

# NEWS

November / December 2015



## Graduation Season

This year we are delighted to congratulate our 2015 December graduates. After years of hard work, the fruits of your labour are evident.

The second summer graduation took place on the 10 of December at South campus at the South Campus' Indoor Sports Centre.

273 undergraduates were capped this year, alongside a large cohort of Honors, Masters and Doctoral candidates. We are proud of our students and are especially proud of our colleagues, Ginique Brown for completing her Honours degree, Kholisa Papu for completing her Master's degree (Cum Laude), Dr Deon Swartz for completing his Phd and Dr Marelize Marx for completing her Phd. Well done educators...





## Edgars initiative



Recently the faculty was approached by Edcon to be a recipient of one of their CSI initiatives representing their brand *Express NY*. They were wanting to donate a number of garments to female students who are either graduating in 2015 or soon to be graduating, thereby assisting in their entrance and transition into the 'working world'.

A total of 18 female students (randomly selected from our final year student group) participated in a store level photo shoot and promotional initiative at Express NY Baywest Mall. Each participant was given a makeover as well as seven new garments to take home with them for their professional wardrobe as they begin their teaching careers.

A wonderful and much appreciated initiative from Express NY; it is so rewarding and refreshing to have our future teachers recognised for the professional and pivotal role they play in children's lives. Our students were excited to be chosen and valued the experience, "This was such a blessing" remarked one of our students on leaving the mall.

Express NY donated the remainder of garments for us to distribute to 4th year students in 2016 who will be undertaking their school based learning.



*Pictured with our graduates is Brand Manager, Hilary Calvert-Evers (centre), and Store Manager, Sam Solomon (far left).*



## Halala Faculty of Education Halala

### The undefeated Razell

Halala to **Razell Mohamed**, a 3rd year BEd student, who has recently won two gold medals at the Destiny Championships 2015. She has won a Gold - Full Contact 19+ (over 19 years old) Women 64 - 74 Kg and a Gold - Light/Continuous Fighting Women 60 - 70 Kg Brown - Black belt. The tournament focuses on various types of martial arts.

Destiny is the annual NMA/ISKA National Championships and is attended by teams from all over the world with an average attendance of about 1100 competitors and several thousands of spectators over the two days of competition.

Reflecting on the Championship, Razelle said "it felt good to be back in the sport as I had taken a break from it for a few years". She continued to say, I felt nervous for the first time going into the competition because I was not sure if I still had what it took to win. Thankfully I did and I am still undefeated in my division. I now know that I can achieve anything I set out for myself to achieve and I hope to grow and inspire others within the sport to simply never give up!!"

Well Done and Halala Razell!

### Congratulations

Our congratulations to colleague Prof Sylvan Blignaut on his recent NRF rating of C3



## THE SA PhD REGIONAL CONFERENCE – EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE

On 12-13 November 2015 Veronica Msutwana attended the SA PhD Regional conference, sponsored by the Department of Science and Technology (DST) and the National Research Foundation (NRF)/Research and Innovation Support and Advancement (RISA). It was well-organized with both accommodation and conferencing at the East London International Conference Centre (ICC). Not only that, 'pioneers' in their fields of study and work made their enriching presentations.

Former NMMU lecturer, Dr Nomakhwezi Mzilikazi, who is now the director of the South African PhD Project with the NRF effortlessly facilitated proceedings on both days. Department of Architecture alumnus, Dr Bridgette Gasas gave the keynote address, speaking mostly of her role as a National Planning Commissioner.

We, the delegates from all the higher institutions of the Eastern Cape (of which NMMU was highest in number), were presented with the South African picture of the trends in PhD production by Dr Charles Sheppard. Each one could establish where his or her university stands nationally. Dr Thobela Nkukwana and Dr Mamadi Mathlako shared their PhD journeys in a matter of fact manner; without 'glamourizing'. Dr Michele Cluver of UWC took us through the process of publishing your work – finding yourself a mentor, determining which journals to use, building a network through travel and conferences, and finding your niche. She noted that your supervisor will facilitate a good PhD, but it is up to you to make it a great PhD i.e. be the CEO of your project. Think... and read... and think and write a paper!

