

YOUTH WORK TRAINING NOW AT



*New Maties! Front right is Dr Christo Thesnaar and behind him is Ms Anita Cloete, lecturers in youth work.
(Photo: SSFD)*

the existing BTh programme. All BTh students can therefore benefit from the youth work modules that are now gathering momentum. The Huguenot College expressed the need for youth work training to be included in an undergraduate theology programme.


Prospective students can choose between a three- or four-year degree in Theology (without original languages) with a load of youth work modules. For students who wish to follow a straight youth work programme, there is an exit point after three years, but students who contemplate further study in Theology can complete the four-year degree after which they can exit or continue their studies.

Those who wish to continue their studies will receive credit for the work they have already completed but will then have to do the original languages (Greek and Hebrew) as well as some other modules required by the various churches.

Together with Dr Thesnaar the Faculty also welcomed Ms Anita Cloete, who has previously taught youth work in Wellington and is now in SU's employ.

With regard to content, the modules were developed to prepare students for practice, and the focus is on, among others, child ministry, youth ministry, drugs, shaping of faith, pastorate, community development and the challenges of violence. Students also take certain components from psychology and sociology with exposure to practice constituting an integral part of the training.

Meanwhile it is not only the group of youth work lecturers and students who are affected by the move but the whole Faculty. The Faculty naturally gained two capable lecturers, a group of energetic students and a wide spectrum of training and subject choices. (Dr Thesnaar and Ms Cloete also have several MTh and DTh students under their wing.)

Prof Elna Mouton, Dean of the Faculty of Theology, said that they are very grateful for being able to offer the students more and also for the remarkable group of lecturers and students who have joined them. They feel immensely enriched. 

Training in youth work is being offered at the Faculty of Theology at Stellenbosch University (SU) from this year. In the past this training was offered at the Huguenot College (and supported by Unisa) in Wellington.

According to Dr Christo Thesnaar, one of the two youth work lecturers, youth workers are increasingly in demand. He said that youth workers are appointed especially in congregations but that schools have also started to appoint youth workers to assist with life orientation and to accompany learners. This often takes place in collaboration with a local congregation or through the governing body of the school. Youth workers are also appointed by organisations involved in community development.

Negotiations between the Faculty and the College regarding closer collaboration were under way for about five years before the final decision by the Senate was taken in December 2007. It was, however, in time for the 13 youth work students at the Huguenot College who could start as Maties in January.

Not only the youth work students will benefit from the larger environment. Dr Thesnaar said that an opinion poll among Theology graduates (2000-2006) has shown that youth work training was a definite deficiency in