CPUT hosts MULTIGRADE EDUCATION CONFERENCE

Despite explicit evidence on the existence of multigrade schools, official education policies in many developing and developed countries remain silent on this issue.

In South Africa, where three million children receive instruction in multigrade classrooms, government education policies make no mention of these schools.

The absence of multigrade education policies was one of many concerns highlighted at the Southern African Multigrade Education Conference, held in Paarl from 22 to 24 March 2010.

The conference, hosted by the CPUT Centre for Multiparaede Education (CMGE) in association with the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Association for Development of Education Africa (ADEA), was attended by more than 100 delegates from Africa, Asia, Latin America, Europe and Australia.

The conference, a first of its kind, created an opportunity for researchers, government officials, activists and teachers to debate, share lessons learnt and plot a way forward for multigrade education.

In multigrade classrooms, which are common in rural areas, a teacher teaches several grades in one classroom. These teachers are not trained to facilitate multigrade classrooms, have little support from government and often no resources.

Virgilio Juvane, Education Adviser, Commonwealth Secretariat and Coordinator of the ADEA Working Group on the Teaching Profession, who was one of several keynote speakers, said nothing concrete is being done by governments to address the challenges these schools face.

"Educational management systems do not include data on multigrade schools. In most cases, educational policy makers and planners... are still largely unaware of the number of multigrade schools in their country."

Juvane said the absence of policies, research and data makes it difficult to improve planning and delivery of multigrade teaching.

CMGE Director Dr Jurie Joubert shared results of a baseline study on multigrade education in South Africa. The study revealed that there is an indifference towards rural people amongst government officials, resulting from a strong urban bias on the part of politicians and policy makers, while officials in most district offices are poorly informed and trained in multigrade pedagogies.

The study also revealed that teachers are not trained to teach in multigrade classrooms, nor is the curriculum conducive for these settings.

Dr Joubert said although multigrade education is "dismissed by policymakers as a second class option", there is growing evidence from around the globe that well-supported multigrade techniques can result in positive education experiences.

In Columbia, the Escuela Nueva (new school) Foundation, has transformed local multigrade schools.

Head of the foundation, Vicky Colbert, who addressed delegates at the conference said: "Escuela Nueva is one of the longest bottom-up innovations that has been sustained and has impacted national policy."

The programme promotes child centred, participatory and cooperative learning as well as a relevant curriculum based on learner’s daily lives, flexible systems of promotion and a new role for the teacher as a facilitator of learning. The programme has been adopted as a national policy by the Columbian government.

Reflecting on these successful examples and debates, delegates formulated a generic Multigrade Policy and rollout strategy at the conference. The policy provides guidelines for the implementation of multigrade teaching, training of teachers and other strategies which governments must put in place to ensure quality multigrade education.

It is envisioned that delegates will adapt the policy to suit their countries’ needs and lobby government for rollout.

FOR MORE INTERESTING NEWS READ...

Chemistry Department focuses on Nuclear Science  5
CPUT shows its World Cup spirit  10
Student dazzles in green designer competition  12
Recently, Dean of Students Cora Njoli Motale played host to the visiting fellows of the American Council on Education (ACE) during a breakfast and round table discussion.

The function was hosted at the Granger Bay Hotel School campus of CPUT on 16 February 2010 and served as an information-sharing platform for each represented institution and an opportunity to bid farewell to the visitors.

The fellows were warmly welcomed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Academic Prof Anthony Staak, who thanked each representative for their commitment to the programme and handed over to Njoli Motale to formally introduce her visiting ACE colleagues.

After breakfast, Merle McOmbring-Hodges (Director: International Affairs) showed the group an academic display of CPUT’s faculty publications, curriculum development and research programmes, and shared factual information with the fellows on the strides CPUT is making.

One of the highlights of the morning’s function was a series of presentations by the visiting fellows on the challenges in Higher Education from an international perspective, including that of highly acclaimed Food Science and Technology Professor Ken Lee (Ohio State University).

Dr Marcia Caton’s (Eastern Connecticut State University) presentation centered on the challenges of promoting education in disadvantaged communities, while Prof Joshua Powers (Indiana State University) explained his four-point model on strategy implementation to successfully overcome barriers in an academic environment.

Other speakers included Dr Shelley Mishoe (Medical College of Georgia), who reinforced her passionate beliefs to uplift the lives of young people through higher education and Prof James Meernik (University of North Texas) spoke about the financial hardships faced by many students in his environment, which inhibits their commitment to complete their studies.

Also in attendance was the new Central SRC President for 2009/10, Vuyo Zita, who later thanked the ACE fellows for their visible commitment to the overall development of academic institutions.

To close of the morning’s programme was George Mvalo (Manager: Institutional Transformation and Diversity Forum) who delivered a vote of thanks to the speakers and commended them on their investments to the academic world.

Since its establishment 45 years ago, the ACE Fellowship Programme offers its members an opportunity to advance their leadership and managerial skills through a forum that encourages cultural exchange and institutional policy debate.

