



## 2019: Marching Forward Together

Since 2007, the year after I became director of the University of Missouri South Africa Education Program (UMSAEP), I have written the opening remarks to our annual newsletter. Normally, I reflect back on the highlights of the previous year. However, given the very unusual circumstances in which you read this, I think it is important to start by acknowledging the substantial impact that coronavirus is having across the world.

At the time I write this, South Africa is essentially locked down for the next several weeks, as is much of the U.S. No one yet knows when international travel can safely resume. For a program that provides international opportunities for research and teaching collaborations, much of our work is currently on hold as our universities deal with the ongoing crisis.

Nonetheless, this will pass and the time will come when we will resume traveling. As this global pandemic makes abundantly clear, we are all interconnected. The UMSAEP shows that interconnectedness can be a very positive force for good if we work together. So, while we struggle to tackle the challenges coronavirus raises, let us take a couple of minutes to reflect back on the successes we had in 2019.

From the beginning of the University of Missouri (UM) System/University of Western Cape (UWC) partnership, faculty travelled to UWC or to one of the four UM System universities for professional development, research and/or teaching. Together, administrators from both institutions have assessed collaborative efforts and determined how they might strengthen the links between UM System and UWC. Indeed, the partnership has endured and flourished largely because of solid support from both UM System and UWC leadership, despite the fact that the UM System has had seven presidents and UWC four rectors since 1986.

President Choi has enthusiastically supported the UMSAEP since taking office in March 2017. His first trip to UWC in May 2019 deepened his already great appreciation for the breadth and depth of the partnership. President Choi was warmly received by Rector Pretorius and his management team and experienced the genuine friendship that marks this special relationship. More details about his trip can be found below.



*Shown from left to right: Executive Assistant Beulah Hendricks, UMSAEP Director Rod Uphoff, UM System President Mun Choi and UWC Rector Tyrone Pretorius*

During President Choi's visit, Justice Albie Sachs, a former member of the Constitutional Court of South Africa, hosted President Choi in his family home. The visit was a happy reunion because earlier in May, Justice Sachs had received an honorary degree from MU and spoke at the MU School of Law's commencement ceremony. During that visit, President Choi and his wife Suzanne hosted Justice Sachs and his wife Vanessa. Learn more about Justice Sachs, a renowned jurist and one of the architects of the South African constitution, in the News in Brief.

Since 1986, the UMSAEP has been instrumental in establishing a strong relationship between all four universities of the UM System and UWC, and has established great opportunities for cooperative teaching, research and learning. I hope we can continue to build these opportunities and relationships to make the UMSAEP an even stronger program as we move forward together. I encourage you to reach out to me if you have any questions about the program or wish to participate in the UMSAEP activities.

Best wishes,  
Rod Uphoff, Director of UMSAEP and Professor Emeritus

**2019 Summary Report**

Our 2017 UMSAEP Report, presented to President Choi, provided an overview of our many accomplishments for the preceding 15 years. That report and the follow-up 2018 Summary Report are posted on the UMSAEP website. Please see the [new 2019 Summary Report](#) to learn more about specific outputs from 2019, including grants, publications and other activities.

**Other 2019 reports, as well as those from previous years, are available at the [UMSAEP website](#).**

## Faculty Exchanges

From the very beginning of the UMSAEP, faculty exchanges have enriched the lives of the faculty members who have traveled or hosted. Current UWC Rector Tyrone Pretorius has spoken of how his trips to Columbia, Missouri, in 1989 and 1992 benefited his career.

Faculty participants also have extremely positive experiences, such as UWC Professor Chris Arendse who traveled to MU in 2019 to work with Professor Suchi Guha. But Professor Arendse indicates that faculty exchanges benefit students at both institutions. [His trip report](#) reflects how the collaboration successfully draws upon the strengths of partners at each university. As Professor Arendse notes, collaboration between the MU and UWC physics departments is having “a definite positive impact on the intellectual and career advancement of both young and established researchers.”

## Student Exchanges

Each year, UM System students travel to Cape Town on faculty-led study abroad programs. Professor Ron Stodghill, a MU journalism professor, led one such program for six MU journalism students in May 2019. These six students: Janae McKenzie, Isabelle Robles, Tristen Rouse, Carli Sitwell, Emma Veidt and Bobbi Watts captured the amazing experiences they had through stories they produced, which [can be found on the Mizzou South Africa](#) blog.

In addition, MU Professor Rod Uphoff took 11 MU law students for an intersession course in January 2019 and 15 law students for a joint program with UWC law faculty and students in the summer.

MU Professors Carolyn Orbann and Lynette Phillips brought 16 health profession students in July 2019 for a service learning program in Fisantekraal, a township near Durbanville.

