

## Historic newspaper bought out by Rhodes University

Rhodes University has bought Grocott's Mail, est. 1870, South Africa's oldest family-run newspaper.

Grocott's Mail, which has been published since 11 May 1870, has a circulation of about 2 800 in the Grahamstown area and costs R2. Facing stiff competition from Caxton who came in with a R1-million bid, Rhodes University was able to buy the paper with a grant from Atlantic Philanthropies in the US.

According to Professor Guy Berger, head of the Journalism and Media Studies Department, management plans still need to be fine-tuned, but he expects that there will be a core of professional staff with students assigned to different beats. Journalism students will be trained on the paper and there will also be space for "experimental journalism". There would be opportunity for photographic, layout and media studies students to participate and a possible website could also be set up.

Addressing concerns that the paper could become a university mouthpiece, Berger assures that it would remain editorially independent.

"This is probably the first time in Africa for a community paper to link up with a journalism teaching facility to mutual benefit. It will enrich our training activities as well as add extra value to the Grahamstown community."

**Source:** [Mail & Guardian](#)