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PSSA News

Newsletter of the Physiology Society of Southern Africa (PSSA)

Physiologists on the move

Associate Professor Faadiel Essop, Stellenbosch University



Prof Faadiel Essop, an expert in metabolic physiology of muscle tissue, was appointed recently as Associate Professor in the Department of Physiological Sciences at Stellenbosch University (he was previously at the Hatter Institute, UCT). Since his arrival on 1 February, 2007, he has presented 15 undergraduate lectures, 9 Honours-level lectures and 3 third-year practicals. In an interview for the PSSA Newsletter, Prof Kathy Myburgh asked him about this "Baptism-of-fire":

"It was one helluva of a journey, but it was fun. I've never been that busy, to be honest! I felt like a student, sitting late nights with the textbooks open", he said, followed by a chuckle, and "That is the off-the-record response!" However, as you know, nothing is really off the record amongst friends and colleagues of the PSSA community.

"Seriously, it was challenging, but stimulating. I enjoy working with people and I think I struck a rapport with the students. Well, we'll see when the feedback forms' data comes back".

As those of us who already have made the switch from full-time research to the combined academic function know, Faadiel has already discovered some unsuspected benefits of teaching: the lecturer learns a lot in the process about the broader framework of the field. In a surprised tone, Faadiel commented: "Teaching has even spawned some new ideas for my research programme. I told my wife that it has been a big change, but for the better!"

According to Faadiel, he has found the Department generally very friendly, but a bit quiet. He likes the vibey University town feel and the leafy streets of campus. I noticed that his office is very tidy, with personal touches like art-work and posters. Only the whiteboard is indicative of the multiple research ideas and projects he is juggling at the same time. We have been lucky to welcome a new postdoctoral fellow and 3 new masters students, courtesy of the Metabolism Group. "There is great potential if we can get the balance right between teaching and research and I hope to make a strong contribution". [A fitting final comment when the interviewer is the HoD!]

News from Physiology Departments

University of Kwazulu Natal

New appointment

[Ms Makhosazane Zungu](#)

Previously a postgraduate student at the Hatter Heart Research Institute at UCT, Makhosazane was appointed as a lecturer at the beginning of this year.

University of The Witwatersrand

New appointments

Dr Colleen Flanagan

Colleen has joined the School of Physiology from the University of Cape Town and Groote Schuur Hospital. Her research focuses on the structure and function of G protein-coupled receptors that are important in reproductive health. She is particularly interested in the mechanism of activation of the GnRH receptor and the molecular mechanisms by which the CCR5 chemokine receptor mediates HIV infection. She continues to co-direct the MRC Research Group for Receptor Biology with Profs Arieh Katz at UCT and Robert Millar of the UK-MRC Human Reproductive Sciences Research Unit.

Ms Dieder Hartmann, will be joining the School of Physiology as a lecturer in June.

Recent promotions

Professor David Gray

Dave was promoted to Full Professor in the School of Physiology. He also is Head of School, having taken over at the helm from Professor Helen Laburn last year. He will be featured in “Physiologists on the move” in the next edition of the newsletter.

Associate Professor Andrea Fuller

Andrea was promoted to Associate Professor at the beginning of this year. She also has been appointed as the Director of the Brain Function Research Group, taking over from Professor Duncan Mitchell who retired at the end of last year. Duncan is still active in the School of Physiology as an Honorary Professorial Research Fellow and a Mellon Foundation Mentor.

University of Pretoria

For the latest information on the Department of Physiology, please visit the website at <http://www.up.ac.za/academic/physiology>

North-West University

Recent promotion

Associate Professor Alta Schutte

Alta was promoted to Associate Professor at the North-West University. Her research interests are in cardiovascular physiology, specifically, vascular function, inflammation and obesity.

University of Johannesburg

New appointment

Selvan Pillay

Selvan Pillay has been appointed as a lecturer. Selvan joins the University of Johannesburg from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Nelson Mandela School of Medicine.

Walter Sisulu University

Recent promotion

Associate Professor Ekambaram Umopathy

Ekambaram was promoted to Associate Professor in the department of Physiology at the beginning of this year.

NEWS FLASH! PSSA 2008

Note. The University of Pretoria will host the [2008 congress of the Physiology Society of Southern Africa](#), from the 16th - 19th September.

2008 is the centenary year for the University of Pretoria.

ERRATUM: We would like to apologise to [Prof Kanigula Mubagwa](#) for spelling his name incorrectly in the last edition of the newsletter. *Editorial team.*

PSSA 2007 (September 9-12)

For an update on the congress visit the website:

<http://web.wits.ac.za/Conferences/Physiology/Home.htm>

For online registration registration:

<http://web.wits.ac.za/Conferences/Physiology/Registration.htm>

Who said teaching was not a joke?

Students can bring some humour into the mundane task of marking assignments, tests and exams. A few examples from exam scripts follow:

Q. Explain the high percentage of reticulocytes in the patient

A.1. *Due to the hypoxia, the kidney secretes erythropeicytes which are converted to reticulocytes.*

A2. *Erythropoietin sends a massage to the bone marrow.*

A3. *The blood loss makes iron deficiency convert the bone marrow red blood cells into reticulocytes which then escape into the blood.*

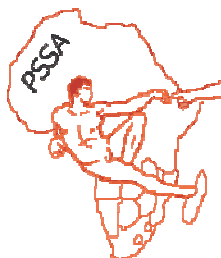
From the Editors' desk

The Newsletter needs your support!!! Please submit newsclips (promotions, appointments, prizes, awards, vacancies, anecdotes, student achievements, congress feedback, etc) to the editorial team:

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OR

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PHYSIOLOGY SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

PSSA on the Web!

Visit <http://academic.sun.ac.za/medphys/pssa.htm>