

DEVELOPMENT BRIEF

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Cover: Focus on disability

Photo credit: Ms Phumla Hlengwa (Corporate Relations Division, UKZN)

Inside cover photo credit: Shutterstock



Message from the Executive Director

*Professor
Anesh Maniraj Singh*

The Foundation dedicated 2017 to serving the needs of students with disabilities. The University is home to more than 700 students with disabilities. The disabilities range from visual impairments to students with multiple disabilities. These students are ably supported by the Disability Support Unit (DSU) which is a unit in the Student Services Division. The DSU is responsible for, among others, ensuring that students with disabilities have an equal opportunity to succeed and that their special needs are catered for. The response to our drive for disability has been strongly supported by our donors and some of those donations have been showcased in this edition.

As we reach the end of 2017, the Foundation has launched the Vice-Chancellor's annual appeal, which we have aptly named “Share the Festive Cheer” (see back cover). The aim of this campaign is to raise funds to support a group of more than 2000 students who do not have adequate nutrition, which affects their academic progress. I would like to appeal to all our readers to donate to this worthy cause by visiting our website <https://foundation.ukzn.ac.za/> and clicking on the DONATE NOW button.

Whilst the world economy has made fundraising very challenging this year, our donors both old and new have given generously and selflessly for which I say Thank You. I also wish to thank the staff of the Foundation for their efforts, the Board of Trustees for their direction and the UKZN Executive for their support of our activities.

Wishing you and your loved ones well over the festive season!



HCI gives “eyes” to 39 blind students

Hosken Consolidated Investments (HCI) Foundation has given the gift of “eyes” to 39 blind students. According to Nevil Balakrishna, a Co-ordinator in the UKZN Disability Unit, a cane serves as the eyes of a blind person. When HCI were approached for a donation for the Disability Unit, they were most impressed with the idea of the SmartCane™ which is a cane with an electronic handle that can detect obstacles up to 3 metres away as opposed to the normal 1 metre of an ordinary cane. Furthermore, the device can also detect obstacles overhead.

Ms Corrine Abel, CEO of HCI Foundation, and Ms Carol van der Rheede, General Manager and Community Engagement, visited the UKZN Foundation on 28 August to present 25 SmartCanes™ to UKZN students. In her address, Ms Abel stated “HCI understands the challenges that students face when they come to university, we understand how much more difficult it is for you. We have donated the funds for these SmartCanes™ to help you be the best that you can be”.

Mr Amith Ramballie, Manager of the Disability Support Unit, explained that UKZN is home to 709 disabled students of whom 237 are visually impaired and 39 are blind. According to Philani Ndulini, disabled students choose UKZN as it has one of the best disability units in the country which helps students succeed without being dependent on others. Siboniso Mabuza supported this sentiment by stating that “disabled students have the best

pass rates at UKZN”. This he says is due to the fact that whilst resources are limited, it is the support and service offered by the Disability Unit that makes a difference in their lives.

In expressing the blind students' gratitude to HCI for their donation, Ntokozo Phiri stated “On behalf of blind people, I wish to thank the HCI Group for the Smart Cane donation. It has been an eye-opening experience as we can now access places on our own without being dependent on others”.

