

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION TALKS

The Newsletter of the
Research and Postgraduate Support Directorate

RESEARCH & POSTGRADUATE SUPPORT

Great Researchers' Corner



Professor
Megandhren Govender

Professor Megandhren Govender is the first full professor in the Department of Mathematics, Faculty of Applied Sciences at the Durban University of Technology. He is also an Honorary Professor in the Astrophysics Research Center, University of KwaZulu-Natal. He holds a PhD in theoretical physics from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). He is currently an NRF C-2 rated scientist. His research areas include gravitational collapse, modelling of compact objects such as neutron stars and strange stars in classical general relativity, modified gravity, gravitational waves and currently the physics of wormholes. He has over 100 publications in high impact factor journals in the fields of theoretical and observational astrophysics. He serves as a reviewer for many prestigious research journals in astrophysics including the European Physical Journal C, Physics of the Dark Universe, General Relativity, amongst the others. Professor Govender has a large collaborative network including physicists and mathematicians from far afield as Chile, Greece, Morocco, India and Oman.

When he joined DUT in 2015, his primary aim was to grow a research group in nonlinear mathematical sciences. According to Professor Govender, "we have a growing number of young and eager staff members in various departments across DUT who are already pursuing fundamental research problems". He believes that the institution being the University of Technology will be useful to engage in interdisciplinary and applied research such as reducing Carbon footprint, understanding structure formation in homeopathic remedies, modelling micro-plastics etc. He perceives "Research" as an essential to being an academic. "It challenges one to be creative and remain curious. It is truly rewarding to know that one's original work has impacted a particular area or contributed to the better understanding of the real world", he said. He believes that 'research' builds confidence and allows one to actively engage with students and colleagues both locally and internationally. He stated that "teaching is made more exciting by drawing on the latest research and publications relevant to that subject. Ideally, one should aim to be an inspirational teacher and a well-published researcher, these are not mutually exclusive".

He is thankful to his lecturers who were brilliant researchers and fantastic teachers. In the pursuit of research, he looks to a symmetry, beauty and truth in God's work. His wife and two children, Kyla and Lev remind him to keep things simple and real.



Professor
Michael Chapman

Professor Michael Chapman is a Researcher-in-Residence at the Durban University of Technology (DUT) in the Faculty of Arts & Design. He is a retired professor of English from the University of KwaZulu-Natal where he served as Head of Department and, for 10 years, as the Dean of the Faculty of Human Sciences. He joined DUT in 2015 with the aim to boost the research profile of the institution while assisting those pursuing, or planning to pursue doctoral research. His own research publications date back to the late 1970's. Professor Chapman began his university career as a lecturer at UNISA- and include 6 single-authored books, several large editorial projects and over 100 articles. "My 600-page history, Southern African Literatures (1996, remains a key work in the field while my most recent book, On Literacy Attachment in South Africa: Tough Love, appeared in 2022.

He has been an A-rated NRF researcher since 2003. Professor Chapman won the Bill Venter Award for Academic Writing and continues to be cited, both locally and internationally, as the landmark book on the literature of the southern African subcontinent and also is the recipient of the English Academy of Southern Africa Gold Medal, the 2018 recipient of the HSRC Medal for the Social Sciences and Humanities, and the SANLAM National Literary Award for South African English Poetry: A Modern Perspective. Professor Chapman conducts several workshops to develop capacity at DUT. He says one of the aims for the workshops he conducts with the DUT doctoral students is to 'demystify' doctoral study. "The key is to be clear, at the outset, in the purpose of one's topic and, in advance, try to envisage the whole as a manageable task". His advice for the doctoral students at DUT especially is that they should think of a doctoral structure of consolidating chapters that, on the completion of the doctorate, can be disaggregated as 6000-word journal articles, referring to arts disciplines. He emphasizes the importance of choosing a journal that is accredited and making sure that the researchers follow the stipulated guidelines of that chosen journal. His words of encouragement are to remember the adage "99% perspiration, 1% inspiration!".

Activities' Corner

Researchers and Research Support Staff Meet with Procurement to Streamline Processes

The meeting between the Research Office and Procurement at the Durban University of Technology that took place on the 3rd of May 2023 was a significant step towards enhancing collaboration between different units and streamlining processes between researchers, research support staff and procurement officers. The staff members came together to discuss ways to improve efficiency and effectiveness in acquiring research materials, services and equipment. In attendance was the Procurement Director – Dr. Nonhlanhla Gumbi, other staff members from procurement, the Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Innovation and Engagement – Professor Keo Motaung, the acting director of Research and Postgraduate Support – Dr. Vaneshree Govender (RPS), the director of the Institute for Water and Wastewater Technology (IWWT) – Professor Faizal Bux, the director of the Institute of Systems Science (ISS) – Professor Kevin Duffy, and members of staff from other units dealing with research services. The Research Office presented their specific requirements and timelines for upcoming projects, while the Procurement Department shared their expertise in sourcing and procurement strategies. The meeting fostered a productive dialogue, allowing both teams to align their objectives and explore innovative approaches to meet the institution's research needs within the provisions of the policy. The outcome of the meeting was a clear roadmap for future collaboration and a shared commitment to supporting the institution's research endeavours.

The Research and Postgraduate Support Directorate Inducts New Postgraduate Students



The Research and Postgraduate Support (RPS) Directorate at the Durban University of Technology recently organised a postgraduate induction program with the primary purpose of welcoming new postgraduate students. The induction aimed to provide a comprehensive overview of the institution's resources, services, and policies specific to postgraduate studies and the experiences of postgraduate students. The program included informative presentations, interactive workshops, and networking sessions designed to familiarise students with the research culture and academic expectations of their respective disciplines. Additionally, the induction program offered opportunities for students to become aware of research facilities, and connect with fellow postgraduate students. By organizing this induction, the RPS directorate ensures that new postgraduate students feel supported, informed, and well-prepared to embark on their research journey at the university.