

# DEAN'S COMMUNIQUE

SCHOOL OF LABORATORY MEDICINE AND MEDICAL SCIENCES

**DECEMBER 2019**





## Dear Colleagues

Welcome to the final edition for 2019. We had an exciting year filled with many firsts and I do hope each one of you had a successful year overall. As we bring the year to a close, I thought it would be important for us to celebrate our achievements and reflect on the challenges especially in the second semester.

# Teaching and Learning update

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I am pleased to announce that the concept note for the proposed four-year undergraduate programme has finally been approved by the College academic affairs board (CAAB). We are now able to proceed with developing documents for submission to the council on higher education. I would like to take this opportunity to thank each of you for the contributions you have made. Through your enthusiasm, dedication and willingness to embrace change, we have an opportunity to change the teaching and learning landscape not only for our School but also the university as a whole.

## **CURRICULUM PLANNING MEETINGS FOR 2020**

In an effort to improve the quality of our teaching and learning in the School, the Academic Leaders held planning meetings for all the programmes in the School including, the service modules. I am encouraged by the overwhelming response for participation to improve our modules not only from staff in the School but also those from other schools who are involved in teaching on our programmes. The multidisciplinary collaboration will strengthen our programmes and ensure that we have a truly integrated curriculum both in the MBChB and the BMedSci programmes.

## OVERALL GRADUATION STATISTICS

We had yet another successful graduation in September and I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all our graduates and staff who worked very hard to ensure successful completion of various degrees. I would especially like to congratulate the following staff members for their achievements: Dr Nompumelelo Mkhwanazi (PhD), Mr Khayelihle Guambe (MMedSci), Ms Ntombifuthi Ngubane (MMedSci), Dr Ashandree Reddy (MMed), Dr Unathi Ngxamngxa (MMed), Dr Nareshni Moodley (MMed) and Dr Prenika Jaglal (MMed). While we appreciate the effort made, I urge supervisors to support our administration staff by ensuring that we stick to the submission deadlines, pre and post examination. If we had done this, our postgraduate numbers would have been higher.

PROGRAMME	APRIL GRADUATION	SEPTEMBER GRADUATION	TOTAL
<b>BMedSci</b>	41	8	<b>49</b>
<b>BMedSi Honours</b>	80	-	<b>80</b>
<b>MMed Sci</b>	34	10	<b>44</b>
<b>MMed</b>	2	4	<b>6</b>
<b>PhD</b>	10	7	<b>17</b>

## UNDERGRADUATE LABORATORY REFURBISHMENT PROJECTS

Phase one of laboratory refurbishments on the Westville campus has finally been completed. As a result of the almost 8 month delay in having the labs handed over to the School, a number of practicals had to be rescheduled. These issues were raised with IPP and CMS and some are yet to be addressed. I wish to thank all staff involved for being nibble on their feet thus ensuring minimal disruption to the timetable on top of the numerous shutdowns we have had to endure. We are now waiting for communication regarding phase two of the project which will include the Physiological Chemistry Laboratory.



The refurbishment of the Medical School Laboratory has been completed. We received confirmation from the project manager that the Lab is ready for occupation and therefore it will be ready for use in 2020. ICS will be conducting training on the use of the audio-visual equipment in the laboratory and communication in this regard will be sent out in the new year.

# Research update

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The School held a successful research symposium where postgraduate students were given a platform to present their research. The event also provided an opportunity for multidisciplinary collaborations. I was encouraged by the overwhelming support from staff and students and I hope researchers do take advantage of the opportunity to initiate collaborations. I also congratulate all the winners for a job well done and the adjudicators who took time off from their busy schedules to spend the entire day with our emerging researchers.

