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## Local filmmakers win Best Adventure Film at world festival

Bhekani Dlamini

Emerging filmmakers, the Fisher brothers, have produced an award winning film, *Halo Effect* which recently won the Best Adventure Film in X-Dance, the biggest action sports film festival in the world. X-dance is the sports festival of the internationally renowned Sundance Film Festival.

Dave Fisher has a BTech degree in Video Technology from the Durban University of Technology (DUT). Steve Fisher is a professional kayaker who has now turned film maker. They are both from East London, Eastern Cape. Dave was a part-time lecturer in DUT's Video Technology Department in 2010, he is now in Uganda.

The film is about a kayaking adventure to the white water meccas of Iceland and Norway where the film was shot. It follows the action of running big waterfalls in kayaks, but also shows what goes on behind the scenes when things go wrong, and they do - broken bones and injuries, getting stuck on a mountain and having to be rescued and brushes with the law. The goal was to run waterfalls. Everything that happens along the way is called the *Halo Effect*. The film shows the whole adventure and not just the kayaking. "The inspiration behind doing this film came from wanting to combine our interests and experience both as athletes and film makers while being able to travel to interesting destinations. We wanted to produce a film that would appeal to kayakers and non-kayakers," says Dave. The project took six months to complete.

Since this was their debut film, they were honoured just to be selected. "We weren't expecting to win an award so it feels great to have done so." Since they are emerging film makers, the recognition has gone a long way in getting their name heard. The film has generated a lot of interest in our direction, so having "X-Dance Winner" as a title really means a lot," he added.

"Our goal was just to get into the festival, but we ended up winning Best Adventure Film and received six other category nominations as well," he says. His brother, Steve was recently in Salt Lake City, Utah to collect the award. "This is a huge achievement for us, especially considering we are a two man team with such a low budget," explains Dave.

Dave is excited that their work had more nominations than any other film at X-Dance. *Life Cycle*, naturally beat us in some big categories, but with no expectations we can't believe how well received the film was, he says.

The Fisher brothers are in and out of the country planning a film tour around the USA, which they are hoping to shoot later this year.

Website: [www.fishmunga.com](http://www.fishmunga.com)

Link to the trailer on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vk8puLJXuvU>

*Halo Effect*, winner of the Best Adventure Film and nominated for Best Director, Best Cinematography, Best Film overall, Best Documentary, Best Story Telling and Best Emerging Film Maker.



Pictured above: Dave Fisher (right), Steve Fisher (left) and Andrew Pollock (middle), BTech graduate.



Above is a still photograph from the movie: *Halo Effect*.





## Editor's Corner

Raylene Captain-Hasthibeer  
Manager: Communications

This issue of *The conDUiT* highlights the immense talent we produce. The lead story on the front page "Local filmmakers win Best Adventure Film in world festival" shows how our graduates are making waves in their fields, around the world. I checked out the video on YouTube, and their work is outstanding!

The article on page 3, "Master Brewer Award" details the rise and rise of Vanitha Engelbrecht, a Brewing Area manager at South African Breweries.

The Communications Department welcomes leads on any potential stories – both these stories came to our attention via members of staff – Cary Burnett and Shakeel Ori – thanks! Both articles have garnered much media coverage, and go some way in repairing the negative publicity we received during the strike at the beginning of the year. Please keep us posted about anything that may be newsworthy – from graduates excelling in their fields to community projects your department is involved in.

*The conDUiT* has just undergone a facelift. We have refreshed the look and feel of this publication, and hope to iron out any further wrinkles in the months to come – watch this space! Feedback is welcome – drop me a line at [raylene@dut.ac.za](mailto:raylene@dut.ac.za) with any suggestions.

Ciao,  
Raylene Captain-Hasthibeer

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## Student Engagement at DUT

In 2010 DUT joined other Higher Education Institutions (HEI) in South Africa to focus on their student experience of success through a Student Engagement project. The project on Student Engagement was commissioned by the Council on Higher Education in 2009 (Strydom and Mentz, 2010) to better understand what it is that students do, as well as what institutions do that impact on student success. Delysia Timm is co-ordinating the Student Engagement project as the Advisor: Special Projects in the office of the DVC – Academic.

Mrs Timm has been working together with the University of Free State since July 2010 to administer the South African Survey on Student Engagement (SASSE) at DUT. The co-operation and commitment of staff and students in departments across all Faculties meant that she was able to get a representative sample of 2376 students from Durban, Riverside and Indumiso campuses. The gender, race and qualification type of the sample was representative of the overall DUT student population.



