



# Info Forum

Newsletter of the Potchefstroom Campus Libraries  
Vol 12:1 • June 2014



NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY  
YUNIBESITHI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA  
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT  
POTCHEFSTROOM CAMPUS

## IN THIS EDITION:

### Page

- 1 - Foreword
- 2 - Introduction
- 2 - Obtaining funds from the NWU
- 3 - Fund raising directed at PPS
- 4 - Planning
- 5 - Visits to libraries
- 6 - Suggestions from other libraries
- 6 - Opening fourth year and honours commons
- 7 - Opening research commons
- 8 - Art works
- 9 - Technology

***"Google can bring you back 100,000 answers. A librarian can bring you back the right one."***

**- Neil Gaiman**

## Foreword

Dear Colleagues

You hold in your hands a special edition of the InfoForum newsletter that focuses on the new Honours and Research Commons of the Ferdinand Postma Library Services. I wish to thank every member of the Library staff who worked so very hard and I congratulate them on the successful completion of this special project.

In 2010 we confirmed a new campus mission, namely "... to become a research-directed campus where excellence in tuition and learning as well as in research are mutually invigorating". We are proud to announce that we are making very good progress, especially in regard to our research centredness. We have established various strategic initiatives of which the completion of the Honours and Research Commons in the Ferdinand Postma Library form part of our support framework in reinforcing our campus mission.

Our research outputs expanded significantly in 2013, particularly in the impact of those outputs. I also congratulate every member of staff on these outputs and thank all of them for their hard work. I know that this specialised facility renders professional library support and seamless access to information, making it a complete support service for the research efforts of our master's and doctoral students, post-doctoral associates and staff.

We have received feedback from our researchers and they all agree that these spaces are as professional and exceptional as those of the top universities of the world. I believe that this space will contribute to the exchange of new initiatives and the strengthening of everyone's intellectual development. This facility promotes the dedication and enterprise of the FPB to support researchers and staff who thereby contribute to our campus mission and the increase in research outputs at the NWU.

Thanks for the most professional support the FPB renders to all our academics and students – your willingness to work along with the rest of the research community of the campus to achieve our goals is part of our successes.

Enjoy the newsletter and the Commons

Research regards

Amanda Lourens (Deputy Rector: Research and Planning)

## Introduction

The North-West University pursues the delivery of focused, high quality research. The establishment of an exclusive research and honours commons in the Ferdinand Postma Library building is a contribution by the Library Services to help realise this goal. The dedicated space offers post-graduate students and researchers the opportunity to work in seclusion in an atmosphere that promotes research.

However, a long process of investigation and planning preceded the establishment of the research space. Owing to international emphasis on the arrangement of dedicated research spaces within academic libraries, Prof Amanda Lourens (Deputy Rector: Research and Planning) and Dr Tom Larney (Director Library Services) made the institution of a research commons on the Potchefstroom campus a strategic priority in 2010. Mr Geoff de Wet from Cape Town was approached as the consulting architect, based on the recommendation by stakeholders on his inputs in establishing research spaces at the universities of Cape Town and Rhodes, as well as his experience in the re-institution of academic library spaces. The first formal step was a presentation on library plans at the strategic planning session of the Extended Management Committee on 30 and 31 May 2011.



## Obtaining funds from the NWU

In 2011 strategic funds were allocated for the services of a spatial architect. His mandate was to reconcile the existing library spaces with changing needs as well as upgrading them to a world-class and relevant academic library. Mr Geoff de Wet, an architect from Cape Town, was appointed to proffer possible changes to the Ferdinand Postma Library building.

The draft design was presented to campus management, after which the Directorate Physical Infrastructure and Planning made an overhead estimate of the total project cost. Included in the estimate was upgrading the services in the 60-year old building which entailed the rectification and adjustment of mechanical, electrical and network services, as well as the installation of a fire alarm and fire fighting system per floor.

The proposed upgrade of the building and the re-employment of library spaces were well received all round. At the end of 2012 the Campus Budget Committee approved the renovation and improvements to the library building in principle and work on the first phase could commence. The funds for Phase 1 were utilised for moving the computer venues from the basement and the establishment of new venues on the third floor of the library. The move of the Ossewa-Brandwag Museum to the Heritage Foundation in Pretoria, clearing out and removal of the respective book collections to other venues and the moving of the valuable Africana collection also had to be covered by this fund. The reorganisation of the basement as storage space for older printed book stock was part of the funding earmarked for Phase 1 as well.