The ACE programme provides higher education professionals with high-level leadership training as well as mentorship by a senior executive at an international University and places members within an influential network of higher education executives.

South Africa’s involvement with the Fellowship is supported by the Higher Education Leadership and Management (HELM) programme of Higher Education South Africa (HESA).

Njoli Motale was one of three South Africans selected to participate in the ACE Fellowship programme for 2009/2010, along with over 30 other academic professionals from across the globe.

Manie Regal, Executive Director: Finance and Services at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) and Gary Paul, Senior Director of Human Resources at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University were the other two 2009-2010 ACE Fellows from South Africa.

The South African tour for the Fellows also included field trips to UWC and Stellenbosch University (SUN).

After the CPUT visit, the visiting American group travelled to the Eastern Cape where they were hosted by the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) in Port Elizabeth, as well as the University of the Witwatersrand (WITS) in Johannesburg before they returned to their respective academic institutions in the United States of America.
A Danish delegation, made up of school principals and teachers, paid CPUT’s Cape Town campus a visit recently.

On 5 February 2010, Vice-Chancellor: Academic Prof Anthony Staak, Dean of the Education and Social Sciences Faculty Prof Maureen Robinson, International Affairs Director Merle Hodges and other CPUT senior staff members, welcomed the delegation at the Council Chambers.

The purpose of the visit was to establish similar programmes as the one currently running in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), through which Danish teachers come to South Africa for training, methodologies and support to teach through the medium of English.

The group of teachers from Denmark progressed to KZN from Cape Town, where the focus would be general education at high schools.

The delegation already has partnerships with KZN schools and is now looking at expanding to other provinces.

The delegation also wanted to find out how institutions of higher learning and high schools can close the gap that currently exists between them.

Because the teachers are involved in Basic Adult Education and Training in their country, they also wanted to find out what CPUT is doing with adults who are currently working and want to further their studies.

The University of Cape Town was the first to be visited in the province.

According to Prof Staak, this was more a courtesy visit than anything else. Prof Staak’s office was approached by one of the professors from UCT.

“In my talk with the professor from UCT, I gathered that they were interested more in the country’s education sector, so I decided to approach our Education Faculty to be also part of the meeting,” said Prof Staak.

Soren Ferslov Andersen, one of the principals from Denmark, said: “The area we are looking at is the transition from general education to higher education. We want to see how the gaps or problems are being solved between the two.

“This transition issue is a global problem because of the international market. Every country including South Africa will have to ensure that quite a lot of students will continue with higher education.”

Among views that were shared in the meeting was “the real need for extended programmes in South Africa as schools don’t take back learners who didn’t do well in matric”.

Addressing the Danish Delegation, Prof Staak said: “As a university of technology, our programmes focus on technological training. We have a strong career focus and that binds all our programmes.”

He also mentioned that in South Africa, generally there’s a crisis regarding learners who are not ready for higher education.

CPUT is also working closely with communities and the Western Cape provincial government.

“We have been involved in a lot of research work with the Department of Education and the findings determined that there was a need for the extended curriculum programmes especially in the science and engineering departments,” said Prof Staak.

Currently, CPUT has extended curriculum programmes in some of the programmes offered in response to the national crisis.

The institution also has a centre for community development and has partnerships with 1700 companies, and that enables the students to do in-service training.

“That is what generally distinguishes our programmes from the traditional universities,” said Prof Staak.

CPUT has recently received 2nd prize internationally for excellent projects in rural areas as a result of CPUT’s students’ involvement in communities with the help of partners from the Netherlands.
CPUT addresses SKILL SHORTAGES IN ENERGY SECTOR

In a bid to increase the limited pool of expertise in the national energy sector, The Electrical Engineering Department is establishing the Substation Automation and Energy Management Centre.

The centre, which will be based at the Bellville campus, will be headed by Prof Raynitchka Tzoneva, who is also the leader of the National Research Foundation (NRF) Niche Area “Real-Time Distributed Systems”.

Prof Tzoneva said the move to establish the centre comes after the International Electrical Commission (IEC) put in place the new IEC 61850 standards, which govern the building, implementation and operations of Substation Automation Systems.

These systems are highly complex computer systems, which are used by operators in the energy sector to control substations.

Prof Tzoneva said a substation can be defined as a node in an electrical power network where lines and cables are connected for transmission and distribution of electric power. A substation has the capability of transforming electricity, usually from high to low voltage for distribution by a low-voltage network. Most substations have one or more transformers and may have many other functions as well, such as switching, breaking and protection capabilities.

However, she said there are few South Africans who have expertise in Substation Automation Systems and the new IEC 61850 standards.

“South Africa has no knowledge of this new way of building Substation Automation Systems. We see the necessity to start working with this new standard and have thus put together the center,” said Prof Tzoneva.

The centre will act as an enabler for education, training, testing, research and development in the new technologies, which can help to upgrade and optimize power systems in South Africa as well as the implementation of the various standards which have been set by the IEC.

