The Wits School of Governance (WSG) is now open on multiple fronts – in the classroom, doing fieldwork, research via multiple different projects and online. The School and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association have partnered to provide online modules (followed by contact hours in May on campus) to students in Parliaments across the Commonwealth.

We have Members of Parliaments (MPs) from several Commonwealth countries including Papua New Guinea, Australia, Swaziland and South Africa all sitting for the Parliamentary Fundamentals Course. There are 14 online modules with tests, memo tasks and some provocations. This will be followed by interactive sessions in May, when we hope to expose the students to our core teaching staff but also Visiting Research Fellow Max Sisulu, who can talk to this topic with authority. We hope our Vice-Chancellor, Professor Adam Habib, will join us, as well as other notable former politicians and parliamentarians.

The purpose is clear. At one level, it is to impart information and ensure that parliamentary fundamentals – the role of the Speaker, separation of powers, the role of the opposition, etc. – are accessible across the multiple countries from which our students will come. But equally important is to engage the students – MPs in their own countries, Witsies when they’re with us – in a robust debate about these matters.

None are cut and dried, none are uncontested, and as the world’s political forces seem to have altered so abruptly, it is most definitely a key moment for all to debate the importance of a democratic parliamentary system, to protect the rights of oppositions, to enhance the role of oversight committees and so on.

While we are rolling out our online programmes, our PhD candidates for 2017 have joined the School for their six-month ‘Social theory’ support courses, which takes them through methodologies, literature reviews, writing skills and other inputs before they face their first major test, submitting a 5000-word self-authored PhD proposal, which goes to panels for assessments.

We welcome the new cohort and wish you all the very best. Anyone who has a PhD knows this is a tough, long and often very lonely journey, and WSG tries to provide support to the new entrants.

But WSG is a School that adopts many non-traditional approaches. We are extremely proud to be running our certificate course for taxi associations in the City of Johannesburg, through which we impart skills in computing, critical thinking, and knowledge about policy, governance, urban transport and the like. The course was designed at the request of the City in order to equip members of taxi associations better able to transition into bus operators, supporting Rea Vaya rather than seeing it as a threat; better able to negotiate, knowing the rules of the game (governance); and better understanding the role of mass transit in a sustainable urban transport network. WSG is proud to be running a course that seems to be working so well that the students are demanding more and more lectures.

Over 150 students graduated with various qualifications in our academic programmes at the end of March. We congratulate all of them on their achievements.

Our Executive Development Unit also held a graduation for 164 participants who completed the Governance and Public Leadership course. The ceremony was attended by the Speaker of the National Assembly, Baleka Mbete and other dignitaries.

Finally, many initiatives are soon to go ‘live’. Expect to see more online courses as we move into blended learning. More events have been planned for the year ahead. We will also continue our partnership with the Development Bank of Southern Africa, which also has a public debate series with us. Much more is on the way. Read inside for more details!
The research vision at WSG is to become a first port of call for masters, doctoral and professional researchers interested in learning about how Africa works in the broad arena of governance, and in particular, how to navigate the politics of delivering development in Africa’s highly unequal and impoverished contexts. The primary purpose is to produce knowledge about how African public and development institutions are governed and managed.

Publications that have been submitted to Department of Higher Education in 2016:

**Journal articles**


Chapters in books


Conference proceedings


News bytes

Professor Susan Booyesen’s book, *Dominance and Decline: The ANC in the Time of Zuma*, was nominated in the Best Non-Fiction Monograph category at the National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences (NIHSS) 2nd Annual Book, Creative Collection, and Digital Contribution Awards. The awards ceremony took place on 29 March 2016.

Booyesen also recently represented WSG at the Institut Francais des relations internationals (IFRI) conference in Paris on 13 March 2017. The IFRI co-organised the conference which examined the theme Southern Africa: the Uncertain Future of a “Pole of Stability”. Booyesen participated in the session which focussed on South Africa, looking at internal dissensions within the ANC.

