISITION, BURSAR AND GRADUATE PROGRAMMES)

Following a Rhodes University Cocktail Party held in Johannesburg earlier this year, Nedbank representatives who generously sponsored the evening were so moved by then Acting Vice-Chancellor Sizwe Mabizela's passionate speech that they donated a once-off gratuity of R450,000 to cover the tuition costs of promising students at Rhodes University who do not have the financial means to fund their 2014 studies.

Their recent donation has benefitted 16 deserving students while a remaining R5000 will be put towards the Lelona Thembakhazi Fufu Memorial Fund.

In a follow-up meeting with Dr Sizwe Mabizela and members of the financial aid and development offices, Ms Mpho Netshiombo, Head: talent acquisition, Bursar and Graduate programmes at Nedbank, outlined the needs of the Nedbank Bursary Programme and encouraged Rhodes to partner them in recruiting more students from the Eastern Cape. There are currently only three Rhodes students in the Nedbank Bursary Programme out of 140 countrywide. Focussing on first years undertaking finance and banking sector courses the comprehensive scholarship — covering full tuition, accommodation, textbooks, pocket money and mentorship and coaching — will be open for applications in the 2016 intake.



PASSING THE TORCH A sad farewell & happy welcome