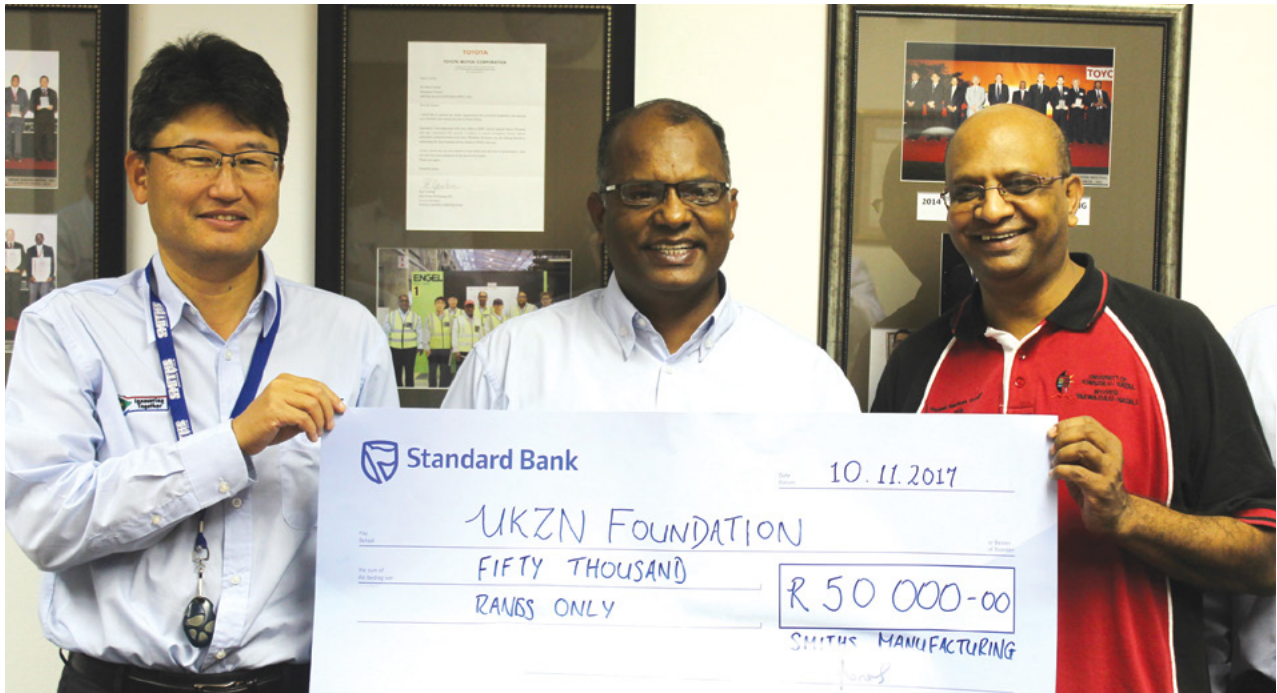
After an emotionally filled interaction with the students, staff from the UKZN Foundation and from the Disability Unit, Ms Abel pledged to ensure that all 39 blind students would be equipped with a SmartCane™ before the end of the 2017 Academic year. HCI have given all 39 blind students the “gift of eyes” and the beginning of a new learning experience.

– Anesh Singh



From left to right: Ms Margie Naidoo, Mrs Sambulo Ntombela, Prof Anesh Singh, Ms Corrine Abel, Mr Nevil Balakrishna, Mr Ntokozo Phiri, Mr Amith Ramballie, Ms Carol van der Rheede

Photo credit: Albert Hirasen



From left to right: Mr Toshiro Imoto (Smiths Manufacturing, Commercial Director) with Mr Selvin Konar (Smiths Manufacturing, Managing Director) and Mr Nevil Balakrishna (UKZN's Disability Unit)

Photo credit: Ms Ingrid Smith

Keeping the “wheels” of students with disabilities turning

Smiths Manufacturing is a leading manufacturer and assembler of automotive air-conditioning and engine cooling components. Smiths' success has been built on four pillars, one of which is corporate social investment (CSI). As a good corporate citizen, Smiths supports more than 30 charities. The company recently donated R50000-00 towards the UKZN Disability Support Unit.

Due to its reliance on professionally skilled labour, Smiths takes education very seriously. According to Selvin Konar, the Managing Director, “Over the years we have relied on UKZN to provide us with engineers; however, we are extending our reach to employ ‘thinkers’ from the management sciences and as such see UKZN as our educational partner”. Smiths' donation towards disability ties in closely with the company's strategy to empower disabled people. “In order to make a difference in the lives of the disabled, Smiths employs 15 hearing impaired staff in various parts of their operation” said Paul Vermaak, HR Director at Smiths.

