



Community Engagement NEWSLETTER

A message from the Editor

By Ms Jeeva Munsamy

“Thank you” is a simple word that evokes feelings of pleasure and appreciation. One of the deepest desires that we as human beings experience is appreciation. Feeling valued and appreciated is important to all of us. It creates the longing to continue – to strive for better.

With these words, I would like to express our gratitude to three CUT employees who represented the institution at the recent International Symposium of Service Learning in Indianapolis. Dr René Botha and Mr Lebogang Mogongoa from the Faculty of Health and Environmental Sciences, and Mr Olutunmise Adesola Ojo from the Faculty of Humanities presented papers at this conference, the details of which are discussed later in this newsletter. It is worth noting that their papers not only covered service learning (SL), but also made community engagement at CUT more visible internationally, as it facilitated the promotion of best practices at CUT. Congratulations! You have done us proud!

On this note, I would also like to extend a heartfelt goodbye to Dr Botha, who has left the employ of CUT for greener pastures. You will be sorely missed, especially for your enthusiasm for community engagement. Hopefully, you will still assist us with your knowledge on SL. Take care and God bless!

INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON SERVICE LEARNING (SL), INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA (USA)

Dr René Both, Mr Lebogang Mogongoa and Mr Olutunmise Adesola Ojo recently attended an International Symposium on Service Learning (ISSL) in Indianapolis, Indiana, USA from 27 to 30 May 2015. They all delivered papers at this symposium.

Dr René Botha presented a paper on “A framework for service learning in the undergraduate Radiography programme in the Mangaung area”.

Feedback from the Radiography Education Discussion (RED) group indicated that only three of the seven South African higher education institutions offering Radiography are engaged in service learning (SL). It was also evident that there exists a great deal of apprehension, and that Radiography academics in South Africa do not have a clear or common understanding of SL. In literature, there is a great deal of evidence to the methodology of SL, but there is also minimal evidence of SL in resource-based disciplines such as Radiography. The aim of this study was to create a framework for SL. Over a period of two years, a mixed-method approach was used to gather qualitative and quantitative data from community members, students, the service provider and academics involved in SL. Data was gathered using questionnaires, reflection and interviews.

The created framework follows the action research continuum of reflection, where the different phases are interconnected and influence each other. The four phases identified in the framework are:

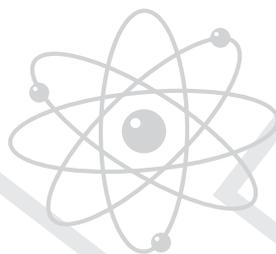
- ➔ Phase 1: Premise: It is important that academics are grounded in the philosophy and methodology of SL – Factors underpinning SL;
- ➔ Phase 2: Stakeholders: The philosophy and methodology of SL should be acted on through the identification of stakeholders, both internally and externally – Creation of a social contract;
- ➔ Phase 3: Points of departure: The consulted needs of all partners assist to establish whether the interaction is relevant to all involved – The type of SL intervention;
- ➔ Phase 4: Implementation: Includes facilitator management, community and service provider participation, assessment and reflection, and possible pitfalls. Key words are *framework* and *resource-based*.

A few words from Dr René Botha

"The information presented can be viewed as pioneering, since resource-based disciplines such as academic radiography find it challenging to engage communities using service learning, and no research has ever been done on the experiences of Radiography students. The posters and papers presented at the symposium revealed the cutting edge of service learning innovation; workshops and social activities allowed for the exchange and sharing of ideas. Participants gained and exchanged knowledge and experiences, and focused on the issues that are relevant to them. These interactions also led to the identification of common challenges and allowed for possible future collaboration. I had the privilege of meeting some of the greats of service learning, including noted professors whose work I used in my PhD."

Mr Lebogang Mogongoa presented a paper on "A reflection on pedagogical approach and innovative methods used to deliver health-related content to different communities that the programme Biomedical Technology at the Central University of Technology, Free State (CUT) engages with during service learning".

In the field of Biomedical Technology, where students are taught the discipline of diagnostic medical laboratory sciences, the approach is to engage on health-related matters in different communities. The communities we engage with are; Heide Primary School, Grootvlei Correctional Facility, South African Local Government Association, and RT Mokgopa High School. The needs of these institutions include hygiene promotion, sexually transmitted disease awareness, provision of clean water, and teenage pregnancy awareness. In addition, the age group of the audience ranges from childhood until retirement age; the educational backgrounds are completely different; and most of the audiences are not trained in health disciplines. Based on the different topics; age and educational background, innovative information delivery methods that present the information at the correct level and assessment strategies had to be implemented to achieve positive results in these different projects.



Mr Olutunmise Adesola Ojo presented a paper on “Efficacy of collaborative projects in improving teaching and learning outcomes of Graphic Design at a university of technology”.

