LIBRARY LEADERSHIP CHANGES

In terms of the new staffing structure for the University of Kwazulu-Natal Library, there will be an overarching Director of Library Services and a campus librarian for each of the five campuses, namely Westville, Edgewood, Howard College, Medical School and Pietermaritzburg. The Director has still to be appointed. Prior to the merger, the Westville, Howard College and Pietermaritzburg campuses each had a university librarian. The positions of campus librarian for Edgewood and Medical School are however, new.

After three years of vacancies at campus librarian level at the three original sites, four out of five posts have been filled with effect from 1st September 2005:

Nora Buchanan has been appointed campus librarian of the Howard College libraries. Nora has completed postgraduate qualifications in librarianship to Masters level and is currently working towards a Ph.D. Her library career at the University of Natal began in 1982 and she was appointed to the post of Deputy University Librarian in 1987, with overall responsibility for the development of electronic information. She was acting University Librarian from 2003 until her current appointment.

Nonhlanhla Ngcobo has been appointed campus librarian for Medical School. She has a social science degree and a post graduate diploma and Honours degree in information studies. Nonhlanhla commenced her library career at Durban Municipal Library in 1994, gathering experience in a wide range of activities including responsibility for that library’s database and work in various branches. She joined the University in 2003 as a subject librarian at the Medical School library where she has worked until her current appointment.

For Edgewood, Roshini Pather has been appointed as campus librarian. Roshini completed her basic library training in 1989 and worked at the State Library until taking up a subject librarian post in the EG Malherbe library in 1995. She completed her Masters summa cum laude in 2005.

On the Pietermaritzburg campus, Praversh Sukram has been appointed as campus librarian. Praversh has worked in the Pietermaritzburg library for over 20 years, completing all his undergraduate and postgraduate library qualifications part time during this period, as well as an MBA. Until his new appointment, Praversh worked in the Main Library subject librarian unit.

The post at the Westville campus remains vacant and this post will be advertised externally in the near future.

The Library now falls under the DVC: Research and thus reports to Professor Bawa. Over the past few years the library has reported to no less than six DVC’s or equivalents. Professor Dave Walker has steered the Library through the merger process and continues to oversee library matters until December of this year.

Library staff wish the appointees well in their new posts. Rosemary Kuhn
Book orders

Academic departments are reminded that the closing date for the receipt of all new book orders is 15 October. Please forward new book requests to the relevant subject librarians.

Exam period: Library opening hours on Sundays

Extended opening hours will be in operation over the November exam period.

All five campus libraries will be open on the Sundays of the 6th, 13th, 20th and 27th of November.

Sunday hours at Westville, Howard College and Pietermaritzburg will be 8.30 am – 5 pm.

Medical School will be open on Sundays from 9 am till 5 pm and Edgewood from 9 am till 1 pm.

New Library Advisory Committee

A new Library Advisory Committee for the UKZN Library has been established. Its first meeting was held on 30th August. The Advisory Committee has requested sub-committees to investigate the possible effects of the merger process on the location of stock, and implications for space, shelving and the like.

New Library System

As detailed in the previous Library Newsletter, the project plan for the new web-based Unicorn Integrated Library System was scheduled to go-live in mid-November. This was a joint project of the eastern seaboard Association of Libraries (esAL) a member of the eastern seaboard Association of Tertiary Institutions (esATI). Since then UKZN has withdrawn its membership of esATI and as a result, the UKZN Library is no longer part of esAL. Consequently UKZN Library will be going it alone in the implementation of a new library system. The good news is that the choice of Sirsi’s Unicorn system has been endorsed but the bad news is that we now have to start the configuration process from scratch which has caused an unavoidable delay. Our first project planning meeting with the South African agent of Unicorn will be in early October this year with the expected go-live date for the first phase of the project now being June 2006.

Electronic resources

- On each campus library’s website is a section for e-books. Different campuses have access to different materials and collections of materials. Apart from subject specific encyclopedias and the Oxford English Dictionary, new additions for all campuses, are World of Learning - an international guide to universities and research institutions - and the International Who's Who.

- A new digital book, available at http://chnm.gmu.edu/digitalhistory/, is: Digital history: a guide to gathering, preserving and presenting the past on the web by DJ Cohen and R Rosenzweig. Published recently by the University of Pennsylvania Press, this book (available in print as well) is aimed at historians, archivists and museum curators and amateur enthusiasts who wish to produce work online. The book covers the different genres of history websites, different technologies involved and how to choose for a particular project, site design, digitization of materials, integrity and copyright issues and preservation. This URL has been posted on the Howard College library website.

- World Political Science Abstracts is now available online via the CSA Illumina platform. SciFinder (Chemical Abstracts) has been loaded on two public workstations in the Pietermaritzburg Main Library. SciFinder is listed under Databases on library websites with a link to installation instructions.

Pietermaritzburg campus

- July saw the commencement of the seven year maintenance cycle in the Main Library. Staff working areas and Short Loan have been re-carpeted, the inside of the building painted and many repairs undertaken. The project will continue into next year as the entire library is to be re-carpeted. This will require that all the books and journals be temporarily relocated. The university community will be kept informed of developments and possible associated problems of access to the stock.
• The computer replacement programme for the library is almost complete with most public access pcs and staff workstations having been replaced. Some additional workstations are being installed.

• Formal library instruction was provided to first year Academic Literacy and Academic Communication Skills students as well as Science Foundation students at the beginning of the second semester. Another round of training in electronic resources was offered at the Life Sciences campus during the third week of September by the Life Sciences library staff.

• Currently on loan to the Main Library is a display: *Isishweshwe: indigo cloth in Southern Africa*. This photographic display is part of a bigger exhibition researched and curated by Dr Juliette Leeb Du Toit of the Centre for Visual Arts. Kirsten Nieser provided curatorial assistance. The display ends on 11 October.