The UFS SASSE team that administered the survey in July 2010. (L-R) Marilet Kotze, Heinrich van Wyk, Pearl Mogatle, Delysia Timm, Eric Olehile, Vaida van der Merwe

SASSE provides data at a systemic level with perspectives on student engagement that are both institution specific and comparative with the other HEI that participated in the study. In this brief report, Mrs Timm will provide comparative feedback on DUT student responses on the benchmarks for effective educational practice as identified in the project. She explained, "The benchmarks, based on 42 key questions from the SASSE survey, measure the degree of active and collaborative learning, level of academic challenge, provision of enriching educational experiences, the extent to which the campus environment is supportive and the extent of student-staff Interaction."

Both first year and senior DUT students reported significantly higher levels of interaction with staff at DUT than the students from the other participating institutions in the overall SASSE sample. The students' participation in active and collaborative learning at DUT is not significantly different compared to the overall sample. DUT students' experience of the campus environment shows that more support can be provided by the institution for them to thrive socially and to cope with their non-academic responsibilities. Hence, DUT should endeavour to provide a supportive campus environment as well as opportunities for enriching educational experiences at a level that will result in our students experience being comparable to those at other participating institutions. Seventy eight percent of DUT students reported that they attend at least 75% of their scheduled academic activities with senior students experiencing higher levels of academic challenge than first-year students. More than three-quarters of the students reported that their educational experience at DUT was positive. There are many other survey items which will be elaborated on in future issues of *The conDUiT*.

Mrs Timm has a complete set of the data (SASSE, 2010) which will be further analysed together with all the other survey data such as the Student Satisfaction Survey and the Subject (PRE 001) and Lecturer evaluations (PRE 002) to design and support interventions to improve student success. An intervention which has already started at DUT is the First Year Student Experience, a fundamental learning module for all students.

She said, "I will be meeting with Student-staff committees that have been established in the academic departments to discuss their experiences that have contributed to their positive student engagement at DUT and to launch the "Tell us about it" student engagement project. This will be a visually-enriched project for all students and is part of an international study on the student experience called - The Visions of Students Today." You can learn all about it from the 2-minute YouTube video-clip which you can access at:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KUMWEmeFlyU&feature=mfu\\_in\\_order&list=UL](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KUMWEmeFlyU&feature=mfu_in_order&list=UL)

All are welcome to join the student engagement discussion forum at:

<http://groups.google.com/group/dut-student-engagement> then click on Join Group.

Please contact Delysia Timm for more information or to make contributions on student engagement at DUT. Email: [timmdn@dut.ac.za](mailto:timmdn@dut.ac.za) or Tel: 031 373 2166.

## Academics in favour of social networks

Naledi Hlefane



From left to right: Dr Mikhail Peppas, Vaneshree Govender, Prof Dee Pratt, Prof Sbusiso Moyo and Anthony Tollow.  
Photographer: Naledi Hlefane

The Research and Development Directorate at DUT were proud to host a presentation by the dynamic and witty Professor Dee Pratt. Her research topic revolved around the importance of software and social networks and the role these play in building research capacity. A common topic of conversation among academics currently, Prof Pratt explained that social and new media are undoubtedly the future of online media. With this in mind she sought to discover how researchers could exploit these mediums for the publication of research by liaising with other academics.

In her presentation she focused on three social networks, Sharepoint, Facebook and Moodle. She then looked at software: Vox Proxy, Endnote and The Writing Tutor Program. These she explored and compared in terms of their different features and also analysed how other academics have used these sites.

Having previously not been social network savvy, Prof Pratt said researching the topic was a learning curve for her. "I had to sign up on Facebook, something I swore I would never do. But I was amazed by how much I was able to do on this site," she said. With Facebook being a universal site, she found it was a good advertising platform. Testimony to this was the DUT Graphic Design group on Facebook. By uploading projects on the page and allowing the public to view it, they are able to promote themselves.

Prof Pratt discussed the advantages and disadvantages of the DUT staff site Sharepoint and Moodle. She said Sharepoint is restricting because of its small population with which to share information, unlike Moodle where lecturers interact with students. She made reference to the Journalism Department's experience with Moodle saying the BTech class are able to converse with lecturers and among themselves even after lectures on the chats available on the site.

In conclusion, she said deciding which site or software is more suitable for academics is merely a matter of preference. What matters is the impact of publishing your research. One's work should generate further research topics.



# Five minute interview with Professor Ahmed C Bawa

Vice-Chancellor and Principal (VC)



Raylene Captain-Hashthibeer recently interviewed the VC at his offices on the Steve Biko Campus.

## **Prof, what would you say is your number one priority?**

My number one priority is trying to understand how to make DUT a student centered institution which focuses on building the capacity of students to learn, to grow emotionally and to understand the responsibilities that they bear to contribute to broader society.

## **What was your first job?**

My first job was as a sales clerk at Umvoti Farmers Equipment in Greytown, in the Midlands of KwaZulu-Natal.

## **What are the key student issues?**

It seems to me that the key issue is really to understand how to provide students with an enabling environment. And one in which they can strive towards and reach their fullest potential.