Associate Professor William Gumede advised UNESCO initially to conceptualise the 2016 World Social Science Report Report and to identify the main intersecting global issues the report should focus on. He was then involved in the subsequent phase, advising on the initial drafts, reviewing the quality, relevance, overall structure and ordering of the parts; and making suggestions as to what needed to be revised, excised or improved. Visit www.wits.ac.za/wsg for the full report.
About Naing’s research

Naing’s thesis makes an important contribution to the theory and practice of municipal service delivery and monitoring and evaluation. The thesis tracks and analyses if municipal monitoring and evaluation systems can operate as early warning systems for service delivery challenges, using the City of Johannesburg as a case. The findings reveal that early warning signals exist, and are noticed, but there is no mechanism or budget to enable officials to use the information. The thesis contends that municipal workers and managers across race and class experience a state of alienation which results in a silo mentality and fragmented planning and management processes. The effects of alienation on municipal performance have not been explored in the local government service delivery discourse. The thesis proposes that a model of proactive monitoring and evaluation, integrated with early warning system components, could indicate crisis, but that capacity constraints, politics, and the multi-sectorial nature of the municipal system are inhibitors.

(Provided by his supervisor, Professor Anne Mc Lennan)

We congratulate the 174 students who recently graduated. We are proud of their dedication and accomplishments in pursuing postgraduate diplomas, Masters and PhD degrees.

Myo Naing, one of our students who graduated with a PhD degree, shared his story of sheer resilience and grit. Leaving Myanmar, his home country in 2002, Naing lived in Thailand before coming to South Africa. “I left my country not because I hate it. I left it because I loved it and was (and still am) determined to work for it. I was convinced that my country needed to be changed. I was one of those who could not live without doing something to change the country,” he said.

He described his first few years in exile as “painful” and said he was silently unhappy and depressed despite people perceiving him to be a jovial character.

“In my heart, I was deeply unhappy and frustrated because I was aware of my own weaknesses and limitations in relation to the struggle [Myanmar’s political situation].” Despite all he endured, Naing stayed positive and relied on his inner strength to pursue his academic goals.

He said one of the primary reasons he came to South Africa was to learn more about the anti-apartheid struggle and the transition to democracy. South Africa struggle heroes including Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Oliver Tambo, Steve Biko, Chris Hani and Joe Slovo inspired Naing and his comrades.

“We were greatly impressed by the rigorous and effective international campaigns that were so powerful because of competencies and effectiveness of the exiled comrades headed by Oliver Tambo,” he said.

Naing values the friendships developed among students and academics at WSG. “All the people at WSG are friendly and supportive. They all made my life in South Africa like being at home surrounded by family members,” he said. He also found the bi-annual PhD forums and Wednesday conversations beneficial.

Naing’s advice for those considering PhD studies

» Before enrolling for a PhD programme, make sure you know about the context of your intended study, the different methodologies, the literature and theories available in your area of interest.

» Do a preliminary study to determine whether enough required data and information are available or obtainable.

» Select the supervisor(s) carefully as they play an important role in your journey. Build a rapport with the supervisor(s).

» Take ownership, responsibility and initiative because it is your PhD.

» Clearly and narrowly define the research problems, questions and objectives and be realistic when doing so.

» Write a lot. A PhD is primarily about writing a thesis thus what you have written down is more important than what you have read.

» Learn and master documentation skills. Have a good and efficient referencing system. It will save a lot of time and trouble.
Some of the Master of Management Research topics:

- Sakhile Kholwaca: Menstrual hygiene management in Mpoponjeni in a rural school in Swaziland.
- Chris Motsilili: Oversight of the Public Accounts Committee in the Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan.
- Mbali Motsoeneng: The impact of the proposed Licensing of Business Bill on social cohesion and development.
- Bongiwe Ngcobo: South African foreign policy decision making on climate change.

*All these research reports were completed in the area of Public and Development Management.

Update on the PSETA Grant to WSG to implement PDM M&E

The Public Service Sector Education and Training Authority (PSETA) and WSG signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) in March 2016 for 72 beneficiaries (funded by PSETA) to complete a Postgraduate Diploma in Public and Development Sector Monitoring and Evaluation.

The School is delighted to announce that out of the planned 72 students, WSG enrolled 57 students in March 2016 for the PDM M&E, which is 79% of the overall target. Out of the 57 students enrolled, six students cancelled their registrations for various reasons, which means 51 students participated in the postgraduate programme.

The participants completed eight courses under PDM M&E:
- Introduction and Orientation
- Governance Leadership and Public Value
- Analytical Methods
- Introduction to Development Intervention
- Evaluation
- Monitoring Systems
- Public Finance and Performance Budgeting
- Managing Monitoring and Evaluation Practice.

