



# RHODES EXCHANGE

Bringing you news about research, progress and development

**\*ISSUE 008 / SEPTEMBER 2014**



**PG 4: THE AGOF AND RHODES**



**PG 5: ENHANCING TEACHING & LEARNING**

## CONFIDENCE IN LOCAL SCHOOLS

At the Allan Gray Orbis Foundation (AGOF) Circle of Excellence Conference held at Rhodes recently, four principals from local schools attended as guests upon the invitation of Dr Sizwe Mabizela, the Acting Vice-Chancellor of Rhodes University. Wendy Mfazwe from Velile Secondary School (Bathurst), Faith Coetzee from Mary Water's High School, Elaine Louw-Bailie from Hendrik Kanise Combined School (Alicedale) and Madeleine Schoeman from Ntsika Senior Secondary School, were able to forge even closer links in the face of so many new possibilities.

Reporting back on the event, these local non-Circle of Excellence Schools are determined to continue supporting in the exceptional work they are already doing in shaping a better future for their children.

Madeleine Schoeman has attended the Circle of Excellence Conferences before. First when she was at Victoria Girls' High School, which was a Circle of Excellence school, and in 2013 when she was sponsored by St Andrew's College to attend. "From the outset, I was inspired by the vision of the Allan Gray Orbis Foundation, and by the richness of the experience," she said. "It is always just a wonderful opportunity to learn and renew oneself."

"The five pillars of the AGOF resonate strongly with me. You cannot make light of concepts such as Spirit of Significance, Intellectual Imagination, Achievement Excellence, Personal Initiative and Courageous Commitment. AGOF is not about entrepreneurship for personal gain, it is, as one person put it this past weekend, not about being the best in the world, but being the best for the world. It is about changing mindsets, which is so necessary in our society, regardless of where a school is situated and regardless of the socio-economic position of the school community."

### BE THE SOLUTION TO EDUCATION

In this issue of Rhodes Exchange, the Allan Gray Orbis Foundation's Circle of Excellence Conference, co-hosted by the Allan Gray Centre for Leadership Ethics at Rhodes recently gave us pause to take a look at some of the challenges facing the secondary education sector and to explore possible solutions. Four local principals talk about their real experiences of education in the rural Eastern Cape. We also talk to Professor Chrissie Boughy of the Centre for Higher Education, Research, Teaching & Learning about what is making Rhodes a leader in the development of academic staff in their roles as educators.



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Mrs Schoeman is thrilled that this year three of Ntsika's Grade 12 learners applied for the AGOF Fellowship, two of whom made it to the interviews, with one going on to the selection camp. "The benefit of AGOF to Ntsika, apart from the mindset change, is that it opens the world, it extends the horizon of our learners and brings them into contact with diversity of thinking and being. This weekend we heard that Ekhona Ntloko is going to the selection camp! How does one put in words what this means to a young person?"

*"Putting emphasis on entrepreneurial leadership can only be beneficial to learners growing up in an area of high unemployment."*

All three of these promising youngsters have already been provisionally accepted to Rhodes for a BSc. "They have had incredible support from the Rhodes community, for example, through the internship programme initiated by Francesca Porri who is now at the South African Institute of Aquatic Biodiversity," she said. "It is risky to name people, but these learners owe so much to the enabling opportunities created and sustained by Rhodes staff such as Julian Larema, Martin Hill, Joyce Sewry, Ken Ngcoza, Desiree Wicks (the list is very long!)"

Elaine Louw-Bailie described the positive energy exuded by presentations and deliberations as contagious, making the AGOF Conference experience uplifting and inspirational. On the serious note of education in South Africa she points out that the Allan Gray programme is aimed at the top 5% of learners in the country: "My school, in spite of achieving matric pass rates over 80% for the past five years, has a long way to go to be eligible to become part of the Circle of Excellence family, making the experience and exposure so much appreciated." She describes the prevailing context in which her learners learn - limited healthy exposure, lack of support at home and the socioeconomic conditions in which the learners live - as counter-productive to grooming the type of learner the AGOF is looking for.