The centre has also approached Prof Alexander Apostolov, a world class specialist in Substation Automation and one of the creators of the new substation automation technology, to assist in its operations. Prof Apostolov will regularly visit the centre and also co-supervise postgraduate students.

The work of the centre is supported by Eskom, consulting and design organizations, City of Cape Town and vendors such as ABB, Siemens and SEL.

Prof Tzoneva said a group of more than 20 students, who are part of the “Real-Time Distributed Systems”, will be involved in the centre.

One of the projects they will look at is the revamp of 13 substations at the CPUT Bellville campus reticulation network. The existing network was established in 1986 and is currently still feeding the campus network. However, the network has reached its expected lifetime.

“This is going to be a unique project. Students will work with designers and vendors to implement a project that will benefit the CPUT community,” she said.

All the substations will also be linked to the centre, which will automatically monitor and control the network operations, and will give students access to real-time data for their research projects.

Prof Tzoneva said the students, who refer to themselves as the “Control Group” are doing excellent work in several other areas that they are researching.

Prof Tzoneva said from a Research and Development perspective, the centre could act as a forum for dialogue between universities, vendors, municipalities, and Eskom to work together to build knowledge transfer systems to enable broad-based development of critical expertise to meet industrial needs.
Chemistry Department focuses on NUCLEAR SCIENCE

The Chemistry Department is putting plans in place to roll out a postgraduate programme that will equip students with skills in Nuclear Science.

This area of science covers a broad range of activities, from designing and monitoring nuclear power plants to developing techniques to analyze samples that are of industrial, mining or geological interest. It also includes the isolation of radioisotopes produced by proton-induced nuclear reaction.

Although there are only a few institutions involved in this area of research in South Africa, there is a dire shortage of local Nuclear Scientists, said Prof Nico van der Walt.

As an acclaimed scientist who has done groundbreaking work in Nuclear Science, Prof van der Walt said the department is planning to roll out a Masters Programme in Nuclear Science in order to address the current skill shortages.

“We are hoping to introduce this programme by 2012,” he said.

In addition, the department is also planning to introduce Radiochemistry as a subject into the BTech Chemistry Programme.

Prof van der Walt, who will play a vital role in the roll out and teaching of the Masters Programme, said to ensure students are properly trained, the institution will have to look at developing a laboratory where they can work with radioactive material.

“If we get such a laboratory, then we would be the only higher education institution in the Western Cape with such a facility,” he said.

Meanwhile the department is continuing research activities in various areas of Nuclear Science, which includes Prof van der Walt’s niche area of ion exchange chromatography and radiochemistry.

The research looks at radiochemical separations of radioisotopes, and the labelling of organic compounds with a specific radioisotope to obtain a product which can be used as radiopharmaceuticals in nuclear medicine or for cancer therapy at oncology departments of hospitals. Radioisotopes are, thus, vital elements of Nuclear Science.

The research also includes the study of various column ion exchange methods which can be applied for quality control of the intermediate or final products.

“All the research in this area is beneficial for humans or for industry,” he said.

Ion exchange chromatography is also used for the removal of toxic elements in the mining industry, water purification and for the determination of specific elements in geological samples.
BUILDING WORK ON TRACK

Construction work at the Food Technology building is progressing at a rapid rate, with builders two weeks ahead of schedule.

The complex, which is scheduled to open its doors in November 2010, will house the Food Technology Department and Agrifood Technology Station.

This state of the art facility will feature several laboratories, a functional food research unit, a sensory analysis facility and pilot plant.

Dr Jessy van Wyk, Head of the Food Technology Department, said they are pleased about the progress of the building.

In mid February builders completed the revamp of a section of the old Food Technology building. This area was converted into the food chemistry laboratory and student ablution facilities.

“This laboratory is bigger and more modern than the last one. It is easier to manage, we can do more analysis and can also accommodate more students,” said Dr van Wyk.

Currently builders are putting up the steel structure of the 1 500sqm pilot plant, which is one of the key features of this multi-million rand building.

“The roof structure of the Pilot Plant is nearing completion. Once that happens then they are going to lay the floor,” she said.

Builders are scheduled to start work on the front area of the building in May.

The ground floor of this area will house a physical food properties laboratory, a microbiology laboratory, sensory analysis facility and lecture rooms.

The first floor will house the offices of the Food Technology Department and Agrifood Technology Station as well as conference rooms.

Dr Van Wyk said they are currently meeting with industry in order to raise additional funds for various interior fittings.

Although R40.6m has been made available by CPUT management to cover building cost, an estimated R25.4 million is still needed to fit out the sensory analysis facility and install various hi-tech fittings throughout the building.

Dr Van Wyk said so far they have been able to obtain equipment donations worth over R1m for the new facility.

MTECH STUDENT makes CPUT proud abroad

A second-year MTech: Food Technology student has made CPUT proud after she went to Germany for experimental training recently.

Twenty-two year old Lusani Vhangani, was sent to the Institut fur Getreideverarbeitung GmbH (IGV) in Germany from 8 to 24 January 2010.

