



## Message from Head of Department .....



In this inaugural edition of the NMMU Pharmacy Department Newsletter the Pharmacy Department would like to invite all our students, alumni, stakeholders, academic colleagues at other institutions, and academic staff at the NMMU to join us as we travel through the year celebrating activities in the department. This year, 2013, is an exciting year for the Pharmacy Department at NMMU as we will be presenting two new programmes: the new integrated BPharm degree; and the Higher Certificate in Pharmacy Support which allows for registration as a Pharmacy Technical Assistant (PTA) with the South African Pharmacy Council. The department is bustling with vibrant activity with the increased number of students. The integrated BPharm programme introduces more pharmacy related material at the first year level with students commencing with the modules Physical Pharmacy and Pharmacy People and Systems in addition to the foundation modules of physiology, chemistry, physics, computers, and biochemistry. The students in the new programme will register from the 1st year with the South African Pharmacy Council to enable supervised, module-embedded exper-

## “Amazing Race” to welcome 1st year Pharmacy students



Winners of the Amazing Race - new BPharm 1 students explored the campus during the Amazing Race, as part of the Pharmacy Department's orientation activities. (more photos - page 6)

iential learning to take place. As the programme progresses to the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th years aspects of the traditional disciplines of Pharmacology, Pharmacy Practice, Pharmaceutical Chemistry, and Pharmaceutics are integrated into the Clinical Pharmacy modules where disease states and associated management are presented. For example, in the Respiratory Clinical Pharmacy module aspects pertaining to pathophysiology, pharmacology, medicinal chemistry, health care aspects of pharmacy practice, and specialized dosage forms relevant to management of respiratory conditions (pharmaceutics) will be presented in one integrated module.

The students registered for the Higher Certificate in Pharmacy Support are a historic group as they are the first students in South Africa to enroll in this new cadre of midlevel workers. The PTA students have a full one year campus based programme con-

sisting of lectures and practicals for each module. On completion of the one year certificate the students can either exit to the workplace where following a period of supervised practice they can register with SAPC as PTAs or register in 2014 as the first group of students enrolling for the Advanced Certificate in Pharmacy Technical Support – the Pharmacy Technician qualification.

As you continue reading this newsletter you will find interesting snippets of information on other activities in the Pharmacy Department: the postgraduate activities, leadership development workshops for the 2nd and 3rd year students, more news about the PTA programme, the new structure in the Pharmacy Department, and staff movements. Enjoy reading and travelling with us as the Department enters 2013!

Happy reading!

Shirley-Anne Boschmans

## Pharmacy Alumnus named as NMMU Alumni Rising Star



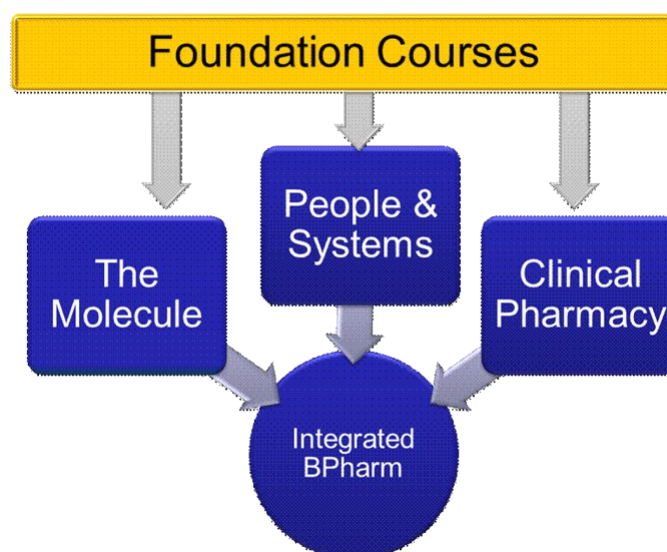
One of our Pharmacy alumni, Milli Reddy, proudly took her place at the annual NMMU Alumni Achievers Awards Ceremony held at the Summerstrand Hotel in October 2012. Dr Milli Reddy completed both her BPharm degree (1998 – 2001) and her MPharm degree (2004) *cum laude* at UPE. She continued her postgraduate studies at University of Texas, in Austin as a Fulbright scholar, and after graduating with her PhD, came back to South Africa to take up a post at the Clinton Health Access Initiative in Pretoria. Milli truly epitomises the attributes of a NMMU graduate, namely excellence, ubuntu, integrity and taking responsibility. She has proven to be a superb ambassador for NMMU, and is a shining example of a NMMU Alumni Rising Star. The Pharmacy Department are justifiably proud to call her one of their own.