Prof Nox Makunga from Stellenbosch University was the most fascinating for me, a ground-breaker in Botany. Her presentation broke down what is to be expected during a PhD examination. She said that we are writing the PhD examination throughout the course of our study, and we have determined what the question is by choosing our topics. It is a process but it needs to be relevant and novel, so we need to think of the timeline. Thus, we need not think of it as a snapshot at the end of our write-up. Dr Nomakhwezi Mzilikazi made us aware of post-doctoral opportunities also citing Alexander von Humboldt Foundation in Germany and her experience as a recipient of this. Dr Desmond Ncango also spoke about NRF funding opportunities for both full-time and part-time doctoral studies.

It was an awesome and motivating experience in the journey of pursuing a PhD!  
*Written by Veronica Msutwana*



## Precious Mahlangu

Precious Mahlangu is a final year Education student at NMMU George Campus.

Precious attended workshops hosted by Brain Walter in 2014, and – like the other George Campus students – worked this year by email correspondence. Her poems were featured in NMMU’s first poetry books *Expressions Within vol 1* and *Expressions Within vol 2*.

Under the name Precious Wordpotter Mahlangu she is a writing and reciting poet who recently published her first book, *African Child Cries*, edited by her mentor, Mr Walter. The book contains Wordpotter’s poems, some of which were featured in last year’s course publication *Beneath the Bridge of Metaphors*, and this year’s text.

*“African Child Cries reveals the historical burdens borne by young South Africans.*

*This book brings audibility to the sobs and cries of people who are silenced by fear and inhumanity.*

*African Child Cries was written with the hope of urging young people to invest in the account of Ubuntu and carry out the spirit of love left by their ancestors.*

*It is a token of appreciation to the people who dedicated their lives to the struggle against black oppression, women oppression and child abuse.*

*This book tells a story about the past and the present in an attempt to teach future generations about their land and its scars – not that they may hold grudges but that they may be healed and learn to love and pray for one another.”*

*“My definition of poetry*

*depends on my situation but first poetry is my understanding of freedom, I speak free of judgement, free of societal expectation and free of cultural and traditional norms. I am a well-known introvert, but poetry exposes the extrovert in me.*

*“I write and recite with the hope of changing, inspiring, bringing light in darkness and uplifting lost hopes and dreams... my poems are different, inspired by different things and different people yet they all have one thing in common, a mission.”*

*I am currently negotiating with online book stores to sell my book, the process is taking way too long. However, I’ve made means to directly sell and mail the copies. For more information, I may be contacted 084 481 5098 / 071 457 5347 pmahlangu91@gmail.com. R120 a copy*

### For death has come

Tell the clock to stop moving,  
the sun to bid its farewell.  
Give over to the night’s darkness.  
I need something to match my dress.

Let the trees stop dancing;  
change the sound of the winds.  
Tell east to swop places with south  
and north to rush west,  
allow winter to come in summer,  
and autumn in spring.

Silence the noises of loneliness.  
Let there be no emotions.  
Bring closure between the past and the present.

Distance memories from moments.  
Disable the heart from loving,  
and the mind from remembering.

Drop the flowers and raise thorns.  
Make parties mournful and funerals joyous.  
Prevent the eyes from dropping more tears.  
Limit the pain that a human heart bears.  
Let nightmares be sweeter than sweet dreams.  
Turn the playground motionless.  
Mute the church bell.  
Slow down the hustler’s rush hour.  
Close all the doors and all the windows,  
make air unbreathable.

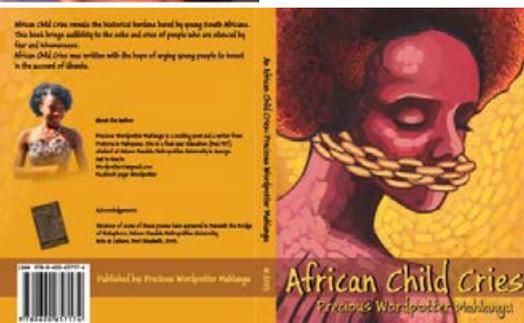
Turn paper back into trees,  
dry the ink in every pen.  
Detach the strings that bind the rich and the poor.  
Equalize the darker and the lighter.  
Put a number to the stars and colour to the shadow.  
Undress sadness of its sorrow.  
Collect secret dreams from the pillow.  
Tell the diary to reveal the hidden.  
Kiss nature like an enemy.  
Hug the mountains and make promises to river flows.

If death be natural let all else be.

### Dark man rules

I live in a house made of tin.  
My supper is served from a bin.  
Yet, with only one hand I can count my sins.