Phase 2 consisted of organising the ground floor to accommodate a computer-assisted Information Commons, a practical computer training facility and upgraded auditorium (Besembos). Special requests for additional funding were successful – about R2,9 million more was required for this – and the project of R7,9 million could continue.

Special funding had to be requested once again for the final Phase 3. Phase 3 entailed upgrading the first and second floors, but the funds needed to be considerably less than that of Phase 2, as the main emphasis is on upgrading the basic services. Funds for this will be allocated only at the end of 2014 or the beginning of 2015.

## Fund raising directed at PPS

Representatives of the Professional Provident Society of South Africa (PPS) approached the Library Services in 2012 with an invitation to draw up a fund presentation for possible funding of items for the research commons. Heads were put together and the necessary facts were collected, such as the number of students, post-graduate students, detailed requirements with prices, benefit to the company and benefits to Library Services.

The long wait for the outcome of the application – that was considered along with the applications of many other South African universities – ended at the end of February 2013. PPS could provide R300 000 of the needed R1,1 million. However, we were very pleased and planning for the best technological equipment for the researchers could begin.

The cheque was officially presented on 31 May 2013.

The following items, earmarked for our researchers, could be acquired from the donation:

Smartboard + Podium	25/07/13	R 21 370,00
2x Printers	08/11/13	R 26 170,52
1 x Scanners	08/11/13	R 792,00
28 x Computers	08/11/13	R 233 217,32
1 x LED Screen 50"	08/11/13	R 7 359,56
1 x Projector	08/11/13	R 4 684,23
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>R293 393,63</b>



The company was very impressed by what they saw during the opening event and almost immediately followed up with a further donation of R250 000 to use in organising the Information Commons on the ground floor.

The Library is very grateful to our BEK colleague who had the lion's share in fund raising and liaison – Cathy Castagno.



*The Rector of the Potchefstroom Campus, Prof Herman van Schalkwyk, and Elsa Esterhuizen, Director Library Services, receive the PPS cheque. The presentation was done by Barry Pretorius, PPS Regional Manager. To his left is JC Vorster, Marketing Manager Youth Market of PPS.*



*Leonard Haasbroek (PPS) and Cathy Castagno*



## Planning

The proposed re-planning of the library spaces for their optimal utilisation by and for consumers resulted in a very exciting and interesting sequence of phases and activities. They were arranged like dominoes, and once the first one tumbled, the next step could proceed.

**Phase 1a:** Research and Honours Commons on the third floor could materialise if:

- 1 the Ossewa-Brandwag Museum were moved
- 2 the stock of k315 (Afrikaans collection) could be stored elsewhere
- 3 the store room on the third floor could be cleared out
- 4 book material less often used could be stored

**Phase 1b:** Prepare the basement for storage space if:

- 1 new accommodation for computer venues could be obtained
- 2 IT services agreed with the move
- 3 project funding were adequate
- 4 computer venues could be moved out of the basement
- 5 basement could be prepared for storage purposes
- 6 walls could be demolished



*Relocation of the Ossewa-Brandwag Museum*



*Moving the 900 books to the basement*









*Demolition of walls*

## Visits to libraries

Then the research spaces of Cape Town, Stellenbosch and Pretoria universities were visited. All three these universities could arrange research spaces through Carnegie donations. We drew from their knowledge and experience.

The staff of these libraries was particularly helpful. Valuable inputs and suggestions were made to bear in mind for establishing a meaningful research space. Although the layout and presentation differed at all three of the institutions, it was noticeable that there were similarities in the services, facilities, available technology and the idea that it should be a “one stop” dedicated research environment.