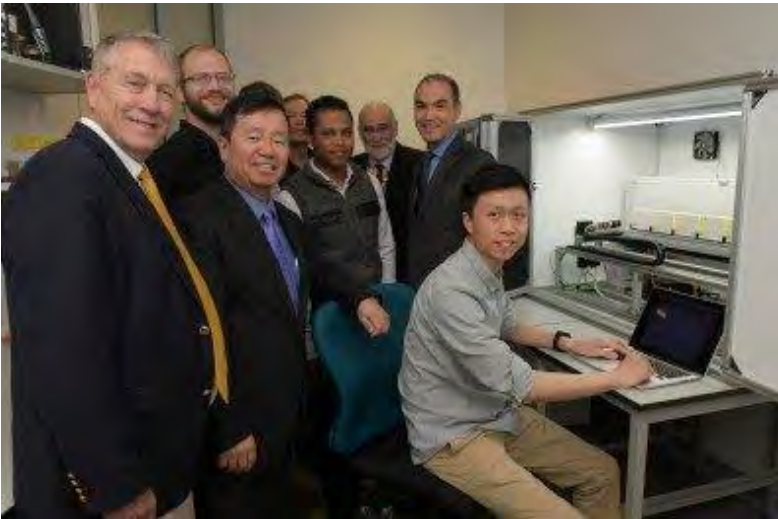
A number of UWC grad students travelled to Missouri in 2019 to conduct research, or in the case of two UWC law students, earn an LLM degree at the MU School of Law. One UWC student who worked with UMKC Professor John Kevern while Professor Kevern was at UWC on a UMSAEP-funded research project subsequently enrolled in a Ph.D. at UMKC. Another UWC student is enrolling there as is one at MU. Additionally, a number of UM System faculty have been played key roles in helping UWC students earn a Masters or Ph.D. degree this past year, including by serving on Ph.D. committees for UWC students.

## President Choi Visit to UWC

President Choi made his first visit to UWC in May 2019 with a historic two-day trip. His trip included visits to the UWC campus where he met with various administrators, deans, faculty members and students who have participated in the UMSAEP. He toured campus buildings, including the new Community Health Sciences Building and the dental facilities located at Tygerberg Hospital, where 50% of South Africa's dentists are educated.

"I was immediately welcomed by the warm hospitality of Tyrone Pretorius and the UWC faculty when I arrived in South Africa. Meeting students and faculty members who have participated in the program and learning about their research and projects solidified how important it is to continue our partnership with UWC," President Choi said.

UWC hosted a reception in President Choi's honor. One of the highlights of the reception was a presentation by two MU graduate students, Ke Gao and Sam McInturf, describing Sunbear, a robot that they built at UWC. Sunbear, originally built at MU in the laboratory of Professor David Mendoza – Cozalt, captures high resolution images of plant growth with more regularity and accuracy than a human worker. The robot was a major example of how UMSAEP enhances collaborative possibilities between the universities.



*UMSAEP Director Rod Uphoff, UM System President Mun Choi and UWC Rector Tyrone Pretorius meet with researchers who played key roles in bringing the Sunbear robotic system to UWC.*

## UM System faculty assist in Capacity Building Grants

In March 2018, the South African Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) awarded UWC two grants as part of the University Capacity Development Program (UCDP). One grant funds a collaboration between UWC, the UM System, the University of Illinois, Rhodes University, Tshwane University of Technology, University of Fort Hare and the Cape Peninsula University of Technology. The award provides opportunities for South African lecturers of any discipline who have not yet obtained their Ph.D. to work with US mentors who help them achieve this goal.

UWC received a second grant for a partnership involving the UM System, the University of Pretoria and Rutgers-Newark University. This project also assists South African doctoral students in obtaining their Ph.D., but specifically targets mentoring of students in the fields of community development and community education. The grant funds program workshops and travel to enable South African Ph.D. candidates to work closely with US mentors and receive feedback on their thesis.

UMSL Professor Todd Swanstrom and Karl Gunther both traveled to South Africa in February 2019 to help develop the Capacity Building program. Along with UMSAEP Director and Professor Rod Uphoff, they participated in a 3-day workshop with faculty from Rutgers-Newark, Pretoria and UWC, and met the first five South African Ph.D. candidates. In June, these candidates traveled to Rutgers and Professor Gunther participated in the workshop there. A [report by UWC's Thabile Sokupa](#) describes this project.

In the fall of 2019, eight South African Ph.D. candidates traveled to Missouri to work with UM faculty mentors as part of the other Capacity Development project. The South Africans spent a week receiving feedback to help them keep their thesis moving forward, and interacted with others in the mentor's department. According to UMKC Professor Debbie Leiter, the mentors enjoyed the experience as much as the visiting students. The UWC visitors also spent time experiencing the richness of campus life in Columbia, Kansas City and St. Louis. For most of the visitors, the trip was their first international travel experience.

A special thanks to UMKC Professors Debra Leiter, Ben Woodson, Josh Peng and Xiaobo Chen; UMSL Professors Lois Pierce, Todd Swanstrom and Karl Gunther; and MU Professors Jill Kanaley, Dan Turban and Ben Warner for their excellent work as mentors.