But where there is passion there is hope. "Some of the questions posed and presentations made me realise, it is possible to produce such a special learner with some innovative leadership," she said. "Putting emphasis on entrepreneurial leadership can only be beneficial to learners growing up in an area of high unemployment which contributes to hopelessness, lack of motivation to achieve and causing learners to become disillusioned about what the future holds. In this regard this programme can work for most learners, not just the top achievers.

As a principal, Mrs Louw-Bailie agrees with Dr Mabizela's view that teacher training and support needs much more attention if we want to produce

learners who can take their rightful place in society and the country and compete favourably at an international level. "The current model of training teachers is inadequate," she said. "Too little time to empower teachers effectively to live up the challenges of CAPS; too little emphasis is placed on quality teaching at GET level, especially in the Foundation phase where learners are still in their formative years. A well-resourced school with incompetent teachers will not improve the quality of education."

"I'm very excited about the programme. I was not even aware of such an enthusiastic, empowering, reviving conference," said Wendy Mfazwe. "I have seen the importance of being a teacher. I have also realised that teaching is a calling."

"On Monday at school I shared information about entrepreneurship in the high school environment with my staff, and with my Grade 12s. "Even if they are from the rural area, they have to change their mindset, they must learn to be employers rather than being employees. How I wish to create space for them to be creative."

Mrs Mfazwe exudes passion when she describes how teaching learners to be givers was another aspect that touched my Grade 12's. "How do we take this to the rural areas? That's the question I ask myself. As a driver of change and with assistance from Rhodes University I'm convinced that we can try as people of Grahamstown. From this conference the message to "learn anything and be anyone" was loud and clear.





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**DR BRIDGETTE GASCA, AN AGOF BOARD MEMBER**

## THE AGOF AND RHODES

The presence of Dr Bridgette Gasca, an AGOF Board Member and one of SA's most influential business women in basic industries, at the Conference provided Dr Sizwe Mabizela, Acting Vice-Chancellor, with the opportunity to discuss particular challenges faced within the Eastern Cape as well as potential solutions through Rhodes University's partnership with the AGOF.

Dr Gasca explained that the board has been grappling to understand why the foundation has been unable to do more in the Eastern Cape given the fact that there are three big universities in the Province?

Dr Mabizela introduced the possibility of developing a Grade 10 schools intervention programme that will run concurrently with the scholarship programme. He acknowledged that although the AGOF scholarship programme provides opportunities to individuals to attend a better school, it is also the denuding local schools from their top talent.

Dr Gasca agreed that there is a need to install a sense of hope with learners, teachers and the community.

Rhodes is part of the small community and can reach all of the schools. The proposed model would include teacher development and is about creating an educational centre of excellence across every aspect of schooling and develop a "community of better practice". Dr Mabizela emphasised that it would be a dual model that would continue to implement the scholarship programme based on the criteria and values of the Foundation in addition to a Grade 10 Rhodes intervention programme that will aim to develop functional schools through the development of teachers.

## A CIRCLE OF EXCELLENCE

The Allan Gray Orbis Foundation (AGOF) believes that entrepreneurs with ethical values and strong leadership skills will have a significant and positive impact on the economic, social and political landscape of Southern Africa. The Foundation's mission is to foster this by providing youth of high potential with access to quality education and by developing their entrepreneurial mindset through Scholarship and Fellowship programmes.

The Circle of Excellence network was launched in 2008 to identify and acknowledge South Africa's top secondary schools for their consistent delivery of successful candidates to the Fellowship. The Circle of Excellence Schools also provide the pool from which the placements for the Scholarship are chosen. The conference is an annual event to celebrate and empower the schools within the network.

The 2014 Circle of Excellence, the sixth principals' conference, was co-hosted by the Allan Gray Centre for Leadership Ethics based at Rhodes University. In keeping with the theme of shifting from excellence to influence, the conference explored opportunities to establish schools as entrepreneurial pipelines for Candidate Allan Gray Fellows. After an overview from Graeme de Bruyn, Head of Programmes at AGOF, and a welcome by Dr Sizwe Mabizela, Acting Vice-Chancellor of Rhodes University, Dr Bridgette Gasca, a Foundation Board Member, presented and led a discussion on the Entrepreneurial Journey: From school to national influence. Dr Mabizela also gave a keynote address on learner and school achievements in his capacity as chairperson of the Umalusi Council and the International Mathematics Olympiad. Beverley Fanella, the AGOF Scholarship Manager, and Dr Nontobeko Mabizela, the Fellowship Selection Manager, presented on scholar and candidate fellow selection in practice. Diana Hornby, the Director of Community Engagement at Rhodes gave some thought leadership to approaches to community and school engagement. Dr Pedro Tabensky, Director of the Allan Gray Centre for Leadership Ethics looked at ethical leadership in schools. Other guest speakers included Craig Andrew from Kingswood College and Tim Barnard from St Andrew's College who took a look at the community collaborations of their schools.