The PSETA students provided positive feedback on the courses. The students’ overall average assessment on factors such as the clarity of the purpose; stimulation of interest in the course and encouragement of student participation in classes were encouraging. Attention will also be paid to areas where we can improve, based on the feedback.

A complete assessment of this PDM M&E programme (both in terms of student performance and the quality of the provision of courses by WSG) will also be carried out.
The unit recently held a graduation ceremony for participants who completed the Government Communications and Marketing and Public & Development Sector Results-Based Management Systems courses.

Nomfanelo Kota, a veteran government communicator was a guest speaker for the ceremony. She has extensive experience in media liaison and communications and is also a former spokesperson for the South African Embassy in New York. She worked as a media co-ordinator for the African National Congress. She currently works for the Eastern Cape government.

Despite her vast experience, Kota enrolled for the Government Communications and Marketing programme this year. She shares her experience at WSG.

Why did you decide to do this course?
I completed the programme in 2007. Last year, I registered to get a sense of what we have achieved as government communicators in the space of a decade. The course has given me an opportunity to pause, take stock and see how far we have traversed and how we have simultaneously regressed in the sector at a policy level.

The programme has assisted me to understand the changing government communications and media landscape better and how different spheres of government have an ongoing challenge of synchronising their approaches to government communications. Government communicators are the heartbeat of government communications.

What do you enjoy about this course?
The classroom engagements provide rigour and an opportunity for appreciative enquiry. Most of the course facilitators have valuable extensive experience in communications and have been a great asset to the learning experience. The richness of class discussions and their interactive nature broadens the minds of government communicators as fresh material is shared in a disciplined manner.

What I mostly enjoy from the course is the interaction from other students and learning from them, the stimulating class experiments and syndicate work that also takes us to external audiences (market research exercises) and how lecturers provide fresh stimulating materials that speak to our constantly changing and evolving media landscape.

What do you enjoy about the roles you played in government communication?
One of the most satisfying parts of my job is when I am able to create and expand nurturing communication networks for the province through interactions with various stakeholders in the sector.

What are some of the most challenging aspects of your job?
The most challenging part is to get political principals to understand that in political communication time is a critical resource and the ability to respond timeously to developments in the environment is the most crucial aspect of a government communicator.

Apart from the obvious of information sharing, what other roles do you think government communicators can play in creating access to all levels of governments?
Government communicators are the gateway to the world of political communication. They must consistently strive to keep channels of communication open at all times, be transparent and keep the public, media and other stakeholders informed of what government seeks to achieve.
At all times, government communicators must know that government communications is not a secret. Mostly government communicators must never allow middle-men and women to stand between them and their political communications work.

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Charlotte Fraser  
Programme manager at WSG

Briefly tell us about your work experience at Wits University.

Before starting at WSG, I spent just under two years at Wits Plus coordinating the CSSA programme with the Chartered Institute of Secretaries based in Killarney and the part-time BSc Honours in Quantity Surveying with the School of Construction Economics. Prior to that, I was at the Wits School of Arts for nearly six years as the Student Liaison Officer looking after the undergraduate students in the professional degrees. Those were very interesting and exciting years watching the wealth of creativity in the performances, exhibitions and installations put on by the students and following their progress through the years. It was also stimulating working with the lecturers, many of whom were professional artists in their own right. What do you enjoy most about working at a University?

I have enjoyed the diversity of working in different faculties and schools and seeing past students graduating and progressing with their careers. By helping them through the hurdles of university administration, I hope to have eased their way in achieving their goals. What are some of the things you hope to achieve at WSG?

I hope to contribute with the smooth running of the ADU.

Roeland Mvokwe  
Financial officer at WSG

Mvokwe describes himself as a black dynamic young man with an in-depth accounting and financial working background.

His career includes stints at Mercedes-Benz SA and the UK government. He values working with a lot with people from different spheres of life. He believes that two heads are better than one. Auditing and compliance take priority in his work. He enjoys relaxing with TV series like *How to get away with murder* and reading magazines like *Time and Entrepreneur*. He likes cricket and athletics and considers himself a great cook. He feels Johannesburg has so much to offer to him as a young man, saying that it has both harsh and flexible environments to be whoever you want to be. I love the “time is money” attitude, it keeps me on my toes.

More about Fraser

Favourite food: Seafood, sushi, pestos and breakfast.  
Favourite book: I don’t have a favourite book but I enjoy reading.  
Favourite music: All music except rap. I grew up in the 70’s when the best bands performed!  
Best holiday destination: Anywhere in the mountains.  
Quote that you love: “It is better to remain silent and be thought a fool, then to open your mouth and remove all doubt.”