## News in Brief

### UM UMSAEP Symposium

For the past two years, UWC's International Relations Director Umesh Bawa and Professor Rod Uphoff have traveled to each UM university in April to hold a symposium showcasing the UMSAEP and describing how to apply for a UMSAEP grant. This year, we will do a virtual Zoom symposium on Friday, May 1, at 12 p.m. CST. The symposium will provide background information about the program and describe the application process. In addition, one speaker from each university will share their experience at UWC. Finally,



Umesh Bawa will talk about UWC and how to find a UWC collaborator. If you'd like to participate in the symposium, please contact Megan Cahill at [cahillme@umsystem.edu](mailto:cahillme@umsystem.edu) for the Zoom information

### **Albie Sachs Visit**

On May 18, 2019, prominent lawyer and one of South Africa's strongest anti-Apartheid activists, Justice Albie Sachs, received an Honorary Doctor of Laws from the University of Missouri-Columbia. He also was the invited speaker for the 2019 MU Law School Commencement. As a former judge on the Constitutional Court of South Africa appointed by President Nelson Mandela, Sachs was a fierce opponent of South Africa's apartheid policies. While Sachs was in exile, the South African secret police planted a car bomb that nearly killed Sachs and resulted in his loss of an eye and arm. Read more about Justice Sachs' life [on South African History online](#).

### **UWC professor wins Next Einstein Fellowship**

UWC's Dr. Rachel Fanelwa Ngece-Ajayi was named this year's Next Einstein Foundation Fellow. The Next Einstein Fellowship recognizes Africa's best scientists and technologists and allows them to advance their careers while inspiring young people to pursue scientific careers. Dr. Ngece-Ajayi came to Columbia and worked on a UMSAEP collaboration with MU's Dr. Shelia Grant in 2016. She described her trip to Columbia as a highlight of her academic career. Her story, which is [available on UWC's website](#), exemplifies how UMSAEP awards can develop young UWC scholars.

### **UWC Administrators Visit**

In November, four key members of UWC's administration, UWC Director of Library Services Dr. Shirlene Neerpath, Director of the Tech Transfer Office Dr. Ana Casanueva, Director of Gender and Equity Mary Hames and Director of Research Dr. Bertie Feilding, visited Missouri. The successful week-long visit to MU, UMKC and UMSL allowed them to meet with their counterparts at each institution and tour each campus.



## **2020 UMSAEP Awards**

The UMSAEP committee met in Columbia on August 29 to select the 2020 award recipients for UMSAEP Faculty Exchange grants and South African Partnership grants. UWC's Deputy Vice Chancellor Jose Frantz and International Relations Director Umesh Bawa participated in the selection process. Names of awardees and their collaborators are below:

Katina Bitsicas and Desiree Moore, University of Missouri - Columbia with UWC's Cherith Sanger

Candace Kuby, University of Missouri - Columbia with UWC's Vivienne Bozalek

Antoinette Landor, University of Missouri - Columbia with UWC's Nicky Roman

Thiagarajan Ganesh, University of Missouri – Kansas City with UWC's Saadika Khan

Omiunota Ukpokodu, University of Missouri – Kansas City with UWC's Vuyo Nomlomo

Martin Bohner, Missouri S&T with UWC's Kailash Patidar

Fateme Rezaei, Missouri S&T with UWC's Leslie Petrik

Shun Saito, Missouri S&T with UWC's Roy Maartens

Erica Koegler, University of Missouri – Saint Louis with UWC's Edna Rich

Haitao Li, University of Missouri – Saint Louis with UWC's Osden Jokonya

Razia Adam, University of Western Cape with UMKC's Yong Wang

Priscilla Baker, University of Western Cape with MU's Tim Glass

Ashwil Klein, University of Western Cape with MU's Walter Gassmann

Anam Nyembezi, University of Western Cape with UMSL's Timothy Makubuya

Natasha Ross, University of Western Cape with UMKC's Josh Peng

Salam Titinchi, University of Western Cape with UMKC's Xiaobo Chen

Henriette Weber, University of Western Cape with UMKC's Bobby Watson and Mitch Butle

## **Committee Member Retirements**

Congratulations to UMSAEP committee member Dr. Lawrence Dreyfuss of UMKC, who has retired and is replaced by Dr. Joy Stevenson.

## **Henry Mitchell Scholarships**

Henry Mitchell Scholars Sam McInturf and Ke Gao traveled to UWC in May to build SunBear, a robotic plant imaging device, in UWC Professor Marshall Keyster's lab. The robot was a replica of the original machine in the lab of MU's Dr. David Mendoza-Cozatl. Read more about the collaboration in stories published by media teams at [MU](#) and [UWC](#).

MU's Adorable Hemphill was awarded a Henry Mitchell scholarship to attend a semester at UWC beginning July 2020. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, her semester abroad has been postponed until January 2021. UWC's Mhlali Badiwe was also awarded a Henry Mitchell Scholarship for travel to MU in May 2020 with UWC Professor Ashwil Klein. His visit has also been delayed because of the pandemic.

The application deadline for a 2021 UM System Henry Mitchell award for study at UWC beginning late January 2021 has been extended to September 10. For UWC students, the application deadline is February 1 to attend UM System classes in the fall of 2021. To apply, [complete the Henry Mitchell Scholarship application](#). Completed applications should be sent to the international office at your university.

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