## New Departmental Structure

Not only did the Pharmacy Department acquire new facilities in 2012, but 2013 saw the introduction of two new programmes – an integrated BPharm degree and the Pharmacy Technical Assistant (PTA) programme. In keeping with these new programmes, under the leadership of the newly appointed Head of Department – Dr Shirley-Anne Boschmans - the Department has also been restructured. There are now three programme coordinators, Dr Boschmans coordinates the BPharm programme whilst Mrs Teri-Lynne Fogarty coordinates the PTA programme and Prof Ilse Truter is the Postgraduate programme coordinator.

In line with the integrated nature of the new BPharm programme, three streams have been created which incorporate the traditional four disciplines: pharmaceutical chemistry; pharmaceutics; pharmacology; and pharmacy practice.

These streams are: Clinical Pharmacy; People and Systems; and the Molecule Stream which are coordinated by Mrs Jane McCartney, by Dr Sue Burton and Mrs Mbali Keele, respectively. The three streams are still underpinned by Foundation courses which have been purposefully designed for the new programme and include anatomy and physiology, biochemistry, organic chemistry, physics, microbiology and computing fundamentals.



## Pharmacy Department offers new programme ....

In February 2013 the first cohort of students registered for the full-time, programme for pharmacy midlevel workers in South Africa, the Higher Certificate in Pharmacy Support. More than 100 applications were received and to-date 69 students have registered. Lectures started on the 11<sup>th</sup> February with much excitement as this is an historic group of students who will, if successful, be the first in South Africa to graduate as Pharmacy Technical Assistants and register with the South African Pharmacy Council (SAPC). If successful in the Higher Certificate: Pharmacy: Support, learners will be able to register for the full-time Advanced Certificate in Pharmacy Technical support in 2014. The graduates of the Advanced Certificate will then be able to register with the SAPC as Pharmacy Technicians after a 6 month internship.

We see the emergence of a university level pharmacy midlevel worker qualification as a unique opportunity to create space for cross-cadre co-training between pharmacists and midlevel workers. We encourage the BPharm students and the HCert: Pharmacy: Support students to assist each other and enjoy a successful academic journey together.



**Changes in the Staff of the Pharmacy Department:**

There have been several changes in the staff over the last three months as we have said farewell to some staff and welcomed other:

- The Department bid farewell to Prof Pieter Milne in December 2012. Prof Milne has moved to the School of Pharmacy at the North West University. The Department would like to thank Pieter for his contributions to the Department over the years he was a member of our staff and Head of Department.
- Andre Kritzinger has joined the department and will be lecturing Pharmaceutics to the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> year students. Welcome Andre!
- Razia Gaida and Candyce Clark will be lecturing chemistry to the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year students during the 1<sup>st</sup> semester Welcome Razia and Candyce!
- Janet Barry has joined the department to assist with the presentation of the PTA programme. Welcome Janet!
- Jacqui Taylor will be supporting the PTA programme as a Technician and will also be responsible for the new Teaching Dispensary facility. Welcome to you Jacqui!
- Claire Vogelbruck will be lecturing in the PTA programme. Welcome Claire!

**New staff members**



**Andre Kritzinger**



**Janet Barry**



**Jacqui Taylor**



**Pharmacy Department 2013 Vice Chancellor’s Scholarship Recipients**

The Pharmacy Department is proud to have two recipients of the Vice Chancellor’s Scholarships amongst the BPharm1 students. The scholarships are awarded to the top 30 students accepted into the University each year since 2009 and the programme was initiated by the Vice Chancellor Prof Derrick Swartz.

Yasmin Kahn and Nikita Naidoo are the BPharm1 recipients of the award this year (2013). Yasmin received her primary school education at Charlo Primary School and her high school education at Collegiate School for Girls in Port Elizabeth. Yasmin matriculated with an ‘A’ aggregate and received ‘A’ symbols for six of her seven subject in matric. In her free time Yasmin participates in Kung Fu and archery. Nikita has lived in Escourt in the foothills of the Drakensberg Mountains where she received her primary and secondary schooling. In high school she attended Drakensberg Secondary School and matriculated with an ‘A’ aggregate and ‘A’ symbols for five of her seven subjects. Nikita is a member of Melody Residence and in her spare time she enjoys painting - art not walls. Both students are passionate about a career in Pharmacy. Read on page 4. about Yasmin and Nikita’s thoughts on why Pharmacy was the profession for them:



Judge R Pillay – Chair of Council, Mrs Santie Botha – Chancellor NMMU, Nikita Naidoo, Prof Derek Swartz – Vice Chancellor and Prof HV Exner – Executive Dean, Health Sciences



Judge R Pillay – Chair of Council, Mrs Santie Botha – Chancellor NMMU, Yasmin Kahn, Prof Derek Swartz – Vice Chancellor and Prof HV Exner – Executive Dean, Health Sciences