More about Mvokwe

Favorite books: *7 Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen R Covey. The *Pelican Brief* by John Grisham and many more legal, political and thriller books from this author.  
Music that inspires you: Hip Hop and poetry  
Most beautiful place you have been to: Lions Head, a mountain in Cape Town which gives you 360 degrees view of the city.
My YALI experience

By Odile Mackett

The Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) Regional Leadership Centres were designed to reach more individuals between the ages of 18 and 35 through the Mandela Washington Fellowship.

The programme, launched by former US President Barack Obama, aims to build capacity for the next generation of African leaders. There are two centres in West Africa, one in East Africa and another in Southern Africa; with USAID as its main sponsor.

YALI RLC Southern Africa is hosted by Unisa’s Graduate School of Business Leadership (SBL), and hosts five cohorts of roughly 120 participants in each cohort. Participants from 14 Southern African countries got to share their unique and common experiences based on our different genders, ethnic origins and sexual orientation. We also shared perspectives as individuals from the business and leadership, public management and civic leadership tracks. Invaluable networks were formed.

The four-week residential programme was filled with numerous evening panels which allowed us to engage with organisations such as USAID, YALI RLC alumni and Mandela Washington fellows. In other sessions, we covered topics which included responsible leadership, leading high performance teams, communication within organisations, project management, policy formulation, as well as a site visit to the South African National Roads Agency.

I found the group discussions with my fellow YALI RLC-SA participants most fulfilling; discovering how as Africans we are so different in many ways but also the same. We agreed that as Africans we are not victims, but our own worst enemy, and that we need to work tirelessly as young people to transform the picture of what Africa looks like.

India Africa Knowledge Exchange

The WSG hosted the India Africa Knowledge Exchange Visit on Public-Private Partnerships in Health from 23 until 27 January 2017 at the Holiday Inn Rosebank in Johannesburg. This workshop was organised under a project funded by the India-Africa Economic Cooperation Fund and the objective of the project was to provide support to relevant policy dialogue, multi-lateral discussions and capacity development for private sector engagement or investment in health financing.

Some of the members that participated in the exchange.
Inaugural Provincial Lecture: Resilience and Disaster Risk Reduction

By Simone Smit

The WSG and the Gauteng Provincial Disaster Management Centre held an inaugural Provincial Lecture titled, Resilience and Disaster Risk Reduction on 15 February 2017.

The lecture unpacked the relationship between disaster risk reduction and resilience. It also enhanced the understanding of resilience and vulnerability and highlighted the correlations among risk reduction, resilience, sustainable development and climate change.

The lecture deepened knowledge and understanding, raised awareness, uncovered best and innovative practices, and provided a platform for deliberation on how to move towards a paradigm shift changing the focus from relief, restoration and rehabilitation, to planning, preparedness and prevention.

Paul Mashatile, MEC for Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs and Human Settlements, in his keynote address made an urgent call for action, saying that strengthening disaster resilience can only be achieved by “a joint commitment and concerted effort by all sectors of society” and that this contribution is necessary “in order that the human race continue to not only survive but thrive”.

The MEC also commended WSG’s role in developing a new crop of public servants.

“Since its inception, the School of Governance has distinguished itself through developing academic courses and programmes that are relevant to needs of our ever-transforming public service. These interventions of training and developing public representatives and civil servants have assisted in no small measure to the transformation of our public service,” he said.

The MEC said he was aware that a number of CoGTA officials – Community Development Workers to precise – graduated from one of WSG programmes.

“We appreciate the efforts you are making in contributing to making our country work. We hope that the relationship between our department and yourselves will grow from strength to strength,” he added.

Other presentations included:

Darlington Mushongera, Gauteng City-Region Observatory: Multidimensional Indicators for Socioeconomic Vulnerability, including mapping multidimensional poverty across Gauteng.

Dr Johan Minnie, Aurecon: Climate Change and Disaster Risk: A Sense of Response-Ability.

Sandiswa Tshaka, SA Cities Network: Urban Risk and Sustainable Cities and what it will take for cities to become drivers of change.

Dr Duarte Goncalves, Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, unpacked approaches to complexity and the necessity for a whole of society response to decreasing risk.

What do school leaders do about the learning gaps in the system?