Nevil Balakrishna, Manager of the Disability Support Unit (DSU) at the Howard College campus, thanked Smiths for their donation as it goes a long way to empower non-traditional students achieve their dreams. According to Balakrishna, the disability support unit is committed to making learning

accessible and promoting student independence. The contribution from Smiths will make it possible to maintain disabled students' assistive devices. According to Balakrishna, assistive devices break due to wear and tear and students are unable to afford the repairs. Smiths' contribution will be ring-fenced to pay for repairs as and when they occur in order to keep the wheels of learning, turning.

Konar and Vermaak made a commitment to grow the relationship with UKZN through grants, bursaries, learnerships and recruitment drives. They specifically emphasised their interest in employing disabled UKZN graduates. Konar said that the employees of Smiths support CSI initiatives and are proud to work for a company that supports communities and society. He stated further that Smiths gives freely in a responsible way simply because “It is the right thing to do”.

– Anesh Singh

Nedbank Eyethu Community Trust Supports Access Students

Nedbank recently partnered with the College of Agriculture, Engineering and Science (CAES) to fund 12 students to study engineering and science through the Access Programme.

The Nedbank Eyethu Community Trust made available a grant of R1 200 000, facilitated through the UKZN Foundation Trust on behalf of the University, that has enabled 12 academically successful students from disadvantaged socio-economic and educational backgrounds to pursue studies at UKZN.

The CAES Science and Engineering Access Programme has a sterling track record of nurturing academic talent. The CAES Access Programme recognises that whilst these learners may not have qualified for entry into the mainstream Science and Engineering degrees, they may still have the potential to be future scientists and engineers. Approximately 500 students in each year are given an opportunity to gain entry into a Science and Engineering degree via the Access programmes. This is based on the understanding that these degrees will take an extra year compared to students who enter through the direct entry route. Besides the financial support, these students are given additional tuition and academic counselling to enhance their chances of success. To date, the success rates are among the best in the country.

A special function was held to acknowledge these 12 students and to announce their financial assistance from the Nedbank Eyethu Community Trust.

Prof Naveen Chetty, College Dean of Teaching and Learning, congratulated the students and encouraged them to continue on their path of academic excellence. "This financial support is a stepping stone to a fruitful and

enriching education that will ultimately prepare you for the working world which I hope each of you fully embrace and commit to achieving the academic success to make your dreams a reality", he said.

Steve Camp from the UKZN Foundation presented each of the students with certificates to acknowledge their financial assistance. He paid tribute to the Nedbank. "This partnership with Nedbank through their Eyethu Community Trust is very much about promoting academic excellence to grow leaders that will contribute towards shaping the future of science and engineering in South Africa that will lead to innovations for the greater benefits of the community", he said.

Simphiwe Mlungwana, one of the beneficiaries of the funding, was most grateful". Both my parents are deceased and it has always been a dream to get a degree", she said". I was raised by my aunt and come from a very poor family. On receiving news that I was awarded this financial assistance, I felt a heavy burden had been lifted off my shoulders! Words cannot express my gratitude to Nedbank", said a jubilant Simphiwe.

– Steve Camp



From left to right: Prof Naveen Chetty, School of Chemistry and Physics together with 12 students to studying engineering and science through the Eyethu Access Programme and Mr Steve Camp far right

Photo credit: Mr Bheki Mthembu

Three cheers for the FirstRand Foundation!

The FirstRand Foundation (FRF) has undertaken to contribute to a strengthened economy and a better South Africa through education and skills development. Amongst the numerous programmes designed to support their aim, FRF committed to providing financial assistance to undergraduate students who had completed their studies and would be graduating in 2017.

It had been highlighted through the #FeesMustFall movement and other platforms that many students faced dire constraints in meeting the financial demands of tertiary education. FRF established that the provision and assistance to those graduating would be a significant contribution to help increase the number of graduates whilst alleviating the financial barriers that many students are exposed to whilst achieving their ultimate success at a tertiary level. Tshikululu Social Investments, who are managing the investment on behalf of FRF, communicated that "The FirstRand Foundation had put aside funding that would enable many students who were due to graduate in the 2017 academic year but had debt (fees owing). These students would now be given an opportunity to have their financial pressures lifted and alleviated giving them an opportunity to fully participate in the labour market".