**Yasmin's reasons for studying Pharmacy:**

Since I was a young child, I had always been intrigued about the Sciences, particularly Chemistry. Since then, I have always felt that my place one day would be in some field of the Sciences. As I grew older, I came to realize that, although I do love Science, working within a laboratory would not be my ideal profession. I felt inclined to find a profession where I could be exposed to Science, but also be able to exercise my passion for people and my desire to nurture and care for those around me. It became apparent to me that I needed to find my place within the field of Health Sciences, and the two options which stood out to me personally were either to become a Pharmacist, or to become a Doctor. It took a great deal of careful consideration to decide which I would choose, but ultimately I wanted to be in a position where I would have the most active role in a patient's road to recovery. A Doctor, in a way, is merely a person who informs you of what you may be suffering from; but when you leave the doctor's office, you hold nothing but a piece of paper, which is only the permission to cure you.

The real root of treating people comes from the role of the Pharmacist. What the Pharmacist provides is the actual cure. The access to the cure cannot be granted without the Doctor, however, without a Pharmacist that

piece of prescription paper, that the Doctor provides a patient with, would not be of any use. I have always wanted to be someone that makes a difference in not just somebody's life, but in as many people's lives as I can, as often that I can. And I feel, a Pharmacist is that person. I want to be a Pharmacist as I feel they hold the most important role in a patient's well-being.

**Nikita's reasons for enrolling for the BPharm degree:**

The field of health science is of great interest to me. I have always been fascinated about how the human body functions and the effects of medicines. I have a genuine passion to help people and to make a difference to my society. I love to bring smiles to people's faces, and to reassure them that life should be lived at its peak. My perception of a pharmacist would be described as a public doctor whom immediately treats and empowers people to live healthy lives. I am a people's person therefore I believe that this field of study will be best for me.

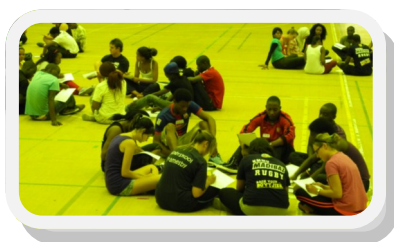
**Congratulations to :**

Ms Yew-Siong on being awarded a Foundation for Pharmaceutical Education bursary for 2013.

## Sandoz Leadership and Management Awareness Workshops to 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year Pharmacy Students

Third year and second year pharmacy students and a staff member, Ilse Truter, had a very interactive and informative start to the new academic year when they took part in a Leadership and Management Awareness Workshop. The two one-day workshops were presented by Dr Louis Odendaal of Competency Alignment (Pty) Ltd on 13 February 2013 to BPharm 2, and on 14 February 2013 to BPharm 3, students. Sandoz Pharmaceuticals generously sponsored the workshops, which has now become an annual highlight on the calendar for Pharmacy students. Using a combination of interactive activities and reflection, the students identified simple but crucial leadership principles such as :

- to never give up; to never underestimate your own abilities
- to constantly explore new things
- to always keep the bigger picture in mind
- to embrace and welcome change
- to identify problems and address them.



The students and Prof Truter would like to say a huge thank you to Dr Odendaal and to Sandoz for another life-changing experience, for teaching us skills and wisdom that no money can buy, and for equipping us with important life skills to be used in our future as proud pharmacists.



# Research News ....

## Research Activities in Sweden

### To our postgraduate students,

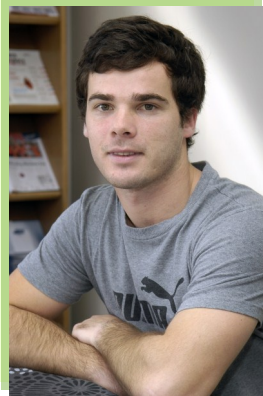
A warm welcome to all new postgraduate students in the Department of Pharmacy! Welcome also to those of you who are already busy with your research. We hope 2013 will be a productive and successful research year in the Department of Pharmacy. Since new postgraduate students are still registering, we will only be able to publish a list of postgraduate students in the next newsletter.

We are starting the year with a two-day Faculty of Health Sciences Workshop on 7 and 8 March 2013 for all new M and D students which will orientate and give you valuable tools to kick start your research project. Much later in the year, on Thursday 10 October 2013, the Annual Prestigious Student Research Conference will be held in the Auditorium at the NMMU (Summerstrand) South Campus, Port Elizabeth.

We are also planning a series of workshops and talks during the year (dates and topics to follow). If you have any specific research topic that you want to know more about, please e-mail me at [ilse.truter@nmmu.ac.za](mailto:ilse.truter@nmmu.ac.za) and we will try our best to arrange a session.