### Alan Paton Centre and Struggle Archives

The 12th Alan Paton Lecture, “Transforming the judiciary: the politics of the judiciary in a democratic South Africa” was given by Advocate Geoff Budlender to an appreciative audience on 25 August 2005 in the Colin Webb Hall, UKZN Pietermaritzburg Campus. Geoff Budlender is an Advocate of the High Court of South Africa, a member of the Cape Bar, and Chairperson of the Council of the University of Cape Town. In 2003, he was honoured by the Cape Law Society, who named him Human Rights Lawyer of the Year.

He spoke about transformation being the fundamental premise of the South African Constitution, and the need for transformation of the judiciary. He spoke of the need for transformation in three ways: in demographic terms; in its underlying attitudes and in being more responsive to the goals of the democratically elected government. The full text can be obtained from the Alan Paton Centre: koopmanj@ukzn.ac.za

The second function, which was held on 15 September 2005, was the Peter Brown Memorial Seminar on *Land Issues*. The Heritage Day Seminar has been renamed in honour of the late Peter Brown, who was instrumental in the setting up of the Alan Paton Centre (APC), and who provided great support as an active member of the APC Advisory Council over the last 15 years of his life. The speakers were John Aitchison, who chaired the seminar and gave the introductory speech; Richard Clacey, who gave a historical perspective on the Association for Rural Advancement (AFRA); Richard Chadya who spoke about the Zimbabwe land issue; Rauri Alcock from the Church Agricultural Project; Mangoliso Khubeka, who gave a stirring speech about the Landless People’s Movement, and Graham Philpott of the Church Land Project. The seminar was well-attended and audience participation was excellent.

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### Howard College campus

Following on from the 9/11 attack in New York, the September Project ([www.theseptemberproject.org/](http://www.theseptemberproject.org/)) has been established as a grassroots effort to encourage public events on freedom, democracy and citizenship in libraries, to be held on or around September 11 each year. This September, over 500 libraries worldwide held specific events that focused on these issues.

The EG Malherbe Library celebrated the Project with a display highlighting the issues around democracy, freedom of speech and the press, and terrorism. Because these issues, since 9/11, have been media-dependent, a display of newspaper articles focusing on issues related to 9/11 and its aftermath was included. People entering the library were given the opportunity to comment on these issues by means of paper on a flip-chart which was part of the display.

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### Westville campus news

• The annual Book Exhibition was once again held during the July vacation. The theme was “Something for everyone” and some 25 000 titles, in various media, were on display. 4000 titles were purchased for the Library.

• The Library supported the University’s Open Day held on 24 July with displays of the range of information resources available both print and electronic in various subject areas. Library staff were available to conduct tours and answer questions.

• Subject librarian for Science, Ms Ashika Pramlal, has returned to the Library after a two and a half year absence during which time she lectured in the School of Human Resources. She can be found on level 9, ext. 8121.
This book is set in Hermanus in the Western Cape and its main characters are the Whale Caller, an otherwise unnamed pensioner who plays his horn for whales; his favourite whale, Sharisha, a southern right whale who visits Hermanus each summer; and the woman in his life, Saluni who is the town drunk. On the sidelines is Mr Yodd, a hermit who apparently inhabits a rock rabbits’ cave and whose function is to act as the Whale Caller’s and then Saluni’s confessor; and the Bored Twins, a couple of pre-adolescent girls with beautiful voices but without any social sense or conscience, who are left at home alone while their parents work for a wine farmer.

The narrative ambles deceptively along in Mda’s inimitable blend of magic realism and deliberate lack of social comment, giving us some idea of the Whale Caller’s background and wandering life until the present, when his deep attachment to Sharisha is sidelined by his growing relationship with Saluni. She moves in with him and takes over his life, obsessing him and occasionally abandoning him for the Bored Twins. Saluni cannot understand why the Whale Caller loves the whale Sharisha and longs for her summer visits, and gradually grows to hate her. She does her best to destroy the Whale Caller’s love for the whale and gets him to follow her on a rambling journey around the Western Cape. On their return, his frustrated longing for Sharisha leads him to play for her and unthinkingly lure her into shallow water, where she straddles and in spite of frantic efforts at rescue, eventually has to be destroyed. Saluni cannot bear to watch his pain and runs away to the Bored Twins, where a combination of her own drunkenness and their idiocy lead to her own death. The Whale Caller calls desperately on Mr Yodd for help but the hermit’s cave is blocked as the result of an enormous wave. In desperation he decides to walk the towns of the Western Cape as a penitent for the rest of his life.

The deceptively lazy pace of the narration does not prepare the reader for the speed and buildup of the disastrous set of events which lead to the destruction of two of the main characters. One moment they are plodding along in the life they have chosen (not middle-class, certainly, but Mda never allows the reader to see them as low-lifes) and the next it is abruptly over. The tragedy develops consistently through the novel, but it is so subtly done that the reader only recognizes this in hindsight.

The setting of the book is convincing. Mda’s skill at getting inside his characters and manipulating not only the reality he presents but also his readers is impressive and makes this a very worthwhile read. The book is a worthy successor to the very funny *The Madonna of Excelsior* (2002), although more lyrical in style.

Zakes Mda is best known as a dramatist, but he has other strings to his bow. UKZN University Libraries hold, in our book collections, eleven of his plays, one of his collections of poems, three of his contributions to academic debates, and five of his novels, of which *The whale caller* is the most recent. He also paints, composes, makes films, teaches creative writing at Ohio University, keeps bees in the Eastern Cape, and is involved in the Market Theatre and the Southern African Multimedia AIDS Trust in Johannesburg.

Catherine Dubbeld