This paper presented collaborative design projects conducted by 28 second-year Graphic Design students. These projects were identified by the lecturer as examples of “real-world” and “hands-on” projects that are complex, challenging enough, and could be impossible for an individual student to complete alone within the limited time frame. Also, these projects require students to synthesise their work in a true collaboration, rather than merely completing the work separately and turn it in together at the end. What set these collaborative design projects apart from other graphic design projects, are the adept outcome and the amount of control that the students are given over the design. The students were divided into four groups. Four members were placed, based on their strengths and ability. The remaining members were placed in groups of four via a ballot system. This selection system was used because the students shared the same background knowledge, and group sizes were basically determined by the amount of work the projects required.

These projects provided students with the opportunity to test their ideas take risks and be creative. In addition, the gaps between the year marks of the top-achieving students and the weaker ones were significantly close. Moreover, knowing that the projects they are working on are “real” was a wonderful feeling for the students.

Students’ responses also indicated that the project did indeed afford an opportunity to learn from their peers. In conclusion, the paper provides an innovative pedagogical model by combining collaborative design practice and a real-world project.



CUT colleagues at ISSL in Indianapolis



CUT colleagues Dr René Botha, Olutunmise Adesola Ojo and Lebogang Mogongoa at the ISSL in Indianapolis



Dr René Botha (CUT) and Robert Bringle, Professor Emeritus



Dr René Botha presenting

MANDELA DAY CELEBRATION, 24 JULY 2015

“What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead” – Nelson Mandela

CUT, in partnership with UFS' Postgraduate Student Council and the Department of Correctional Services celebrated Mandela Day by serving their 67 minutes at Joe Solomon Primary School in Heidedal and Nzame Primary School in Rocklands on 24 July 2015.

This partnership involved that stakeholders had to devise ways to assist the above-mentioned adopted primary schools. The stakeholders identified pressing needs, and agreed to adopt these schools for a period of three years. On this day, the following activities took place:

Joe Solomon Primary School

- The classrooms, toilets and the school yard were cleaned;
- Desks and chairs were repaired;
- Classrooms were painted;
- Learners were served soup by Shoprite Soup Kitchen; and
- Trees were planted.



From left: Mr Leon Bosman, Joe Solomon School Governing Body; Katleho Nyaile, UFS postgraduate student; Mr Quentin Canavan, Joe Solomon Head Master; Ms Jeeva Munsamy, CUT Community Engagement Manager; Mr Tonny Seling, UFS postgraduate chairman; Mr Clive Solomon, former ward councillor for Heidedaal; Mr James Jordaan and Mr Werner Britz, both CUT staff members from Facilities department



Stakeholders hard at work cleaning and scrubbing floors and windows. The state of classrooms at Joe Solomon Primary School prior to the engagement

Nzame Primary School

- Furniture and a carpet were donated to the pre-school learners;
- Learners were entertained by Ms Laila Nyana;
- Learners were served hot dogs and juice, sponsored by Protea Hotel;
- Rice, vegetables and chicken, sponsored by The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA-SA), were provided for the learners; and
- Trees were planted.



Donated furniture, and trees planted at Nzame Primary School



WINTER SCHOOL 2015

The Winter School is an annual programme offered to Grade 12 learners in nine subjects, namely:

- Accounting;
- Business Studies;
- Economics;
- Engineering Graphics and Design;
- Computer Applications Technology;
- Geography;
- Life Sciences;
- Mathematics; and
- Physical Sciences.

It is a partnership between CUT, Standard Bank and the Free State Department of Education (FSDoE) that assists the learners, the majority of which comes from disadvantaged communities, to improve their chances of success in the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations.



The 2015 Winter School took place from 29 June 2015 to 10 July 2015. A total number of 1 022 learners from around the Free State province, as well as a handful from other provinces, attended the Winter School. The 2015 Winter School was ceremoniously opened at the Boet Troskie Hall on 29 June 2015, with senior officials from CUT, Standard Bank and the FSDoE gracing the occasion.

Prof. Henk de Jager, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Academic and Research at CUT, acknowledged and expressed his gratitude for the collaboration with Standard Bank and FSDoE: *“What the province has achieved in education*

over the years would not have been possible without the keen interest and dedicated support from Standard Bank. We look forward to continued collaboration with Standard Bank and the Department of Education”.

Plenary sessions were conducted for a period of eight days, where faculties were invited to talk about the programmes on offer. Furthermore, motivational speakers and a representative from Standard Bank were also given a platform to talk to the learners about different topics.

The services of Fidem Pitseng were enlisted to provide learners with lunch on a daily basis.



From left to right are: Prof. Henk de Jager, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Academic and Research at CUT; Dr Wendy Setlaletoa, Head of Department: Mathematics, Science and Technology Education, CUT; Mr MB Monnane, Deputy Director-General: FSDoE; Mr Will Choene, Head: Provincial Public Sector, Standard Bank; Prof. Thandwa Mthembu, Vice-Chancellor and Principal of CUT; and Mr Anton Nicolaisen, Provincial Head, Standard Bank – Free State.



Tutors and senior officials of CUT, Standard Bank and Free State Department of Education



Grade 12 learners attending the 2015 Winter School's official opening ceremony at the Boet Troskie Hall



Central University of
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GENERAL ENQUIRIES

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