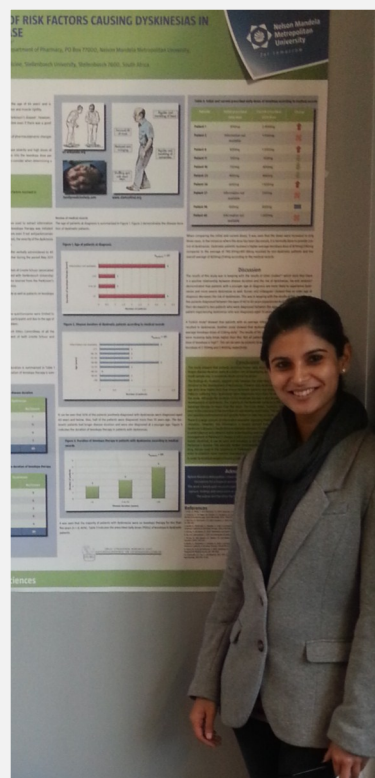
Prof. Ilse Truter



News from Keith Daniell currently in Sweden: "After a very cold introduction to Sweden I discovered their passion for coffee and quickly joined in! I am currently involved in research in the Department of Physiology and Pharmacology at the Karolinska Institute for my Masters degree. The university is extremely diverse and has a very large contingent of international students which is making it very easy to make new friends and colleagues from all over the world!" See photo of Keith in the snow below! Good luck to Keith with his research in Sweden until mid-June this year.



## A great learning experience .....

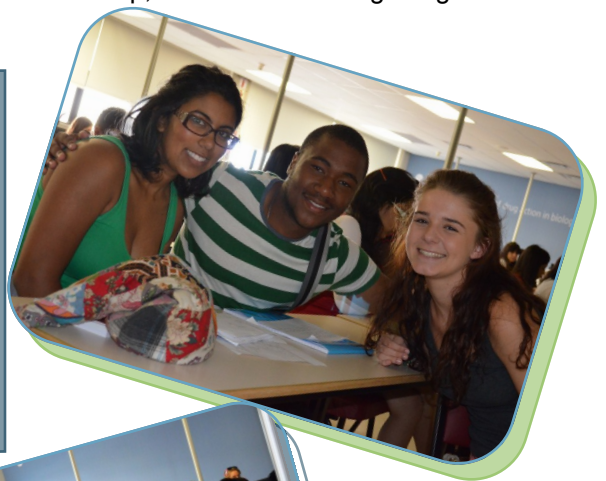
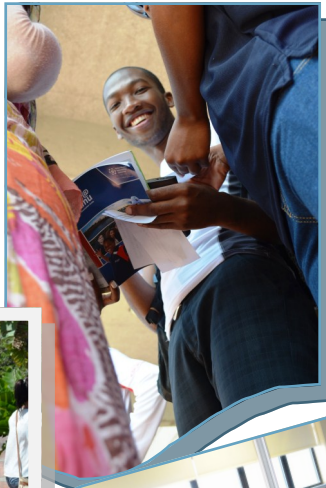


The 11<sup>th</sup> annual Alzheimer's disease/Parkinson's disease conference was held in Florence Italy. Set in a beautiful city, the conference was truly a congregation of the greatest scientific minds from all over the world. The amount of research taking place throughout the rest of the world is astounding and instils hope for health care professionals and patients alike in terms of the two most common neurodegenerative diseases in the world. The number of presentations was enough to keep participants enthralled for hours on end and the poster presentations provided wonderful opportunity to interact with the researchers. Personally, this was the first international conference I had attended and it was an experience to remember. I returned each evening educated and inspired. On to the next one... Razia Gaida



# Student activities ....

2013 is a new year for everyone, a new department, new lecturers, new courses and new students. With all the exciting new changes some things stayed the same and one was the annual Amazing Race for the first years. Orientation this year, was compressed into a few days. After an informative introduction with our new Head of Department, Dr S-A Boschmans, we had our Amazing Race. It was interesting to see how the first years asked around to find out where places were around campus. Eventually everyone made it to the final stop, with the winners getting free t-shirts. Amber Cheng - chairperson of PEPSA



## News from PEPSA ....

PEPSA is the student pharmaceutical society of NMMU; it serves a student base of about four hundred; members and non-members. We're a student society involved in community based projects, pharmacy awareness and social events. This year we aim to become more active within the department and with the students. We would like to have more events where students are able to partake in to promote awareness and let the students meet each other. Hopefully everyone will support us to make it a success.



- Chairperson Amber Cheng
- Vice- chairman - Shamelle Govender
- Treasurer - Paché Oranje
- Secretary - Bukeka Bata
- Editor - Ruchenda Hoffmann
- Media and communication - Lyle Vito
- Social - Alex West
- Community - Keshana Moodaley
- Academics -Thandile Pahlwa
- SAPSF liason - Thabang Mofokeng



**In the next issue**  
**Phelophepa**  
**Fun and Education**  
**Pharmacy staff enjoy the**  
**grysbok trail**  
**Interaction with schools**