

FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

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While 2009 could best be described as the year in which the Faculty planted the seeds for the development of some groundbreaking academic initiatives, 2010 became the year in which we were able to reap our first harvest. The Faculty is home to three of the 21 academic initiatives that form part of Stellenbosch University's HOPE Project (previously known as the Overarching Strategic Plan – OSP).

The initiatives within the Faculty include a three-pronged one that incorporates the Graduate School, the Partnership for Africa's Next Generation of Academics (PANGeA) and the African Doctoral Academy (ADA); MEDIAFRIKA, situated in the Journalism Department; and the Geographic Information Technology (GIT) initiative in the Geography and Environmental Studies Department.

The establishment of the PANGeA was formalised on African University Day (12 November), when six universities, including Stellenbosch, signed a multilateral memorandum of understanding (MMoU; see page 50). The other African universities were the University of Botswana, Makerere University in Uganda, the University of Malawi, the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, and the University of Nairobi in Kenya. The PANGeA network aims to stem the brain drain from Africa and to reverse the decline of scholarship on the continent by strengthening the development of higher education in Africa. The pursuit of these aims involves the creation of opportunities for knowledge exchange and collaborative research among peer institutions, for methodological development and for full-time doctoral study and the creation, in future, of joint doctoral degree programmes.

Another prong of the initiative, the Graduate School, coordinates research themes focused on Africa's development, administers the doctoral programmes and full-time doctoral scholarships, recruits and enrolls doctoral students from the African continent, appoints supervisors and examiners, and monitors and evaluates operations to assure its quality. The ADA, for its part, is a training structure focused on research methodology in order to promote advanced scholarship and research. Thanks to this three-pronged initiative, 31 doctoral students from 11 countries across Africa were enrolled in the Faculty on full scholarships in 2010.

MEDIAFRIKA, the new multimedia journalism training and research centre, is housed in a building right behind the Journalism Department that was completed in 2010 and will

be officially opened in March 2011. Through this initiative, the Faculty will help train and develop journalists who are able to report on critical issues on the continent without favour. The Journalism Department, one of Africa's top 12 journalism schools (UNESCO survey), is the only specialised postgraduate journalism school in South Africa that currently offers programmes for honours, master's (three options) and PhD students. Through the Centre, we are now able to offer learning and training opportunities for media professionals from all over Africa and to pursue our research objectives with greater vigour.

The Geographic Information Technology (GIT) initiative, which is driven by the Geography and Environmental Studies Department, consolidates and expands on the existing knowledge, skills, programme offerings and infrastructure related to GIT at SU. GIT does this in association with the Centre for Geographical Analysis, also housed in the Department, and these efforts have been producing various benefits. In 2009 it became possible to establish the Centre for Regional and Urban Innovation and Statistical Exploration (CRUISE); it conducts research on topics such as regional and urban systems, and will provide GIT training for government officials. In 2010 it became possible to expand the Department's staff. This in turn has allowed the Department to develop a unique GIT degree programme, to establish a research programme and to provide services in pursuance of the University's development themes. CRUISE, fully funded by StatsSA, also expanded its staff in 2010. In addition, the Department has learned that the Disaster Mitigation Programme (DiMP) will move to the Department from the University of Cape Town early in 2011. DiMP focuses on the occurrence of natural, social and political disasters, the gauging of population vulnerability and resilience, and on community and government coping strategies and structures. It has ties with nine other African universities. Overall, our offering in terms of GIT training, research, development and learning is unusually comprehensive.

We have seen in 2010 how the vision, hard work, dedication and perseverance of both our staff and students have helped us to deliver a bountiful first harvest. This is only the beginning of greater things to come.