In total, the FRF donated R4 024 374 to assist 352 of our students to clear their financial debt owing to the University. No doubt this magnanimous act of generosity displayed by the FirstRand Foundation has given this group of graduated students the desire and perseverance to blaze through their chosen careers without the thought of a heavy financial burden hanging over their heads.

Our sincere gratitude goes out to The FirstRand Foundation, for helping to empower the next generation of leaders through financial academic assistance. This has given our students the desire to persevere and inspire greatness!

– Nadia Paul



Students studying applied sciences at Howard College
Photo credit: Mr Albert Hirasen

Buckman Cares

The School of Education on the Edgewood Campus are in the process of upgrading their Science laboratories. According to Dr Angela James a senior academic in the School, “the School caters for more than 300 future Science teachers”. In order to improve Science education in high schools UKZN is committed to graduating teachers who have been taught at a premier learning facility.

According to Mr Johnathan Job Managing Director of Buckman Laboratories South Africa, “We are pleased to be a part of this upgrade project as it fits in very well with our Buckman Cares programme”. Buckman Laboratories is a multinational chemicals manufacturer that seeks to provide innovative solutions that meets their customer’s needs. The Buckman Cares programme is “a global community engagement initiative that dedicates Buckman resources – both financial and human – to improving education for youth, enhancing health and human services, and bolstering environmental stewardship”. Mr Job stated further that they are in the field of science and believe that they should be making a difference in science education.

In answering the question why Buckman selected the laboratory upgrade project from the hundreds of requests they receive, Robyn Clark, – Skills



Front centre: Mr Johnathan Job (Managing Director of Buckman Laboratories South Africa)

Back left to right: Ms Robyn Clark (Skills Development Generalist at Buckman), Dr Busisiwe Alant, Dr Angela James (Cluster Leader Science and Technology Education, UKZN School of Education) and Ms Mtuku Goba (Director, Buckman Human Resources)

Photo credit: Brendan Boyce

Development Generalist at Buckman, explained that the laboratory upgrade is a sustainable project which teaches future science teachers, who then teach the next generation of scientists, many of whom could be future employees of Buckman and other companies in the chemical and related industries.

Human Resources Director, Mtuku Goba stated that Buckman supports students from the Hammarisdale community with bursaries to study at UKZN. The company has supported other initiatives at UKZN in the past and are open to fresh ideas for collaboration in the future.

In concluding the meeting with the Buckman team, Dr Angela James thanked the company for their generous donation towards the laboratory upgrade and assured them that the funds will be used towards microscopes and chemistry kits which will ensure that the School continues to deliver excellence in teaching.

– Anesh Singh

The School of Arts has reason to dance

The School of Arts which is one of seven schools, and which forms part of the College of Humanities hosted its 12th annual music and dance event, which is aptly named the African Cultural Calabash and Cuisine event. The Calabash vine is iconic across African Culture. The bottle shaped melon fruit has been used as a vegetable or when mature and dried to carry water, as a eating utensil and as a musical instrument.

According to Dr Patricia Opondo, the events Director and primary organiser, "the Organisational Support Funding grant enables the UKZN African Music Project to continue with important community outreach activities, most especially to mount the annual folklife event on campus, the Annual African Cultural Calabash". This 3-year support funding has enabled us to grow the Calabash and profile a wider variety of local artists, and in turn offer them decent remuneration".

Opondo noted, "Community engagement and outreach is central to our philosophy. As such,

we are also able to engage with rural-based community arts groups and have them share a platform with established artists". This year the Calabash featured Emzini Arts from the South Coast who also showcased music and dance genres beyond the Zulu repertoire. A highlight was the vibrant Burundi Drummers.