Vhangani’s German trip was as a result of a partnership between AgriFoods and IGV.

Vhangani is currently busy with her studies on Anti-Oxidant Effects of Maillard Reaction Products in a Lipid Rich Food Product.

Her studies will help extract or heat up sugars and amino acids. It will also evaluate the anti-oxidative effects on sunflower oil and as an alternative to synthetic anti-oxidants.

With the Food Technology Department being in a process to invest on a Rancimat equipment, that is used for oxidative stability of food products, Vhangani was sent to Germany to familiarise herself with the equipment. The training enabled her to be able to train other students who would undertake similar studies in the future.

“My experience in Germany was excellent as I was not only focusing on the Rancimat equipment, but also on others that we might need to use in future. They are well-equipped that side, so I learnt a lot and the training contributed so much in my studies,” said Vhangani.

In Germany, Vhangani’s study was around the Anti-oxidant Effect of Roasted Parboiled Rice in Lipid Rich Products. Part of the project required Vhangani to use the Rancimat equipment before the final product was completed.

CPUT’s AgriFood Technology Station together with the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) funded the trip. Larry Dolley from the Agrifood Technology station with Dr Jessy Van Wyk, Head of the department at the Food Technology Department organised the funding.

Vhangani who studied at CPUT from the diploma level, intends to further her studies and register for PhD next year.

“Even though it would be nice to get a job, but it has to be in an environment that will allow me to be able to further my studies or at least in an environment where I will learn everyday. Working for an academic institution would be an ideal job for me,” said Vhangani.
Student Services Council LAUNCHED

“We will look at the areas of success and those of concern for students ranging from those who live on campus to part-time and mature students”

Recently Dean of Students Cora Njoli Motale chaired the first Student Services Council in the history of CPUT.

The meeting took place on 23 February 2010 in the Blue Room of the Administration Building on the Bellville campus.

In adherence to legislation, the first Council meeting was compliant with the Higher Education Act (1997) that advocates the establishment of a ‘single co-ordinated higher education system, which promotes co-operative governance; aims to redress past discrimination; responds to the needs of the institution’s community; ensures representivity and equal access.’

The decision to create this Council was approved by both CPUT’s Executive Management together with the Council and is fully supported by all the academic deans, unit directors and the central and local student representative councils (SRCs).

This newly formed Council is essentially a forum that brings together both the institution’s representatives and student governance leaders to one decision-making committee.

Student and staff units, including academic and administrative departments, would be represented on the Council, with meetings taking place once every term and outcomes being reported at various institutional levels.

The Council divided institutional representatives into smaller focus groups that meet on a regular basis to discuss key topics, such as creating a strategy on dealing positively with student protests.

SRC representatives were also encouraged to meet with their membership to discuss the issues arising.

One of the primary aims of the Council is to create clearer channels of communication between staff and students, through open discussions and debate on the issues affecting them.

The Council will also be collaborating with different institutions of higher learning, particularly those in the Western Cape, to look at best practice and starting new projects.

Njoli Motale advocated the need for the institution to understand its main stakeholder: the students and she said, “As the institution, we want to engage better with the student body in its entirety and this platform is a start”.

“We will look at the areas of success and those of concern for students ranging from those who live on campus to part-time and mature students”, added Njoli Motale.

She shared that her directorate is in the process of completing a survey done through the office of Samuel Henkeman, Transformation Manager that measured students’ needs including on-site medical services, financial assistance, safety and security and transport.

Njoli Motale stated that the function of the Council included looking at strengthening the institution’s research profile and working on streamlining the directorate’s project finances.

Also on the agenda for the Council is the establishment of a Sports Council that will look at harmonising the different sporting codes across the various campuses.

Some of the outcomes of this first meeting included reaching consensus on the need for policies, such as the HIV/Aids policy and Compassionate Grant policy to be published and circulated amongst the student body.

The next meeting is due to take place in April, with preparation for the Institutional Quality Audit being a key priority.
Construction work on the Administration Building at the Bellville campus is underway.

At a cost of R36.5 million, the Administration Building will be extended in order to accommodate a Senate Hall, Council Chamber and several other offices that are vital for operations at a higher education institution.

Stanley Dennis, Director of Infrastructural, Development and Estates at CPUT said the existing building will be extended on either side.

The ground level on either side of the building will feature undercover parking, while the first level will boast several halls, conference rooms and offices.

Of the new facilities currently under development, the Senate Hall and Council Chamber are the most prominent.

The 200sqm Senate Hall will seat 130 people, while a 150sqm Council Chamber will accommodate 50 people.

Dennis said these two areas will be fitted with state of the art recording rooms and equipment, ranging from electronic voting stations to desktop microphones.

The rooms will be acoustically treated and fitted with modern furnishings.

The new extension will also feature several conference and breakaway rooms.

Archive space will also be provided for various departments in the new extension.

"Additional offices will be built but at this moment it has not been allocated to any specific department," said Dennis.

Interior changes will be made to certain offices that are currently located on the first floor in order to accommodate walkways leading to the new extension.