University of Cape Town	University of Stellenbosch	University of Pretoria
		
		



## Suggestions from the research commons staff at US, UP and UCT:

- Spacious work stations with sufficient power points (2- and 3-point plugs)
- Adequate number of computers, equipped with research software programs
- Printers, scanners and photocopy machines
- Areas for laptops
- Durable ergonomic computer chairs
- Group study spaces and seminar rooms of which at least one room must be equipped with Skype for contact with distance study supervisors and oral defences
- A conference room where high profile meetings and training sessions can be conducted and also be broadcast to other campuses. A large white screen rather than plasma screens was recommended.
- Assistance must be available, whether the expertise of a subject librarian, IT specialist or students' assistant
- Single, private work stations are required
- Research method textbooks as well as dictionaries must be available
- A colourful and modern look with good lighting is essential
- Invest in a good coffee machine (provide paper cups with lids)
- A water fountain with purified cold water is indispensable
- Preferably no microwave oven – food odours are not conducive to an academic environment
- Involve the Writing Centre, Research Office and other academic role-players
- A leisure area with daily newspapers in Afrikaans and English as well as current magazines such as *Time/Newsweek* on the coffee tables
- Use plasma screens to communicate important info, for example sessions being offered
- Co-ordination with IT services is essential for continuous and timely support

These suggestions were largely implemented and the spaces were opened on 28 March 2014.

## Opening 28 March 2014: fourth year and honours commons



**Relaxation area**



**Computer workstations with ample power points**



**Seminar rooms**

## Opening 28 March 2014: research commons



**Relaxation area**



**Computer workstations with ample power points**



**Seminar rooms**



**Conference room with SMART board**



**Reference works**



**Print and scan facilities**



## Art works in the research commons

Because of the special bond between the artist and sculptor Jo Roos and the University and because an exceptional bust created by the sculptor Pierre Volschenk, was donated by Dr Willie van Niekerk to the University's art collection, the art works of Jo Roos were a spontaneous choice for the research commons. The bust forms a focal point in the leisure space of the commons.

Jo Roos is also the sculptor of the well-known Totius sculpture that was moved from its previous location in the Totius Memorial Garden along the Wasgoedspruit to the campus and currently stands in front of the old Main Building. For many students this sculpture serves as background to their graduation photos on graduation day. The sculpture of Sol Plaatjes on the south side of the Joon van Rooy Building was also created by Jo Roos. Some years ago the Library, together with the former rector Prof. Annette Combrink, bought an exquisite sculpture, *Die Mampoerstoker*, during an exhibition of Jo Roos's works. The work is based on the author Herman Charles Bosman's tales and is exhibited against the background of a copy of one of Jo Roos's paintings of a school in the Great Marico (by choice of the sculptor).

Along with two fine oil landscapes from the North-West University's art collection, among others donated by Mrs Dingi Roos, widow of the painter and sculptor, the group of art works form an attractive unit that commemorates this artist and friend of the University.





## Technology in the research commons

The research commons boasts about 26 “All-in-one” workstations linked to two network printers and are pre-loaded with various software packages to support research. It also has a scanning facility in the printer room for scanning single page documents.

The NWU’s Wi-Fi access is available throughout the entire space and there are additional power points (2- and 3-point plugs) at every open seat to provide for loading devices. Laptop users may request an extra monitor from the assistants’ office if necessary.

The conference venue is equipped with a SMART interactive pen podium on which presentations can be made and shown dynamically by means of the accompanying projector. A camera and microphone are directed at the speaker so that presentations may be broadcast via Skype or Adobe Connect.

Additional software on the workstations includes:

- Atlas.ti
- SPSS
- SAS
- Statistica
- EndNote and Write-N-Cite



A document camera is also linked to the computer if the speaker has to enlarge paper or other physical objects for the convenience of the meeting. The Skype venue ([book it here](#)) is equipped with a camera and microphone covering all participants in the meeting. Other web conference applications can also be used in the venue – users must, however, have their own usernames and passwords for this facility.

Workstations and some other equipment in the research commons were purchased with the financial aid of PPS. To acknowledge their gesture, the library loaded a special “PPS” background on the workstations.

### Access control

The research commons is available to all the master’s and doctoral students of all three campuses as well as to all research staff. The honours commons is available to all fourth year and honours students. Physical access to the research commons is regulated through access control at the doors; access may be gained by the person’s NWU card.

Articles written by: Amanda Lourens, Elsa Esterhuizen, Hester Spoelstra, Louise Vos, Louw Venter en Suzette Coetzee

Editor: Elize van Eldik | E-mail: [elize.vaneldik@nwu.ac.za](mailto:elize.vaneldik@nwu.ac.za) | Tel: 018 285 2441

InfoForum is available on the web at <http://dspace.nwu.ac.za/handle/10394/8323>