The Calabash has also provides a vital platform for student development and exposure. Student participation is central to the Calabash event. The module called African Music Outreach: Community Development provides service learning to the students and they have hands-on experience in all aspects of mounting and hosting a large-scale cultural event. This prepares them to work in events management and arts administration once they graduate, as the course also teaches them to write business plans and how to prepare funding proposals.

This year the event was sponsored by the National Arts Council (NAC) and the South African Music Rights Organisation (SAMRO) Foundation Concerts SA initiative. The generosity of the 3-year grant from the NAC made it all possible. Without their support, it would not have been possible to host the Calabash. In addition to supporting the event, the NAC has made 12 student bursaries available for 2017. In the future, more sponsors and partners will be required.

– Brendan Boyce



The Burundi drummers

Photo credit: Thuli Dlamini



From left to right: Mrs Nadia Paul (UKZN Foundation), Mrs Debbie Heustice, (Director, Info Africa), Mx Nomonde Magantolo (UKZN Disability Support Unit), Ms Jo Griffiths (Managing Partner, The Loudhailer), Mr Thembani Ntobeko Khumalo (UKZN Disability Support Unit), Ms Brigitte Bard, (CEO, BioSURE), Ms Julie Mitchell, (BioSURE)

Photo credit: Brendan Boyce

Introducing HIV self-testing kits

UKZN Foundation, info4africa and the UKZN AIDS Programme hosted a lunch on 2 October 2017 with Brigitte Bard, a World Advocate on HIV self-testing, Founder of the Bard Foundation and CEO of BioSURE. She spoke with passion and authority about HIV self-testing in South Africa.

Brigitte is recognised globally as a leader in the field of HIV self-testing and is passionate about the role testing has to play in allowing people to make informed choices and assume responsibility for their own healthcare.

BioSure HIV Self-Test became available in South Africa earlier this year and is currently the only CE approved HIV self-test in South Africa. There has been significant interest in the self-test from all sectors in South Africa. Brigitte and her team are currently engaging a variety of stakeholders in business, government and civil society about self-testing. BioSure believes that self-testing will make a significant difference to increasing knowledge of one's HIV status, breaking down stigma and nurturing understanding around confident sex and sexual health.

Brigitte is based in the UK and works closely with the Terrence Higgins Trust and World Health Organization (WHO) to promote the responsible use of HIV self-testing. Having founded and launched the world's first approved HIV self-test to utilise blood in 2011, she now serves on a number of medical advisory boards working closely with leading clinicians, public health bodies, government and NGOs. The BioSure HIV Self-Tests are available at all leading pharmacies such as Dis-Chem. Find them near the pregnancy test kits, condoms and other sexual health aids.

– Debbie Heustice and Anele Ndumiso Mkhize



Dr Nigel Grech seated
Photo credit: Dr Nigel Grech

US-based alumnus sets up legacy fund

In an increasingly globalised society where graduates have become more mobile locally and internationally, South African universities are having to strengthen their efforts to remain connected to their alumni. In this regard, the UKZN has launched and continues to nurture programmes aimed at allowing former graduates to reconnect and give back to UKZN. The Friends of UKZN Agric is such a programme where former graduates have a platform to remain in touch, reconnect at events and support certain projects in the School of Agricultural, Earth and Environmental Sciences and the UKZN generally.

Recently, Brendan Boyce of the UKZN Foundation caught up with former student, Dr Nigel Grech, who is a board member and Executive Vice President and Director of Research and Development at Verdesian Life Sciences, in the United States of America. A graduate of the Discipline of Plant Pathology, Dr Nigel Grech shared how he is contributing to the UKZN.

It is about giving back. I have a wonderful career both in research and commerce but always within the field of crop science. I wanted to share my knowledge and exposure with a younger generation. Sharing the wonders of science is critically important to develop a pipeline of trained graduates. In my view, these are essential elements in economic development and attracting regional and national investment.