**GRAEME DE BRUYN**

### FACTS AT A GLANCE

The 2014 Circle of Excellence brought together 47 attendees from all over South Africa:

- 11 Eastern Cape attendees came from Mthatha, Uitenhage, PE, Grahamstown and Bathurst;
- 1 from the Free State;
- 11 from Gauteng;
- 11 from KwaZulu-Natal;
- 2 from Limpopo;
- 1 from the Northern Cape;
- 10 from WC

### WHAT IS THE CIRCLE OF EXCELLENCE?

The Allan Gray Orbis Foundation believes that quality, holistic education is an important part of developing high-impact entrepreneurs. The Circle of Excellence is a partnership seeking

to strategically support and encourage institutions of educational excellence in South Africa, which are critical to the region's collective futures. Circle of Excellence schools receive recognition and strategic support at various levels from the Foundation to ensure their continued provision of quality schooling and their commitment to developing high education standards. Their membership is reviewed in January each year to finalise the top 100 schools. The membership criteria and principles are as follows:

- A weighted scoring of 3 points per Candidate Fellow and 1 point per Camp Candidate is awarded to the learners' school
- The schools' performance is considered on a five-year rolling period in order to provide more consistency in

the scoring process

- The Foundation reserves the right to use discretion regarding this scoring process as and when required

### BECOME A CIRCLE OF EXCELLENCE SCHOOL

A question often asked by principals and teachers is how their schools can become part of the Circle of Excellence initiative. A high school can become a member of the Circle of Excellence by providing a track record of transformation and quality schooling and by presenting high numbers of successful applicants to the Fellowship. A high number of successful applicants received from a school who become Allan Gray Fellows, increases the school's chances of becoming a member of the Circle of Excellence initiative.



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## ENHANCING TEACHING & LEARNING

The Centre for Higher Education, Research, Teaching and Learning (CHERTL) is a unique resource at Rhodes University. With considerable expertise among its staff members, its programmes aimed at improving the teaching and supervisory capacity of our academics, make CHERTL a leader in this field.

Since 1999, CHERTL (formerly the Academic Development Centre) has been involved in the development of academic staff in their roles as educators and in consulting with individuals and departments on matters related to teaching and learning. Their courses include the nationally recognised Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education as well as a selection of short courses on subjects such as the assessment of student learning.

“Rhodes probably has the most qualified staff in SA in terms of supporting student learning,” said Professor Chrissie Boughey, the Dean of Teaching & Learning and Director of CHERTL. “Since the early 2000s, 180 academic staff members have completed a qualification in the assessment of student learning and 74 a postgraduate diploma in higher education. These numbers need to be seen in the context of the overall number of academics employed at the university

– 336 in 2013.” These figures are an indication that the staff are thinking about their roles as educators and are far more aware of the context in which they teach.

CHERTL’s work is not limited to Rhodes. Formal programmes, short courses and workshops are offered to academic staff at universities across South Africa. CHERTL was further approached by the Dutch agency NUFFIC to develop an accredited course on doctoral supervision, the aim of which is to develop the capacity of academics to produce doctoral graduates. The Department of Higher Education and Training (DoHET) has awarded further funding to extend this effort.

“We have always understood the situation in SA in that universities are not equally resourced,” said Professor Boughey. “In terms of teaching and learning we have taken our work to other universities, and to the historically black universities in particular, in a bid to develop academic capacity. We are the only university that has done this, and at our own cost. We see this as our social responsibility and believe that the only way out of the current appalling situation where large numbers of black students enter South African universities only to leave without ever having completed a qualification is to improve teaching. Our aim is to capacitate academic staff to facilitate the successful graduation of students from disadvantaged backgrounds.”

