



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Humanities

Fakulteit Geesteswetenskappe
Lefapha la Bomo

MESSAGE TO STAFF OF THE FACULTY OF HUMANITIES: 16 OCTOBER 2015

Dear Colleagues

It is a great pleasure to share with you important activities and achievements of, and recognition received by a number of our colleagues.

Award-winning app for healthy hearing in schools

Hearing difficulties is a major cause of learners' failing at school. The award winning hearScreen™ App – developed by the University of Pretoria – is on a mission to ensure that children have healthy hearing for healthy learning. As many as 3,2 million South Africans suffer from disabling hearing loss, many of which are children. *'As many as one in every ten children may experience hearing difficulties in school'*, according to Prof De Wet Swanepoel (Department of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology). Hearing difficulties lead to more failed grades and an increased risk of difficulties in respect of with energy, stress and poor self-esteem. *'Early detection is the key to ensure healthy learning in children,'* says lead inventor, Prof Swanepoel. The hearScreen™ App makes low-cost hearing tests possible. Geotagged results link children to hearing health providers through a cloud-based server. More than 5 000 children and adults have been tested across Tshwane. Through partnerships with local NGOs thousands more will be tested in coming months.

Silver Medal for Professor De Wet Swanepoel



Prof De Wet Swanepoel (Department of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology) recently received the news that he has been honoured by the Southern African Association for the Advancement of Science (S2A3) for his **innovative smartphone application, known as hearScreen™**. The device provides an easy-to-use, cost-effective solution for screening children and adults for hearing loss. He has been awarded the S2A3 British Association Medal (Silver), which

will be handed to him during an official ceremony.

The British Association Medal is awarded to a person under the age of 40 who is actively engaged in scientific research and who demonstrated evidence in publications, discoveries and/or skills of outstanding capability and achievement, especially when measured by international standards. The

medal is one of the highest awards for original scientific research in South Africa. The Faculty is proud of him and this outstanding achievement that has once again put Humanities in the spotlight.

C2 Rating for Professor Alexander Johnson

Congratulations to Professor Alexander Johnson (Department of Music) who was recently informed that his application to be rated by the NNS rating was successful. He received a C2 rating, valid as of 1 January 2016.

Professor Maxi Schoeman elected member of ASSAf

Congratulations to Professor Maxi Schoeman (Department of Political Sciences) who was elected as a member of the Academy of Science of South Africa.

UNAIDS Grant for the Centre for Sexualities, AIDS and Gender (CSA&G)

The CSA&G was recently approached by UNAIDS and awarded a short-term research project (to the value of US\$ 50 000,00) to assess *South African Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and the AIDS response*. The focus of the research is to:

- i) document civil society engagement and contributions to the National AIDS Response from 2009 to 2015, and
- ii) develop guidelines for the role of CSOs in supporting the national goals of meeting the 90-90-90 targets in 2020 and putting an end to AIDS in the foreseeable future.

The work will involve identifying the support, capacities and financing that CSOs will need and assessing the financing frameworks and options for supporting CSOs in the next 10 to 15 years. Case studies of up to six CSOs will be conducted and the research will be presented at the Durban 2016 International AIDS Conference in a satellite session. The research project is a collaboration among UNAIDS, SANAC and the National Department of Health. In doing this research the CSA&G will be seeking research assistants (MA and PhD students or short-term post docs). A call for researchers will be made in November.

Professor Zitha Mokomane's project with the HSRC and the Presidency

In collaboration with the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), Prof Zitha Mokomane (Department of Sociology) secured a grant for R1 054 384,18 from the Programme to Support Pro-Poor Policy Development (PSPPD) based in the Presidency to undertake a project entitled *Family Cohesion, Values and Strengthening in Promoting Family Wellbeing in South Africa*. The aim of the project is to analyse the 2012 round of the HSRC's annual South African Social Attitudes Survey with a view to enhancing knowledge of family-related dynamics, orientations and preferences in contemporary South Africa as the basis for informing policies aimed at strengthening and enhancing the wellbeing of families and, by extension, social cohesion. For her role as co-PI in the project Prof Mokomane will receive 23% (R244 078) of the total grant amount.

Ovuwa Cultural Ensemble Performs in Massachusetts



The name Ovuwa means (cultural) re-awakening. The ensemble was first established in 1998 under the name 'Tuks Africa Sings' but was later re-named 'UP Chorale'. The current name is more in line with the purpose and character of the group, which has grown by leaps and bounds since its inception. Linked to the Department of UP Arts, Ovuwa offers a space for cultural exchange through their performances. Their trans-cultural collaboration and participatory approach creates a wholesomely dynamic experience that develops and unites the group.

On invitation, the group performed in the United States (mainly in Massachusetts) between 25 September and 12 October 2015. In 2011, the ensemble travelled to Peru where it performed in a Cultural Dance Festival (*Festidanza*) with various groups from many different countries. In 2012, as part of a Cultural Exchange initiative with the First Congregational Church of Old Lyme in the USA, UP Ovuwa received an invitation to take part in a Cultural Exchange Tour. Ovuwa also has great relationships with nationally and internationally acclaimed groups such as Umoja, the Soweto Gospel Choir and Creole from Colombia.

These international trips serve as a great platform for ensemble members as they are given the opportunity not only to learn about other cultures but also to teach and illustrate South Africa's diversity. In addition, the trips result in great international exposure for the Faculty.

Finally, all the best to our colleagues who are finalising their undergraduate teaching and preparing our students for the looming examinations.

Kind regards

Vasu Reddy