## A YOUNG ACADEMIC RECEIVES A PRESTIGIOUS AWARD



***Dr. Yogandree Ramsamy, Microbiologist***

Join me in congratulating Dr. Yogandree Ramsamy on receiving the coveted L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science Grant. Dr. Ramsamy was one of 7 successful applicants out of a field of 175 who received the award based on the scientific excellence of their work. She currently works as a Consultant Clinical Microbiologist for the National Health Laboratory Services at Prince Mshiyeni Memorial Hospital in Umlazi. In 2018, she was awarded the prestigious Institute Mérieux-ICAN (Infection Control Africa Network), Young Investigator Award in recognition of her research into Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in Africa. She is also a member of several local and international committees related to Antimicrobial Stewardship (AMS) and Infection Prevention and Control, including the International Society for Chemotherapy – Infection Control Working Group, the British Society for Antimicrobial Chemotherapy, ICAN, SAASP (South African Antibiotic Stewardship Programme), and SASCM (South African Society for Clinical Microbiology). The Head of Health in KZN appointed Dr. Ramsamy to the KZN Antimicrobial Stewardship (AMS) Committee where she engages with various stakeholders to promote the concept of AMS within the KZN public health sector in line with the South African National AMR Strategy. She is currently pursuing a PhD in the School reviewing Carbapenam Resistant Enterobacteriaceae (CRE) in a One Health perspective. Dr. Ramsamy is passionate about bringing together multidisciplinary AMS teams in South Africa and raising awareness of a bleak future without the prospects of lifesaving antimicrobials. Mentoring up and coming individuals who are equally passionate about saving antimicrobials for future generations is one of her greatest ambitions.

### **FOR MORE ON HER STORY PLEASE VISIT:**

<http://ndabaonline.ukzn.ac.za/UkzndabaStory/Vol7-Issue63-translations/L%20Oreal%20UNESCO%20For%20Women%20in%20Science%20Grants%20for%20UKZN%20Scientists>

## INTERNATIONALISATION

As we endeavor to encourage international collaborations, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Prof Anil Chuturgoon on hosting a successful talk on Nano Medicine by Professor Yashwant Pathak from the University of South Florida, USA. I believe the talk was well received by attendees and engagements emanating from this talk will yield fruitful collaborations. For more on the story please visit: <http://ndabaonline.ukzn.ac.za/UkzndabaStory/Vol7-Issue39/Seminar%20Explores%20Nano%20Medicine> . Furthermore I would also like to acknowledge Prof Chuturgoon for being in the top 30 performing researcher list University-wide. The neuroscience group also hosted their second neuroscience symposium with Prof Bonga Chiliza (HOD: Psychiatry) as the guest speaker.

### FOR MORE ON THIS EVENT PLEASE VISIT:

<http://ndabaonline.ukzn.ac.za/UkzndabaStory/Vol7-Issue39/Neuroscience%20Group%20hosts%20Successful%20Symposium>

# Academic Promotions

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The new academic promotions policy places emphasis on the reports from external assessors and therefore only candidates who received the requisite number of assessor reports for their level were assessed in the recent committee meeting on academic promotions. Of the five applications received, only two are still awaiting assessor reports and three were evaluated in the meeting. It gives me great pleasure to announce the outcome of the 2019 academic promotions process. I would like to congratulate Dr Phikelelani Ngubane (promotion to Senior Lecturer), Professor Raveen Parboosing (promotion to Associate Professor) and Prof Michelle Gordon (promotion to Associate Professor). Prof Gordon is also the Academic Leader for the Infectious Disease Theme.

### ***New additions to the team***

#### ***Academic administration***

I am also happy to announce that we have successfully appointed an administrative officer for the MBChB programme who will start on 2 January 2020. Ms Pamela Mbalenhle Mbanjwa brings with her a wealth of institutional experience having worked at various higher education institutions prior to joining our School. We are looking forward to a productive working relationship with her and the rest of the team.