*continues...*





*continues...*

Another man's definition of crime  
is my job specification.  
The sight of a woman's purse  
affects me like her cleavage.

I remember tales told by my old man,  
so I swallow temptation and let a black man pass.  
What can he be making? A penny or two?  
But at the sight of a white man  
I unleash the demon in me,  
die to the inner voice screaming mercy.

I have dreamt of this day  
night after night as I lay on my bricks-balanced bed,  
counting the holes piercing my privacy.  
I sharpen my only tangible inheritance,  
my old man's okapi.  
The mission is accomplished in my head.

History says my lacks are from a white man.  
School fooled me into thinking I am equal  
to a man who knows no lack.  
Television drew me a picture  
of how I could retrieve what's mine.  
Education tried convincing me otherwise.

The method of drawing the knife;  
a perfected skill.  
The redness on his face strikes me for fear.  
They have it too.  
His words disappear around the corners of his mouth.  
At wind-blown speed my hand dips into his left pocket.  
I feel the thickness of his sweat,  
the rhythm of a shaking man,  
and withdraw my wage.

He pleads for his life,  
deconstructing the conversations  
I am having with my black ghost.  
He offers all he has.  
I hear two little names; Stacy and Tray.  
Maybe I should care.  
Anger overpowers my mission  
as I see the sadness of my old man,  
telling me the tales of a white man.

I raise the hand with the okapi,  
have it rest on the man's soft flesh.  
This one has red blood.  
He screams, it is pain.

And then I wait  
for his blood to turn white,  
for the pain painted on his face to subside.

I wait  
for the knock of satisfaction in my heart.  
Nothing.  
A sense of freeing freedom?  
Nothing!  
The sight of a white man in pain gives me no joy.

So I turn the knife around,  
whisper my apologies;  
combine the steel in my hand with my own flesh,  
use my last strength to look at my hands,  
my blood  
as red as that of the white man besides me.

I missed the lesson where humanity  
ruled all men equal:  
not their colours and inheritance.  
The life in their blood.

### **Died inside her body**

*For Saartjie Baartman*

A beautiful African woman,  
well formed, found her nakedness imprisoned,  
was watched like animal  
and then labelled abnormal.

She became money-making material,  
a test of human-animal sciences  
reduced to a tool  
of workmanship, enticed  
from one country to the other.

She shut her eyes to be in darkness.  
Their voices gave sight to her heart,  
told her body to die, as their hands  
explored her caves and the edges  
of her womanhood, privacy, her majesty.

They carried her body shape in shame,  
neglected her strength in every penny they paid:  
well-formed and created by God,  
yet owned and sold to and by men.  
The look in their eyes as painful  
as the labour pains she never had.

And then she died  
of a disease called blackness  
and an overdose of womanhood,  
with bits placed in the soil of her fathers:  
her pain and shame told  
from one generation to the next,  
living in tongues and literatures

that pray that the soul  
of an African Queen rest be laid to rest.



## Neville Alexander Conference

**N**adeema Musthan attended the 2nd annual Neville Alexander Commemorative Conference at the University of Free State, entitled “Student Rising”. As the topic is extremely relevant to Education, we asked her to share her reflections on the experience...

It was fitting that this forum belongs to the students, and the workers, and those who stand, work and fight in solidarity with them and their struggles. As Neville did. For those who are hearing about Neville for the first time, particularly staff and students situated within institutions of higher learning, it is an indictment of the paucity of our curricula and scholarship, and underscores the urgent need to examine and transform it.

Neville’s ‘radical praxis’ that meant his writing informed his action on the ground and visa versa, is an example for all of us genuinely committed to transformative change towards a more socially just society. What I witnessed this past day & a half has filled me with hope that this tradition of a radical praxis continues.

The day before the conference students from 20 universities met. When we sat down with some of them for dinner, some of the conversation centred around how to deal with patriarchy within the movement itself. A female comrade talked about how an all-female delegation of students visited another campus & how they were questioned about why there were no men, yet other delegations were exclusively male and were not questioned. Issues of having to justify the female experience to males in order for it to be deemed valid. How female comrades were rejecting the renaming of spaces after male struggle icons: Steve Biko, Nelson Mandela, Hector Petersen... to the exclusion of female icons. The women I listened to and heard in the 2 days are articulate, unapologetic and fierce. As one female comrade said, we cannot fight sexism, racism, homophobia & ignorance outside the movement and not fight it within. During the conference another student reminded us that while intersectionality allows us to put the different forms of oppression on the same plane, we cannot deal with them in the same way. Our responses need to reflect the complexity and multidimensional nature of lived experience.