Dennis said the extension is a “huge project”, and will measure 2 700sqm on completion.

Builders have already started demolition work on the parking areas adjacent to the Administration building.

He said strategies have been put in place to ensure that operations in the Administration Building are not unnecessarily disrupted.

"We had acoustic engineers give us advice on how to deal with the noise and vibration on the site," he said.

Dennis said the project is earmarked for completion in December 2010.

The donation, which benefitted 550 learners attending rural schools in the Western Cape, marked the launch of the Schrijven (Write) Project.

The project, a collaboration between The Centre for Multigrade Education and St. Canisius, a high school in the Netherlands, will address the stationery needs at multigrade schools in the Western Cape.

Currently close to three million learners in rural South Africa are in multigrade classrooms, where teachers work with more than one grade at the same time in the same class. These schools are a worldwide phenomenon in impoverished rural areas.

Researcher at the unit, Adrienne van As said the collaboration came about through their interaction with Rob Wegdam, a language teacher at St. Canisius, whom they met in the Netherlands during work related trips.

With students from St. Canisius embarking on yearly school excursions to South Africa, they decided to link up with the Wellington based centre and start a community project that would benefit South African learners.

During the past few months, the Dutch learners hosted various events in their community and raised R40 000 to kick off the project.

The funds were used to purchase stationery, which the Dutch learners handed out at the multigrade schools during their trip to South Africa in February/March.

Three rural schools in the Wellington area were identified to benefit from the first donation. This included, Bergrivier Primary and Blouwlei Primary, two small multigrade schools bordering wine farms. The third was Wagensmakersvallei Primary, a big rural school situated just outside Wellington.

Van As said the learners from both countries enjoyed the meetings, which was marked with singing, handing out of toys, sweets and the much needed stationery.

Rodger Adams, a researcher at the centre who will coordinate the project said: “It was wonderful to see the happy smiles of the learners. We hope to visit other rural schools in the near future so that we can see much more happy faces.”
CPUT’s Emergency Medical Sciences Department recently held a successful five-day Aviation Rescue Course for its second-year students.

Other key role players included the South African Red Cross Air Mercy Services (AMS), National Sea Rescue Institute (NSRI), South African Police Services Air Wing, the 22nd Squadron at the Ysterplaat Air Force Base and CPUT’s Survival Centre.

The course was held at various locations that are relevant to the Emergency Medical Sciences industry.

To kick-start the programme, on Monday 1 March 2010, a pilot from AMS addressed students about understanding the limitations of an aircraft and what information is required in managing them. Basic understanding of rotor and fixed wing aircraft anatomy and flight dynamics; priorities of emergency procedures; and principles for managing procedures and Fixed Wing Rescue capabilities were among the studies that were covered.

On the second day the students went to the AMS office at the Cape Town International Airport (CTIA) and later moved to the Survival Centre at the Granger Bay campus.

Part of the syllabus covered included information about equipment requirements, emergency aviation safety and the use for hoist operations when conducting a rescue.

Part of modules that were covered on the second day included hoist crew composition, details of crew selection and information required to activate an Aviation Rescue Operation.

For the third and fourth day, the students moved both to the SAPS Air Wing, also situated at CTIA and the 22nd Squadron at the Airforce Base, where they continued learning about the Helicopter Underwater Escape, Ground to Air Signaling, among other things.

According to Robin Heneke, a second-year lecturer and a programme coordinator, the students had thorough grounding in the aviation rescue environment and overall the course was a great success.

The week-long course ended on Friday 5 March, with a practical exercise at the NSRI base in Melkbosstrand.

Each student was required to demonstrate practically what they have learnt about the aviation rescue environment. For the practical, the students were expected to show theoretical understanding of the mission requirements and crew interactions for sling operations. Besides showing an understanding to the multiple factors, which come into effect during a rescue mission, the students were also required to have practical exposure to the hoist operations.

Heneke said: “Students had exposure working with various aviation rescue organisations that are currently offering services in the aviation environment.

“The whole course was very informative, but the last day was great. The feedback we got from the students was amazing, they really did not just learn to cover the course outcomes, but they enjoyed themselves too.”
On the eve of the 100 days countdown to the kick off of the 2010 FIFA World Cup TM, the campus community at the CPUT was treated to a day of football frenzy and market day stalls and entertainment by local artists. The Cape Town campus piazza was a hive of activity on 1 March 2010 where students and staff gathered in support of 100 days countdown before the start of the World Cup later this year.

The outdoor event was organised by the Department of Student Affairs, headed by Sibusiso Chalufu, with Annette Grobler (Student Development Officer) as project manager. Grobler was assisted by Derek Stocken (Student Development Officer) and Cathy Cloete (Marketing and Communication) amongst others.

One of the main attractions for the day was the highly acclaimed Capetonian Afro-fusion band Freshly Ground, who is the most high profile act to be hosted by CPUT.

Exhibitors included ABSA Student Banking and jewellery, computer goods, clothing and a variety of foods were also on sale.