**Previously, we had also sent communication through the College PR office of the appointments of:**

- Dr Nqobile Jaca (**Biomedical Resource Unit (BRU) Manager**)  
<http://ndabaonline.ukzn.ac.za/UkzndabaStory/Vol7-Issue39-translations/Young%20Vet%20Appointed%20BRU%20Manager>
- Dr Khethelo Xulu (**Lecturer**)
- Ms Cleopatra Rakgantsho (**Lecturer**)
- Ms Asiphaphola Ludidi (**Academic development Officer**)
- Mrs Xolile Dlala (**Administrative officer**)

# School communication strategy

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We had yet another fun-filled School fun run/walk and from the feedback received, staff enjoyed the event. I would therefore like to appreciate all staff who took time out of their busy schedules to embrace this event, it would not have been successful without your participation.



*SLMMS and SNPH participants gearing up for the run (orange)/walk (green)*

***I would like to thank the following sponsors (in no particular order):***

Tackling Infections to Benefit Africa (TIBA SA) for T-Shirts, Centre For The Aids Programme Of Research In South Africa (CAPRISA) for bottled water, Africa Research Institute (AHRI) for earphones, African fusion group (AFG) for medals, KwaZulu-Natal Research Innovation and Sequencing Platform (KRISP) for caps, United Scientific for energy drinks, HIV Pathogenesis Programme (HPP) for goodie bags and energy bars and UKZN Corporate relations for trophies. I also thank the Public Relations Office, the organizing team and volunteers from both Schools for a job well done.



**SLLMMS/SNPB Fun run/walk winners**

	<b>RUNNERS</b>	<b>WALKERS</b>
<b>MALE</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Khayelihle Guambe</li> <li>2. Siyabonga Majola</li> <li>3. Mandia Dube</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Silvester Olupot</li> <li>2. Lungani Bengani</li> <li>3. Dennis Makhubela</li> </ol>
<b>FEMALE</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Vinie Koumou</li> <li>2. Bonisiwe Msibi</li> <li>3. Nonjabulo Dlamini</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Senamile Ngema</li> <li>2. Inga Elson</li> <li>3. Snehlanhla Zondo*</li> <li>3. Brenda Nquku*</li> </ol> <p><b>*sharing</b></p>
<b>VETERAN MALE</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Benhard Gaede</li> <li>2. Moses Chimbari</li> <li>3. Bheki Zondo</li> </ol>	
<b>VETERAN FEMALE</b>		Inga Elson

We also held our second annual staff appreciation awards which are aimed at encouraging excellence in our school. Once again staff were given the opportunity to nominate people who they thought embodied REACHt values . The following staff were recognized for their contribution to the school in various categories:



**SLMMS Staff awards recipients with the Dean (second from the right)**

CATEGORY	RECIPIENT (S)
Admin employee of the year	Ms Zinhle Mvelase
Technical employee of the year	Mr Thokozani Ndwandwe
Admin Team player of the year	Ms Thobile Mkhize and Mr Martin Botha
Technical Team player of the year	Mr Smanga Gumede
REACHt award	Ms Cassandra Subiah
Most productive lecturers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dr Saajida Mahomed</li> <li>2. Dr Andile Khathi</li> <li>3. Dr Phikelelani Ngubane</li> </ol>
Most productive senior lecturer	Dr Bongani Nkambule
Granstmanship awards (NRF funding) Lecturer level	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dr Hlengiwe Mbongwa</li> <li>2. Dr Jacobus Hendricks</li> <li>3. Dr Paradise Madlala</li> </ol>
Granstmanship awards (NRF funding) Senior Lecturer level	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dr Bongani Nkambule</li> <li>2. Dr Brenda De Gama</li> <li>3. Dr Ndumiso Mhlongo</li> </ol>

Finally, as the year draws to a close, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for contributing towards the annual performance plan and ensuring that we are a step closer in meeting our strategic goals. May you all have a Merry Christmas and a prosperous 2020.

**Regards**

**Professor Musa Mabandla**

**Dean & Head of School**

**School of Laboratory Medicine and Medical Sciences**