An unusual challenge in the current funding environment is that, although funding to improve teaching and learning is flooding into the South African system, capacity to work with this funding in strategic ways is in short supply. “Anyone wanting to work with academics on the development of their teaching capacity needs to have the academic credentials and experience to gain the respect of their peers,” says Boughey. “Unfortunately, over the years the system has not produced this sort of expertise with the result that it is really difficult to fill vacant positions in Teaching & Learning Centres”. CHERTL has met this challenge by developing a version of its PGDip in Higher Education intended especially for staff in Teaching and Learning Centres. This initiative has been rewarded with substantial funding from the DoHET.

In addition to work in staff development, CHERTL has one of the biggest PhD programmes in the University, with over 30 registered candidates – all researching some aspect of higher education. The doctoral programme has attracted substantial funding from the National Research Foundation for projects on Social Inclusion in Higher Education – programmes which have already seen their first graduates.

CHERTL has also been centrally involved in initiatives aimed at growing a future generation of academics to serve higher education. This has been done through the introduction of three Accelerated Development Programmes at the University: one funded by the Mellon Foundation, one by the Kresge Foundation and the third by the University itself. In each of the programmes young academics are appointed on three year contract supernumerary posts. They are paired with more experienced mentors and given a reduced teaching load as they work towards further disciplinary qualifications. 25 lecturers were appointed on the Kresge Programme and 8 on the Mellon Programme. To date lecturers have been appointed on the Rhodes Accelerated Development programme in the departments of Politics, Mathematics, Education, Environmental Education, Drama, Statistics and Law.

The DoHET is now making available a large amount of money for national programmes aimed at growing the next generation of academics for higher education based on the success of the Rhodes programmes.



LEFT: CHRISSIE BOUGHEY, DEAN OF TEACHING & LEARNING



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## MEETING SA'S HIGHER EDUCATION CHALLENGES

CHERTL aims to assist in meeting the challenges faced by Rhodes such as increasing the intake of black South African students, particularly from the Eastern Cape. To realise this goal, CHERTL sees the development of academic staff as educators as critical although some student development initiatives are also run by the Centre. One such initiative involves admitting students who do not meet the universities usual entrance requirements to do their degrees over four, rather than three, years. "The challenge here", says Boughey, "is finding bursaries and other forms of funding for young people whose families cannot afford tuition fees or the cost of accommodation in Grahamstown – there is simply never enough money to go around".

Another challenge taken up by CHERTL has been the pressure experienced at teaching venues that can no longer accommodate the growing numbers of students. A partnership between CHERTL and the Commerce Faculty is changing the way teaching takes place by exchanging face to face for online learning for one contact session a week.

"In 2009 there was a huge bulge in the numbers of students registered for first year. Because of this increase in numbers, calls were made to build another lecture theatre complex at huge cost," said Boughey. At the time estimates for building another lecturing venue such as Barratt were in excess of R420 million which was way beyond Rhodes's reach.

The suggestion from CHERTL was a pilot project, in the Faculty of Commerce, which aimed to exchange one contact lecture per week for other forms of teaching offered online. Departments in the Faculty responded in different ways. Mr Kevin Barnard of the Department of Accounting put tutorials online, not only saving the cost of employing tutors but also freeing up numerous tutorial venues and ensuring that the tutorial was conducted by an expert – the lecturer himself!

Professor Jen Snowball of the Department of Economics & Economic History dropped a lecture and developed a range of online activities including which have not only been greeted positively by students but which have also reduced the queues of students seeking individual consultations

"As we are able to track the download patterns it has become clear that a more sophisticated use of the RU Connected technology is allowing lecturers to personalise their teaching using information and communication technology," said Professor Boughey. Making the use of this technology more meaningful for students has presented a solution to the space and money challenges of burgeoning lecture venues.



PROFESSOR TOM MARTIN, DEAN OF HUMANITIES

## NEWSFLASH!

### CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEW DEAN OF HUMANITIES

In early September Senate supported the Senate Executive Committee recommendation to appoint Professor Tom Martin as Dean of Humanities for a five year period. The Head of Department for Philosophy, Professor Martin has been the Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Humanities under outgoing Dean Professor Fred Hendricks.

Warm congratulations are offered to Professor Martin on his appointment.

**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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