

Mining professors converge on Gauteng from all over the globe

It was with great enthusiasm and excitement that the Department of Mining Engineering at the University of Pretoria and the School of Mining at the University of the Witwatersrand co-hosted the 25th annual meeting and conference of the international Society of Mining Professors (SOMP) in South Africa. This was also the first time that the Society's annual meeting and conference was held on African soil.



→ Delegates of the annual meeting and conference explore the University's campus (from left): Prof Hein Lieberwirth (Germany), Prof Oscar Restrepo (Colombia), Prof Pinyo Meechumna (Thailand), Prof Vlad Kecojevic (USA), Prof Jurgen Kretchman (Germany) and Prof Huwe Philips (South Africa).

The Society of Mining Professors, which was established on 21 October 1990 when a group of some 20 professors of mining gathered at the Montanuniversität in Leoben, Austria, held its annual meeting and conference from 26 to 30 June 2014. The conference was officially opened by Prof Cheryl de la Rey, Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of Pretoria, at the Maslow Hotel, Sandton, Johannesburg on 27 June 2014.

The programme of the annual meeting was organised by Prof Ronny Webber-Youngman, President of SOMP for 2013/14 and Head of the Department of Mining Engineering at the University of Pretoria. After introducing Prof De la Rey, Prof Webber-Youngman gave delegates an overview of Mining Engineering at the University of Pretoria.

The industry keynote address was delivered by Roger Baxter, Chief Operating Officer of the Chamber of Mines. The SOMP keynote address was delivered by Prof Oliver Langefeld from the Universität Clausthal, Germany, who considered

what universities will be like in fifty years' time with regard to mining education. A number of interesting presentations followed by specialists in the field of mining education.

The second day of the conference was hosted by the University of the Witwatersrand. Prof Fred Cawood, Head of the School of Mining Engineering at the University of the Witwatersrand and co-host for SOMP 2014, gave an overview of research activities at the Wits School of Mining and also introduced the industry keynote speaker, Nick Holland, Chief Executive Officer of Gold Fields.

The final day of the conference, 29 June, was held on the UP campus, where the delegates were welcomed by Prof Webber-Youngman and Prof Roelf Sandenbergh, Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology. The conference was concluded with two mine visits on 30 June: one to a deep gold mine, Mponeng, and the other to an underground coal mine, Zibolo Colliery, which proved a memorable experience. 📍