

ALUMNI SHOULD SUPPORT EXCELLENCE, SAYS RECTOR



At the top universities around the world excellence is supported by the contributions and involvement of their alumni and donors - not only financially but also through their mediation and networks.

This is the conclusion reached by the Rector of Stellenbosch University (SU), Prof Russel Botman, after a year of intensive interaction with alumni, donors, stakeholders as well as top development offices at higher education institutions in the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

In his report to the Annual General Meeting of the Convocation on 6 November in Stellenbosch, Prof Botman pointed out that on occasions for interaction he often encounters probing questions

regarding the role that SU plays in the development of our society.

"There are certain expectations - based on SU's excellence and expertise - that this role should be extended."

The Rector reported on his undertaking to swing perceptions of SU, strengthen and build relationships with alumni and focus on academic excellence.

"The fact that the Minister of Education has indicated to us that she is happy with SU's language policy for 2007 is a good example of political opinions that are beginning to swing in our favour." He also referred to nontraditional feeder schools that are becoming increasingly positive toward the University as well as the growing number of international doors that are opening for the University.

With regard to alumni relationships Prof Botman expressed his wish for a larger turn-out at Convocation meetings and announced that in 2009 he will have discussions with the Convocation Management on proposals that will enable more alumni to attend meetings. "The University is currently looking at the format of our graduation ceremonies and the possibility of having an alumni function coincide with graduation week and the outlining of the Convocation meeting with a possible Alumni Day," Prof Botman said.

"The quality of our alumni reflects our international reputation. Together we can build to increase SU's contribution to development and ensure its future excellence."


Concerning academic excellence Prof Botman said that the University has built a positive image over many years. "With regard to student numbers our popularity lands us in trouble somewhat because our undergraduate growth exceeds the limit, but we will have to manage the process in future."

Furthermore, the University has made a commitment to a Pedagogy of Hope. Within this, five themes have been identified:

- eradication of pandemic poverty
- promotion of physical and mental human dignity
- promotion of peace and security
- promotion of democracy
- environmental sustainability

Over this, Prof Botman said, there had been extensive consultation and a total of 27 proposals for consideration as possible OSP projects (the Overhead Strategic Plan, or OSP, is a management instrument to give academic excellence a more specific focus) had been received from the various University environments. "What is important is that the proposals are based on the academic expertise and ability of the University. Furthermore, they must not merely be managed sustainably into the budget; they must also enlarge the space in the budget."

According to Prof Botman, Community Interaction (CI) constitutes an important component of the core activities of the University. "I am delighted to be able to report that the various University environments are integrating CI activities with their mainstream activities in an enthusiastic and dialectic manner." CI flagship status has been assigned to 10 projects (see article on p 14).

Prof Botman also referred to donations received by the University and said that "a definite indication of the value attached to SU's research outputs is the constant growth in external funds for research that we receive annually". 

NEW MATIESALUMNI NETWORK COORDINATORS

Lydia-Marie and Pierre Joubert: The Bay area (California)



Lydia (BSc, MPhil, PhD) is a former resident of Harmonie. In 1984 she continued her research in Electron Microscopy at Tuks and Indiana University (USA). After moving back to Stellenbosch, Lydia obtained an MPhil in Higher Education and then continued her academic career at the Department of Microbiology. During her involvement in Innovation Fund and BioPAD projects they moved to California. In 2006 she started as Electron Microscopist at Stanford University Medical School, where she is now in charge of the Scanning EM core.

Pierre (Hons B Eng, B Hons Journalism, MEng) is a former resident of Helshoogte. After working at the CSIR in Pretoria he took up a position in Stellenbosch, started his MBA, and accepted a faculty position at the US Business School where he lectured in Management of Technology. He started his own company and became involved with Silicon Graphics in Mountain View, California. In 2004 he accepted a position at a Silicon Valley company. Pierre is enjoying the challenge of being involved in start-up companies, new business ventures and global incentives.

- Contact Lydia and Pierre on tel 650.823.1293 or via e-mail at lydiajoubert@gmail.com

Adv Michelle Posemann: Durban (BA, LLB)



Michelle completed a BA (Law) at Stellenbosch in 1993 and LLB at the University of KZN in 1995. She commenced pupillage at the Durban Bar. Subsequently she began practice as an advocate of the High Court of South Africa in December 1997 and still practices as such in Durban. She has also completed a post graduate diploma in Maritime Law. She currently serves as mediator and arbitrator with the Africa Centre for Dispute Settlement.

She is a past president of the South African Society of Labour Lawyers (SASLAW) (KZN) (2003 - 2005) and lectures in High Court Practice and Appropriate Dispute Resolution at the UKZN based School for Legal Practice.

She is a founding member of the Society of Advocates of KZN and South African Association of Mediators (SAAM), founding member of the Mediation Institute of Southern Africa and member of SASLAW.

- Contact Michelle on tel 031 305 2783, 082 659 5329 or via e-mail at michelle@trancentral.co.za

Steven Rosendorff: Calgary (Alberta), Canada (BComm)



Steven spent two years in the UK, as a Marketing Executive in Human Resources and then returned to South Africa, to a general management position in the Western Cape. Thereafter he spent some eight years in the motor industry and a further three years in the life assurance sector and in 1997 he was approached by a South African affiliate of a UK based global search practice to start a practice in Cape Town.

Steven is a Fellow of the Institute of Directors in Southern Africa and was elected the Chairman of the IoDSA, Western Cape Branch in 2002 to 2004. Apart from his past involvement with the Institute of Director's Educational Trust Fund he more recently held the position of Executive Director. Steven was the Managing Director of Platinum Executive Alliance as well as a Director of Prime Resource Management. During 2008 Steven joined Investors Group Financial Services Inc. in Calgary, Alberta, Canada as Business Development Coordinator.

- Contact Steven at tel 403 973 4942 or via e-mail at capiecanuck@shaw.ca

A complete list of the network coordinators is available at www.matiesalumni.net