



NUST BRIEF

Namibia's most prominent scientist lectures at NUST

Namibia's world-renowned scientist, Dr Jakob van Zyl, delivered a riveting public lecture on campus, much to the delight of a huge audience hundreds of students, academics and members of the general public who were in attendance. The event was organised in collaboration with the United States Embassy.

Dr van Zyl is a graduate of the University of Stellenbosch (Bachelor's degree) and California Institute of Technology (Caltech) (Master's and Doctorate). He joined the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) in 1986, where he started as a research scientist developing models to infer soil moisture from space-borne radar images. He has been based in the United States of America since 1982, and has assumed various roles such as being an academic teaching at Caltech. Currently, he is the Director for Solar System Exploration at JPL, where he is responsible for a portfolio exceeding USD\$750 million per year, which includes missions to Mars, asteroids Psyche, Vesta and Ceres, Jupiter, Europa, and the Saturnian system.

During the lecture, which was attended by science enthusiasts from all walks of life, Dr van



Dr Jakob van Zyl, Director, Solar Explorations: Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) (fourth from right); Dr Tjama Tjivikua, NUST Vice-Chancellor (second from right), pictured with Electrical/Electronic Engineering students.

Zyl discussed the results from recent Mars missions and what has been discovered so far about that planet and others, and their moons. He spoke about the evidence of the presence of water elsewhere in earth's Solar System, further discussing how this knowledge has fundamentally changed views of what is already known regarding conditions suitable for life to exist.

For nearly 60 years, NASA has been exploring space and the furthest probes have actually ventured beyond the confines of the Solar System. Space telescopes peep deep into the Universe and have discovered thousands of planetary systems, with numerous planets like the Earth orbiting other stars. The talk examined the wonders of earth's solar system as revealed by NASA missions.

Dr Tjama Tjivikua, the NUST Vice-Chancellor, expressed his gratitude to Dr van Zyl for flying the Namibian flag high on the international platform of this magnitude. He further underscored some new and exciting developments regarding NUST's contribution to aerospace technology and research in Namibia. He celebrated the friendship with Dr van Zyl.



Some of the participants who attended the Human Resources Management Symposium.

Symposium brought together HR professionals

The first-ever Human Resources Management (HRM) Symposium hosted by the Faculty of Management Sciences, in collaboration with North West University (South Africa) and Tilburg University (The Netherlands), was held on campus successfully. The theme of the symposium was: 'Role of HR Practitioners in Mitigating Nations Turbulence Amidst Global Economic Challenges.'

The event witnessed the participation and attendance of academics, students and industry practitioners as well as representatives of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises. The symposium was chaired by renowned professors in the HRM field from Tilburg University, Netherlands and Northwest University, South Africa. Marius Meyer, CEO of South Africa Board of People Practices (SABPP) also gave a presentation.

Different HR practitioners from academia and industry presented stimulating topics in the discipline. Critical HR discourses during the event focused on the impact of economic hardships on organisations, with a particular focus on the behaviour, attitude, engagement, commitment and satisfaction of employees. Service delivery, business competitiveness, as well employer/employee relations were other focal points. More than 50 participants attended the event.

There are plans to host the symposium on an annual basis with more participation from local and international stakeholders.

Private sector's role in curbing corruption

A NUST Public Management Senior Lecturer, in the Faculty of Human Sciences, Dr Johan Coetzee, recently presented a paper titled: 'The Role of the Private Sector in Tackling Corruption.' The paper, commissioned by the Institute of Public Policy and Research (IPPR), surveyed attitudes towards corruption in the private sector in Namibia and outlines steps the private enterprises can take to help fight corruption.

In the study, Coetzee states that the private sector and civil society need to unite and use the media to mobilise public support for disclosing of public documents, for audit assessments, and/or full audits of large-scale corruption cases.

"The private sector and civil society need to coordinate in order to form a united front to negotiate with government on alternatives to reduce corruption in the public and private sector interface, for example, in terms of border control corruption, and delays in the approval of licences and permits," reads the report.

He acknowledges that corruption occurs in all countries, however, it is in the developing world where the impact of corruption is most destructive.

He says the reason is "corruption mainly impacts the vulnerable, i.e. the abject poor, uneducated and disabled in developing countries who cannot 'afford' corruption compared to people in developed countries with a much higher standard of living and who are much less vulnerable."

Coetzee is adamant that it is possible to deduce that the private sector does have a critical role to play and an undeniable accountability in reducing corruption in the public-private sector interface.

"The private sector should refuse to pay bribes, expose corrupt public servants and public transactions because of protection provided by Section 52 (4) of the Anti-Corruption Act [Act No.8 of 2003]. Questionable transactions should be reported to the media to increase transparency as exposure is the most



Dr Johan Coetzee, Senior Lecturer: Faculty of Human Sciences.

appropriate cure for corruption," he adds.

Coetzee further argues that a private sector that is in agreement that corruption is one of the top issues reducing business and investment, can put pressure on government to reform 'hot spots' and reduce corruption in the public and private sector interface, e.g. procurement, monopolies and cartels.

According to the Corruption Perception Index of Transparency International (TI), Namibia has always been one of the top five least corrupt African countries. "However, a rating of mostly below 5 out of 10 since 2004, indicates we are mediocre, not good but not bad, just 'hanging in there,'" concluded Coetzee.

NUST wishes students all the best with the exams.