MTN, an official sponsor for the World Cup and major brand Red Bull supported the event by handing out promotional hats and energy drinks to the crowd.

Another popular attraction was the Ajax Cape Town football team members who dropped in to sign autographs for their fans.

Master of Ceremonies (MC) for the event was Carol Manana, SABC Sport’s award-winning radio and television presenter, who captivated the audience with her natural charm. Manana was chosen for her experience in presenting other football related events, including the World Cup Final Draw for the World Cup event with actress Charlise Theron that took place last December.

She said, “Events of this nature are important as a part of nation-building, as South Africans of all ages can be a part of this once-in-a-lifetime occasion. These events also helps to build momentum to the kick-off, because this is a dream come true for our country to host such a magnificent event”, Manana added.

On the day, her task was to introduce the day’s entertainment, which included several musical and dance acts. Before the entertainment began, Chalufu addressed the audience and reiterated the importance of garnering support for the World Cup from all citizens.

He said, “Students should look out for other exciting events that our unit will present in the coming months, as we want to engage with students on all levels”.

Then the CPUT student Diski Dancers, led by Cape Town Tourism ambassador Amanda Martins, gave an enthusiastic demonstration. They were followed by the World Champion hip-hop dance group, Ubuntu B-Boys that wowed the crowd.

The MTN dancers, who hail from the local township of Nyanga, also gave a stellar performance with their pantsula dance moves.

Finally, Freshly Ground took to the stage and performed a lively set of their most popular songs with a debut of a new track from their forthcoming album.

As a grand finale, 100 green and yellow balloons were symbolically released to represent the days remaining to the start of the World Cup.

The event was closed with the crowd singing the South African national anthem in chorus.
JOURNALISM STUDENTS educate community

This project has gone a long way in the development of our community, said Ashley Searle, Director of the Office of the Consumer Protector.

Searle, who was speaking at the Service-Learning Journalism Reflection event, hosted by the Service Learning Unit, commended journalism students who recently participated in a community project that saw them create awareness around Advice Offices.

These offices, which are the community arm of the Office of the Consumer Protector, a unit within the Department of Economic Development and Tourism, are mandated by law to provide consumer related advice to the public.

In a bid to increase awareness around the services offered at the offices, the students compiled newsletters which were distributed in the various communities.

The project was a collaboration between the Service-Learning Unit, the Journalism Department and the Office of the Consumer Protector.

Searle, who was the keynote speaker at the event that was held on 19 February on the Bellville campus, said the newsletters stimulated and enhanced the role that Advice Offices play in communities.

He said while the project benefitted the community, it also added to the development of the students.

“Students had the opportunity to take theory and implement it in the community. This is one of the main reasons why our office saw this project as being relevant,” he said.

“Let us not make this a once off project. There is an opportunity to take this to another level,” said Searle.

Journalism Lecturer and Service Learning Convenor for the project, Clement du Plessis said students got a “taste of what journalism is all about.”

“They were exposed to the community and gained a lot from this experience,” he said.

In total six different newsletters were compiled and distributed in various communities.

Journalism student and group leader, Kobus Pretorius, said it was a “good learning experience.”

Students had to go out into the communities, interview individuals, take photographs and decide on how the information should be packaged.

Pretorius said the project helped students to develop skills which are vital for when they enter the world of work.

Associate Dean of Informatics and Design, Colin Daniels said projects such as these add another dimension to students’ education.

Daniels said it is important that teaching and learning goes beyond the classroom.

Jacqui Scheepers, Manager of the Service-Learning Unit said it is important to use the youth in programmes that can impact on local communities.

Scheepers said they will look at rolling out the programme with another group of journalism students in the second term.
STUDENT DAZZLES in green designer competition

B Tech Surface Design student at CPUT, Nolwazi Nandi, made history at the second annual House and Leisure Green Designers at Woolworths Competition when she was awarded the prize of first runner up for her throw design.

House and Leisure magazine and Woolworths joined forces to sponsor this competition, which highlights ecofriendly design techniques across a variety of products.

For a seven-month period, House and Leisure featured the creations of students from various tertiary design institutions and the final products were displayed at their stand at the Design Indaba Expo that was held at the Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC) from 26 – 28 February 2010.

On Thursday 25 February 2010, the winners announced from a group of 10 finalists and Nandi’s was the only design selected from the throw category.

Students from seven different design schools were given the task of taking green prototypes from conceptualization to creation and also to source appropriate manufacturers to help them create their products.

Nandi, who hails from the Eastern Cape town of Cofimvaba heard about the competition last year from her lecturer, Elna Lubbe, who used the competition as a 3rd year class assignment.

The CPUT students were mentored by Melissa Kerkhoff, owner of Lula Fabrics.

Seeing this rare opportunity, Nandi said she decided to apply her mind and focus on her love of textiles in this project, which took several months to complete.

When asked what inspired her original handmade design, she said: “I took my cultural roots into consideration and researched the design techniques of the Xhosa people”.

