

UCT scholars take top honours at awards ceremony

Five University of Cape Town (UCT) scholars were named among the country's science and technology leaders when the winners of the National Science and Technology Forum (NSTF)-BHP Billiton Awards were announced at a gala event in Johannesburg recently. The awards reward excellence in scientific research, technological innovation, education, capacity building and communication.



Professor Bongani Mayosi was honoured for his outstanding contribution to Science, Engineering, Technology and Innovation (SETI) through management and related activities. He was commended for his work in building, managing and leading capacity development in research at Groote Schuur hospital, which has achieved very significant output, and has to the discovery of genetic causes and prevention of heart disease and clinical features of pericardial tuberculosis.

Professor Heather Zar was the winner in the category TW Kambule Awards for her outstanding contribution to SETI through research and its outputs. She has led the development of a strong, clinical translational research programme, producing cutting edge research that has changed global practice and improved child health through better diagnostic, preventative and management strategies.

The winner in the category TW Kambule Awards was Dr. Amanda Weltman who has provided a testable theory explaining the mysterious force causing the universe to accelerate, the so-called Dark Energy.

Scanner helps to diagnose cancer

Dr. Kit Vaughan and the PantoScanner Team at CapeRay Medical (Pty) (Ltd), a UCT spinout company, were named winners in the category for an individual or a team for an outstanding contribution to SETI through research leading to innovation in a small, medium or micro enterprise. CapeRay's Pantoscanner is enhancing clinicians' ability to diagnose breast cancer by combining the best of low dose X-rays and ultrasound.

Dr. Peter Carrick's Namaqualand Restoration Initiative won him the award in the category for research leading to innovation in a non-government, community based, or non-profit organisation. This initiative uses extensive and ongoing ecological research, and business and socio-economic nous to design and implement systems that restore globally important biodiversity and generate livelihoods through the rehabilitation of degraded lands.

"The NSTF-BHP Billiton Awards are yet another reminder of the esteem and prestige with which UCT scholars, senior and up-and-coming and even retired, are viewed in the country," said Professor Danie Visser, deputy vice-chancellor for research. "The fact that our scientists were nominated in no less than 18 categories should serve as an illustration of the depth and scope of contributions that they do and can still make to South Africa, Africa and the world."