The decision my wife and I made to invest R500,000 as a charitable endowment for the benefit of financially impoverished students was predominantly driven by our wish to catalyse through this modest gift

greater graduation success. Education is the greatest liberator from so many societal issues and if our small gift can help just one student cross the finish line, we have achieved our goal. Collectively, I believe that UKZN can attract significant investment regionally and internationally through the correct alignment of the significant network of past students and alumni worldwide.

In answering the question "What is the lasting impact of this partnership and what is your message to other alumni?" Grech stated "More exposure, more international investment and funding in UKZN and ultimately delivering excellence. UKZN is a top university but unfortunately does not promote itself well internationally. All universities today work on the international stage and this is critical to get the best faculty and staff, attract students and ultimately investment. My hope and aim is to help drive these goals, but it must start from within. UKZN graduates must promote the virtues of UKZN, reconnect and get engaged".

– Brendan Boyce

Successful brand-raising seminar

The University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) Foundation in collaboration with the Consulate General of India and ABSA Bank hosted a seminar on Expanding Horizons: Trade and Investment Opportunities between South Africa and India. The purpose of the event was to stimulate discussions regarding trade opportunities between India and South Africa and to raise the profile of the Foundation.

The seminar took the format of a panel discussion. The esteemed panellists included: Her Excellency Ms Ruchira Kamboj – High Commissioner of India to South Africa; Dr Shashank Vikram – Consul General of India, Durban; Mr Zamo Gwala – CEO Trade and Investment KwaZulu-Natal; Ms Nazrana Jassat – SA Representative for the Confederation of Indian Industry; Mr Rajiv Singh – Regional Executive of Customer Network – ABSA.

In her opening address, Her Excellency Ms Ruchira Kamboj stressed that India will celebrate 75 years of independence in 2022 and was currently emerging as a strong and prosperous country. Currently, investment in power, roads, rail, ports, airports and communication is taking place under the Connect India programme, which is set to modernise the transport and communication sector. India aims to develop 100 smart cities, which are citizen friendly and economically viable that will transform the lives and living conditions of its citizens. The Internet has reached some of the remotest villages in India and soon every corner of the country will have full connectivity.

Ms Nazrana Jassat spoke strongly of the shared histories between South Africa and India which she believes will pave the way for a shared future through collaboration between the two governments, companies and academic institutions. Jassat said that it was necessary to think about the next 50 years and explore these opportunities into the future.

Ms Kamboj stated that to maximise the synergies that exist between the two countries, it is important to address factors such as direct airlinks as well as visa and works permits, which will open the corridors for trade and tourism.

The seminar attracted more than 200 guests from industry. According to Prof Anesh Singh, “we aim to raise the profile of the UKZN Foundation through greater involvement with the business community through high profile events such as this”.

– Anesh Singh



From left to right: Mr Rajiv Singh (ABSA), Ms Nazrana Jassat (CII), Dr Shashank Vikram (Consul General of India), Mrs Ruchira Kamboj (High Commissioner of India), Prof Anesh Singh (UKZN Foundation), Mr Zamo Gwala (TIKZN), Ms Vani Moodley (Vani Moodley & Associates)

Photo credit: Albert Hirasen

Share the Festive Cheer

Support the UKZN – Student Food Security Programme

**DONATE
NOW**

More than sixty percent of UKZN students require financial support to access higher education. Some students receive full funding to cover all their expenses. However, there are at least 2 000 students who do not receive funding for food/meals. Research has found that students who are undernourished are prone to poor academic performance. The University of KwaZulu-Natal Student Food Security Programme is critically underfunded and requires generous support from students, staff, alumni, businesses and other stakeholders.

**“As we prepare for the festive season
I appeal to you to make a generous contribution
to the Food Security Fund in order to make a difference
to students who will need meals in 2018.”**

**Dr Albert van Jaarsveld
(Vice Chancellor and Principal)**

To make an online donation go to
www.foundation.ukzn.ac.za
and click on **DONATE NOW**



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