Using the smocking sewing technique, she interpreted geometric diamond shape, typically found in Xhosan clothing and jewellery to create her throw made from an undyed cotton blend fabric.

The colours of the threads used in the throw also have a symbolic meaning of growth (green), wealth (red) and maturity (yellow) in the Xhosa tradition.

Nandi shared that she is passionate about recycling and using natural products.

“I am very conscious of the effect that manufacturing has on the environment, so I want to focus on and creating functional designs that are reusable”, said Nandi.

Along with the other top three winners, Nandi walked away with an Apple MacBook computer, a R1000 Woolworths gift voucher and will have her throw manufactured and sold at selected Woolworths stores throughout the country.

Currently, Nandi is participating in a three-month internship programme at Woolworths Homeware Department, where she is mentored on several design projects by Paul Duncan (head of homeware) and Lynne Harris.

She completes the programme in April and is also working on manufacturing her product through a community-based organisation, Learn to Earn in Khayelitsha, which teaches skills that unemployed people can use to create a small business.

Her B Tech thesis research topic will focus on designing homeware products inspired by Cubism from recycled wood.
CPUT and Dutch university strengthen ties

Five BTech Mechanical Engineering students, together with their supervisor, will soon embark on a trip to The Hague University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands.

Five students; Alex Pieter Le Roux, Corne Serfontein, Dylann Niemack, Kyle Cottle, Kyle De Freitas and their supervisor Fareed Ismail are due to leave on 14 March 2010.

They are scheduled to spend two weeks there before the students from the partner university come to CPUT in June.

Students from the two universities will collaborate and work on one project that will be completed during a two-week visit of the international students to CPUT.

Following the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that was signed between CPUT and The Hague University of Applied Sciences in 2008, the university invited six people from CPUT for a working visit.

Ismail, who is also a lecturer at the Mechanical Engineering Department, said: “This is all about collaborating with the international universities. This will definitely help put our qualifications on the map and that will help us become an internationally-recognised institution.”

Upon arrival in the Netherlands, the two universities will have a discussion on which study they will partake in.

The Mechanical Engineering Department already submitted two possible ideas.

Designing a solar-powered vehicle and also building an Alternative Energy Resource Science Centre at CPUT is one of the studies that CPUT will back during the discussions before embarking on the actual project. If the proposal solar-powered vehicle gets approved, the group will come up with ideas on how to make cars that are less harmful to the environment.

According to Ismail, the Alternative Energy Resource Science Centre will have alternate energy resources.

Niemack, who will be travelling overseas for the first time, said: “This is a good opportunity for us as students and it will help us push innovation for our institution.

“Engineering is all about pushing beyond boundaries, so it is very exciting to be part of the team that will push beyond limits.”

Currently, the Mechanical Engineering Department is working together with the Electrical Engineering Department on future projects.

“We believe that we need each other. Mechanical Engineering students can design something and once it’s done, they will need electricians to complete the job.

“It is important for our students to learn how Electrical Engineering works,” said Ismail.

CPUT launched the project with the Netherlands University last year and the department hopes to have similar initiatives running annually.

Cottle, who will also be leaving the country for the first time, said: “I can’t wait for the overseas trip. In South Africa, we are still back in the old days. How they do things and their work ethic is different that side. This trip will surely broaden our spectrum.”

The department which has won several awards also initiated community service project, where each year they invite grade nine students and shadow them for a day on how the department works.

Last year, CPUT took first and fifth place overall, as well as second place in the Static Judging and second place in the Performance section during the United States Baja Competition.
CPUT’s Bellville campus no longer has wild cats wandering around, experiencing animal cruelty from non-pet lovers, thanks to two Biomedical Technology students.

Hayle Poole and Tarin Hansen, both third year students, have made it their responsibility to take care of wild cats they discovered when they moved to the Bellville campus in 2008.

The two students discovered that there were many cats at the campus that were misunderstood by the campus community, “instead of getting the love they were looking for, they were mistreated”.

According to Poole, one day she saw a cat that was ravaging through black bags and she knew that she needed to do something.

“Both of us love cats so we couldn’t stand seeing them starving and having no one to turn to,” said Poole.

In total, the students found about 30 cats on the campus. However most of them died as their health had already deteriorated when they were discovered. They bring the surviving cats food, which they buy out of their own pockets, twice a week. The team visits various spots on the campus, where the cats have managed to make it their permanent homes.

Hansen said: “It is difficult having to raise money for the food, but that doesn’t really bother us because we are doing it out of the goodness of our hearts and cats are very precious to us.”

The students have managed to tame most of the cats and they also take care of medical expenses. Even though the students stay as far as Fish Hoek; for the past two years they have been coming during vacations once a week to feed the cats.

Hayley said: “Growing up with enormous number of cats at home made me understand and draw closer to these animals. Cats have feelings too.”

The students have managed to raise funds, even though they are not enough, through donation letters they put on notice boards in businesses around Fish Hoek.