## **What do you consider to be your greatest achievement?**

Being the father of two daughters and seeing them grow and develop and struggle with life.

## **What are your priorities for academic and research capacity?**

My greatest challenge is really to develop a strong and deep seated intellectual culture at DUT, so that both students and staff identify with the institution as a place which is entrenched with learning and the quest for new knowledge.

## **What's your favourite city in the world?**

Wow – good question! (*After some deliberation*) Outside of South Africa, I am enthralled with the hustle and bustle of New York. And I'm intrigued by the pace of life and the demeanour of the people of Accra.

## **Prof, what concerns do you have about the budget at the university?**

My deep concern about DUT's budget is the fact that we are unable to do really interesting things at the university because of the pressure of what absolutely needs to be done. And we cannot help but focus on the state of the campus and the need to improve the quality of student accommodation.

## **What was the last book you bought?**

“Snow” by Orhan Pamuk, the Turkish novelist who won the Nobel Prize in Literature a couple of years ago. It's an absolutely fascinating novel that explores the social political lives of people in a small Turkish town close to the border with Armenia - as a way of exploring the rise of different sorts of fundamentalisms.

## Master Brewer Award

Bhekani Dlamini

Vanitha Engelbrecht has been the first in the history of the South African Breweries Limited (SAB) to receive the James S Hough Award after passing the Master Brewer Examinations with distinction. This is a prestigious award granted by the Institute of Brewing and Distilling (IBD), which is an independent organisation/body based in the UK that specializes in brewing and distilling worldwide. As the winner she received £1000 and an engraved quaich (shallow two-handled drinking bowl).

Engelbrecht has a BTech degree from DUT and is a Brewing Area Manager at the South African Breweries Limited. She excelled in her Diploma Master Brewer examination which consists of five papers that cover Value Chain Management from Brewing Raw Materials to Packaging including Utilities, Finance and Environmental Management.

A recommendation for the James S Hough Award is made by the IBD Board of Examiners for the candidate who achieves the highest pass in all four modules, plus the Case Study Paper, of the Master Brewer examination. Awarded to the highest distinction at M.Brew (Diploma Master Brewer). This award is open to all M.Brew candidates. The Board of Examiners are responsible for selecting the winner, based on examination results.

“It is the highest honour one can receive. I am the only person in SAB to have won this award. This is a very prestigious award that is not awarded every year. My name will now be written in gold on a wooden roll of honour board in the IBD's meeting room in Mayfair, London. I was invited to the United Kingdom as a VIP to collect my award at an Awards Dinner,” comments a delighted Engelbrecht.

She wrote two exam papers in 2007 and three papers in 2009. I took a break in 2008 to have my son who is now three years old. Her son, Joshua, was 14 months old when she wrote the last three papers. That was definitely a challenge for her and her husband. However she thanks her husband for his support throughout her studies.

Engelbrecht advises that to be a brewer one can choose quite a few jobs within SAB. She chose to move into Line Management and has managed all the brewing areas within SAB, namely brewhouse, cellars and filtration. She says a line manager is responsible for the overall quality, cost, delivery, morale and safety of a specific area. Engelbrecht adds that it is definitely a specialized field as a graduate straight from school will not be able to manage a brewing area. She was awarded a bursary from SAB and on completion of her university studies, joined SAB in 2002. She started off as a technical trainee and completed a brewing traineeship as well as an engineering traineeship within two years. She was the first and only person to have completed two traineeships within SAB in South Africa.

Moving upward through the ranks in the SAB plants, she then moved to Port Elizabeth in 2004 where she worked as a project engineer in the engineering department and team leader in the packaging department. She spent a year in PE before moving to Johannesburg. Engelbrecht initially worked at the Rosslyn Brewery in Pretoria where she worked as Process Engineer, Cellars Area Manager and then Filtration Area Manager. In 2010 she moved to the Johannesburg Brewery, Alrode Brewery, where she worked as the Filtration Area Manager, then the Brewhouse Area Manager and is currently the Cellars Area Manager. In between her roles at Alrode Brewery, she was seconded to Prospector Brewery in KZN where she acted as Brewmaster for four months.



Vanitha Engelbrecht at work

Picture Supplied

## Research Commons



DUT Library provides a multipurpose centre on Steve Biko and ML Sultan campuses for MTech, DTech students and staff.

The Research Commons facility was designed to promote research in DUT, by creating an enabling environment for postgraduate students and academics. The environment is conducive for learning as well as conducting statistical analysis with various research packages.

This state of the art facility offers one-stop-shop access to printed and electronic research resources including printing, photocopying and scanning services, emails, blogs and Skype access. Postgraduate students are assured of a personalised service from the postgraduate librarian, Nhlanhla Nhkelo.