For me, the most chilling part of the 2 days was when student reps from each of the 20 institutions were given 3 mins to speak about their struggles, their gains, their issues & why they joined the #feesmustfall movement. Some of the inputs included:

**Rhodes:** has always unsourced, but uses a grading scale. This means that some workers have worked there for 30+ years and their salaries have never changed.

**NMMU:** institutional racism & a need to decolonise the curriculum.

**Stellenbosch:** the preservation of Afrikaner culture to the exclusion of all others. Outsourcing remains. The language policy remains an issue with the council rejecting the English language policy yesterday. The student described the council & its ways as ‘evil’. A failure to address the land issues as the university was built on land taken from people who were forcibly removed to the outskirts of the town.

**UCT:** institutional racism and patriarchy. Decolonisation of the entire university. For example, UCT has shares in Lonmin up to R50million. The company builds on campus and finances students who then work for Lonmin. This is the same company that is implicated in the Marikana massacre.

**UWC:** Students are portrayed as hooligans, violent etc by management and the media without any inquiry into student motives.

**Venda:** gross imbalance in gender representation in top management. One manager suggested that they reintroduce the module called ‘Theology’ to teach the students to be obedient.

**CPUT:** there has been a 59% increase in fees over the past 5 years

**TUT:** the student called it a ‘dungeon’ Students say they ARE poverty. So much so that it leaves them no space to breath, to talk, to discuss. Huge numbers are financially excluded every year.

**POTCH:** is an Afrikaans institution. Open racism with students called ‘kaffirs’ to their faces. Say they are treated like kaffirs. The university recruits from local white high schools & white students from Namibia, but ignores local schools with other students.

*continues...*



*continues...*

Language policy is inclusive on paper, but it's a different story in reality. Afrikaans lectures with notes in Afrikaans. Students are failing.

**WITS:** Workers are not allowed to be/use the places they are made to clean. An intersectional approach is needed in the university and the movement.

**Free State:** Institutional racism. Management have only agreed 'in principle' to changes so 2016 will see the struggles continue.

**Pretoria:** The problem lies in how students are 'governed'. Extreme managerialism has bred apathy in the student population. Very few black academics & a problematic language policy.

**UKZN:** has a culture of protest. At the moment they are fighting the closure of 7 residences and what the varsity is calling the 'digital revolution'. No student will be allowed to register in 2016 without a laptop & no notes will be printed.

**UJ:** what is clear is that structures & curricula in the universities, as well as SRCs & unions, that are meant to protect & help workers & students & staff, don't. They have been exposed.

It was clear to everyone that this movement was not just about fees, nor is it just a hashtag. The issues are structural & systemic and will require ongoing struggle.

A student echoed a sentiment I heard recently: it is not our job/responsibility to educate the privileged and the ignorant. In that moment I couldn't help but agree, as I sat among people, all of us attempting to make sense of what has been & what's to come. Our own struggles and this collective struggle does not leave space for us to breath, to still explain, to bring those who do not understand up to speed. We are reading, talking and doing. So must we all if we are to contribute to a truly democratic and transformed South Africa.

*Nadeema Musthan*

## ADMIN FORUM

On the 20th of November, the Admin Forum Committee end of year event was held at South Boulevard Café. It was a lovely start to the day with delicious breakfast and sincere company. As the team reflected back on a successful year, excitement grew for future prospects.

The team would like to thank Jackie Hay for her hard work and dedication throughout the year and as we welcome Ntosh Yamile to the leading position, we wish her all of the best for the year 2016.

With that being said, the team had an enjoyable end of year function.

## Farewell

This year, the Faculty of Education honoured two staff members who are retiring after many years of dedicated service. We say Thanks to Dr Pam Austin and Prof Paul Webb for their time and service, and we bid them a fond farewell.





# End of year Function

The Faculty met for a day of Team building and bonding on the 3rd December 2015. Staff members arrived at Hamiltons in Seaview unaware of the games and team sports to come. All participated and won prizes for winning, losing, eating smarties and the like. Well done to the organising committee on a job well done...