Anyone who would like to assist the students or offer a donation towards feeding the cats should contact them on 0839681510 or 0845934613.
Housing Department hosts 1ST YEAR WELCOMING DINNER

“You should count yourselves privileged to have made it this far, as you now taste the vitality of the intellectual and professional life in this campus.”

These were the sentiments of Mxolisi Gcwabe, one of the Residence Coordinators and also a guest speaker at the first year’s welcoming dinner recently.

The Housing Department held the dinner at the Major Sports Hall for all first year students residing on the Bellville campus residences on 11 February 2010.

Residence Business Manager Johnny Basson opened the ceremony with a prayer while the Head of the Housing Department Malinge Gqeba was the programme director.

In his welcoming remarks, Basson said: “You need to remain focused to your purpose. You need to build on strong foundations, be it at school, church or at home. We want to create a home away from home and we hope that CPUT residences can create good memories.”

The Local Student Representative Council was also introduced to the first year students.

Residence and Transport officer Sibulele Thunywase introduced all portfolios and persons responsible.

Thunywase introduced: “You need to enjoy life academically and socially, but most importantly you need to excel academically.”

Gcwabe congratulated the first years and wished them well during their tenure at CPUT.

“Whatever you do, you must know that you are building up a legacy. It is that legacy that you’ll leave behind. Work vigorously towards your student life, failure at CPUT is not an option. Life is not a bed of roses, even roses have thorns. You will only succeed if you are responsible and abide by the rules,” Gcwabe said.

The Fundani Centre was also represented as one of the support units to the students.

Dr Guy Roger Mihindou from the centre said: “Fundani Centre will assist you in your assignments and help you write them academically. Our tutors will help you score better because we want you to do better in your studies. A 75% pass needs to be the minimum that you get in your exams.

“Our mentors are not only about academia, but will also help you socially and give you tips on every aspect of your lives.”

Lauren McConnell, who surprised the whole Housing Department after she was elected the chairperson of House Committee last year, was among the speakers.

According to Gqeba, McConnell came out strongly last year during the selection of the House Committee representatives.

“We have never had a first year student holding such a position before, but McConnell has done that and we are proud of her,” said Gqeba.

McConnell was born and bred in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal.

“Coming here was quite a change for me as my home is far and being a chairperson was another challenge. I had to organise functions and at the same time I had to attend to my schoolwork, but I did well in the end. The key thing for me is time management,” said McConnell.

To the students, she said: “You must always believe in yourselves, don’t let anyone tell you what you are worth.”

Last year, McConnell received a Community Builder of the Year Award for her contribution in various communities of the Western Cape.
Student dazzles on dance floor

When not sitting at the drawing board and working on design concepts, Christelle Dreyer is practicing her ballroom moves.

Dreyer, a Btech Graphic Design student is one of the top ballroom dancers in the Western Cape. She boasts a number of awards, which she clinched at local, national and international level. Dreyer, who competes in the wheelchair category at ballroom competitions, has been participating in the sport since her high school days.

Passionate about the sport, Dreyer said: “Ballroom dancing takes up a lot of your time. If you want to compete on a high level, then you have to be dedicated.”

Currently Dreyer and her dance partner, Chemical Engineering Student, Vincenzio Coe, are training for a number of local and national competitions that will take place this year.

Dreyer said they practice at least once a week and closer to competitions have more sessions with their dance instructor.

Competitors in wheelchairs rely heavily on their upper body movements when dancing. They also rely on their arms in order to navigate their wheelchairs around the dance floor.

Dreyer and Coe, who won the world championship title in their category in 2007 during a competition in Holland, are hoping to clinch top spots in all their competitions this year.

“Hopefully we will get first place in the local competitions,” she said.

Dreyer said when she first competed, she was very nervous. However, after several years of competing she now takes to the dance floor with confidence.

“Once you are on the floor, you forget about everything around you,” she said.

The CPUT Mini-World Cup Tournament in full swing, with several teams already knocked out of the competition.

The tournament, which is taking place during lunch breaks at the Cape Town campus, is part of the University’s multi-campus Football Frenzy Campaign.

The campaign aims to engage all students in various soccer related activities as the Fifa 2010 World Cup draws closer. A major part of the campaign is the weekly Football Friday Frenzy, in which staff and students are encouraged to come to campus dressed in soccer supporters’ gear.

This CPUT initiative also forms part of the Western Cape’s campaign to engage all citizens in the province around the 2010 World Cup. Activities are aimed at promoting a sense of national pride and broaden knowledge and awareness of the event.

Quinton Summers, a Sports Development Officer at CPUT who is coordinating the tournament said: “We have had a good response from students.”

Summers said they formed 16 soccer teams, each who are representing a different country.

The matches are played during lunch breaks in the Multi-purpose Hall at the Cape Town campus. The tournament is being played on a knock-out basis.

Summers said several matches have already been played and that eight teams have been knocked out of the tournament.

With exams and the end of the term approaching, Summers said they will continue the tournament in April.

“The tournament will resume on 21 April with the finals scheduled to be played on 28 April,” he said.

Summers said the final match will be preceded with a friendly game between staff members.