

# Collaboration with MIT opens doors

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The University of Pretoria is always looking for opportunities to collaborate with other innovative institutions around the world. In recognition of this effort, it has established an exchange programme with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the USA.



→ *The Principal of Bekekayo Intermediate School, Thobela Mashiloane, with the nine MIT students, two UP students (Ivan Mbulaheniki and Nkosinathi Lekaba) and a student from Switzerland (Marina Morawietz). Marina was doing a one-month voluntary community outreach project at UP.*

The exchange programme makes it possible for students from the Department of Mechanical and Aeronautical Engineering to study at MIT for a year and for MIT students to study at the University of Pretoria for a year. The exchange programme is very successful and many students have benefited from it. Initially, the programme was established for a period of five years, but it has been renewed for another five years.

As part of this programme, a group of nine students from MIT visited the University during their spring break in April 2014. In addition to a campus tour and a visit to the laboratories of the Department of Mechanical and Aeronautical Engineering, they also visited the wind tunnels at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), the Hartbeespoort Dam and Lesedi Cultural Village.

In order to experience South Africa's rich natural heritage, the MIT students visited the

Rhino and Lion Nature Reserve, Pilanesberg Nature Reserve and the Cradle of Humankind. Dr Martina Jordaan, lecturer in the Community-based Project (JCP) module, organised the visit. The JCP module is a compulsory module in the Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology.

During their visit, the students visited the Bekekayo Intermediate School, a farm school near Bapsfontein. The school is one of the JCP module's 450 community partners. The purpose of the project was to give the MIT students the opportunity to interact with learners from the school and to do a community outreach project in South Africa. The students painted games on cement, created a volleyball court and repainted the wall at the entrance to the school. The MIT students' feedback on their visit and community project was very positive and they felt that it was a memorable experience. 🌍