By Professor Anne Mc Lennan

Principals Upfront is a platform where school leaders come together to share working practices about different facets of school leadership.

On 1 March 2017, the WSG, in partnership with BRIDGE, the Catholic Institute of Education (CIE), the Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership & Governance (MGSLG) and the Sasol Inzalo Foundation hosted the first Principals Upfront dialogue for 2017.

The event was held at the MGSLG and attended by 80 principals and education officials. They explored the 2016 matric results backwards to foundation phase, to shift focus from the end of the system to the beginnings.

Dr Beverley Damonse, from the National Research Foundation set the scene by showing what happens on the way to matric and after. Principals Elizabeth Masemola from Zonkizizwe Senior Secondary and Waahida Tolbert-Mbatha from Kgalolo Academy shared their strategies for managing the gaps. Mduduzi Qwabe from the CIE facilitated a robust dialogue.

The insights emerging from the shared practice are:

- Some system progress is evident in terms of access, equity and redress. But more attention needs to be focussed on technical Further Education Training and Technical and Vocational Education and Training to accommodate different needs and interests. There is more to do out there than maths and science.

- Closing gaps is hard system work and needs partners and collaboration to happen. Both principals shared positive experiences about finding partners to assist with plugging gaps – anything from providing food, uniforms for sports teams to equipment and technical expertise.

- Get the kids to have goals from the first day of school and show them that you expect them to achieve these goals. Even if it is a two percent year on year improvement, or passing or failing a subject. High expectations build confidence and commitment, whereas no expectations breed apathy.

- Get parents on board. Once parents also believe it can be done, they will provide the support that is needed. The school needs to develop an effective communication strategy to reach different stakeholders, including the local community. WhatsApp is proving to be a flexible tool in this regard, even in poor socio-economic areas.


Upcoming event

The next Principals Upfront will take place on 17 May 2017 at MGSLG, 40 Hull Street, Vrededorp, Johannesburg, from 14:00 to 16:00.
Reforming SOEs

Associate Professor William Gumede hosted a conversation under the banner: Reforming State Owned Enterprises (SOEs): lessons from other developing countries with global experts.

Dr Thomas Marois (SOAS University of London), Dr Mabel Thwaites Rey (University Buenos Aires), Dr Sebastian Torres (Principal of Ecuador’s National Institute for Higher Studies) and Dr Daniel Chavez (Transnational Institute, Netherlands) were the panel members on 13 March 2017.

Gumede said in South Africa, SOEs and related agencies occupy about 40 percent of the economy and whatever happens at these companies directly have an impact on the economy.

Gumede said South Africa’s challenges centre around a few factors, including an ideological rigidity because some policymakers argue that only SOEs should be used while others believe SOEs should not exist.

He said there are some who feel that SOEs only focus on social issues and don’t necessarily maximise on state capital and returns. He added that books are often not balanced at SOEs and that there is no clear measurement of the economic value-add of SOEs.

Gumede said the SA government has not held SOEs accountable and the country has multiple laws and regulations which are not always clear.

Marois argued that commercial banks are not able to pursue development issues.

"When we look at development banks, we ask what do we want to see from the point of civil society and NGOs? We looked at the different governance models, mandates, ownership and control... and a whole lot of indicators. The ones that appear to be doing better are the ones (development banks) with clear lines of accountability, transparency and governance," said Marois.

Torres’s point of view raised questions about management of SOEs. “In the quest for diversification and promoting social objectives, we forget about management,” he said.

He suggested that when experts are in charge it can be a more productive experience than just having politicians at the helm of SOEs. He used the telecommunications and energy sectors in Uruguay to illustrate his point. At some point, the goal was to make Uruguay a telecommunication hub in Latin America and in order to do this Internet access was needed. The person responsible was an engineer and she lobbied for facilities that made Internet infrastructure and access possible.

Chavez, who was part of the Municipal Service Project at Wits in the early 2000s, said there is no need to do more research on privatisation because a huge body of knowledge already exists.

“We are interested about the quality and nature of public management... We need to find balance between financial sustainability of public enterprises and the social objectives of SEOs,” adding that the private and public sector differ because the former concentrates on profit and the latter on public services.

Chavez also added that in Latin America, different ideas of what development mean has been incorporated into a research agenda.

Rey said Argentina do not have any successful examples of privatisation that meet the needs of the people, adding that the main objective to privatise was to pay off external debt in the 1990s.