

NEWS

Students focus on gay rights

ERICA DREIJER

STUDENTS from seven South African universities gathered on the steps of the Constitutional Court in Braamfontein last week to mark the end of a national two-day conference focusing on gay and lesbian rights.

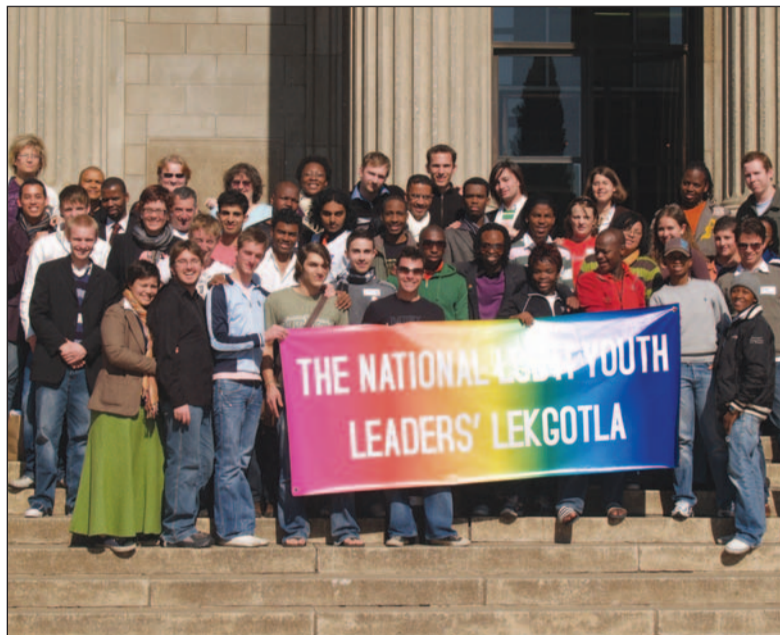
Organised by Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Inter-sex (LGBTI) youth leaders, the lekgotla was hosted at Wits. Delegates came from Wits (ACTIVATE), Stellenbosch University (Lesbigay), UWC (Loud-Enuf), Rhodes University (OUTRhodes), UCT (RainbowUCT), University of Pretoria (UP & OUT) and the University of the Free State (XX/Y).

The ceremony at the Constitutional Court symbolised the aim of the conference. A draft charter, formulated during the conference, was read out. It committed LGBTI youth leader to supporting human rights.

Delegates to the conference acknowledged that, although the legal framework had advanced in providing rights to gays and lesbians, it was not reflective of reality. Discrimination and prejudice were still widespread.

The conference was organised to air these issues and to find a forum to find solutions. It began with a tribute to the memory of two lesbian women who were murdered in Meadowlands the previous week.

In his opening address Dr David Bilchitz, ex-Witsie and former Activate chairperson, said all South Africans, "queer and straight", needed to embrace transformation and challenge prejudice in striving to ensure that all citizens enjoyed freedom, equality and dignity.



NICE TO MEET YOU: Delegates representing lesbian and gay societies from 7 universities across South Africa met at Wits last week for the first National LGBTI Youth Leaders' Lekgotla.

On the first day of the lekgotla, various issues were identified as affecting LGBTI youth.

These were the lack of knowledge within and about the community, a lack of social spaces to interact outside the clubbing scene, and slow state action to protect gay and lesbian people in cultural and religious arenas that do not accept gay and lesbian rights.

From the issues identified, delegates agreed the main areas to be addressed were education, advocacy and activism of gay and lesbian rights and finding a way to organise social LGBTI activities

beyond the clubbing scene.

The morning session on the second day was used to meet with organisations that supported the LGBTI sector, including Behind the Mask, Forum for the Empowerment of Women and Gay and Lesbian Archives in order to establish a closer working relationship with these organisations.

In the afternoon, delegates discussed the draft LGBTI Youth Charter which had been compiled by a working group during the morning and ended with the ceremony at the Constitutional Court.

Security questioned as 'snooper' sneaks into res

VUVU VENA

Questions about safety in Sunnyside Residence arose when a student in the self-catering residence found a man "snooping" around in her room during the vacation.

The student, who asked to remain anonymous, was in her room getting ready to cook supper last Thursday, when she found a man snooping around her belongings.

"My first reaction was to scream," she said.

Although the man tried to hush her up, she did not stop. However, no-one heard her as the residence was virtually empty. She ran to the reception area, leaving the man in her room.

The receptionist confronted the man and asked how he came into the residence. He said he had been in the residence for some time and was looking for his girlfriend "Debby". He said he had simply walked in through the main entrance when nobody was at reception.

The receptionist said there was nobody by the name of Debby living in the residence. The man then claimed he needed fetch something from his car and ran off.

A student from Men's Hall Residence, who was at the Sunnyside reception at the time, told the receptionist the man fitted the description of a man suspected of stealing laptops from Men's Res.

Another receptionist, who was not on duty at the time, said they had been instructed not to talk about the incident before residence management had had a meeting



How safe are our residences?

about it.

However, she had spoken to one of the hall co-ordinators the day before the incident saying how scared she was to sit at reception, especially at night during holidays.

Several students said they were concerned that Sunnyside was the only residence on campus without turnstile gates as an added security measure in a female residence.

When asked what steps management planned to take, accommodation officer Princess Ncapayi said: "We are going to have a meeting to address this issue."

The suspect is described as being a coloured man with curly hair and marks on his face. He sometimes wears spectacles with dark lenses and a black frame.

CAMPUS CELEB

FARHANA ISMAIL

Tshilidzi Nemaungani is the executive chef on the 11th floor of Senate House. Referred to as "Eric" by colleagues, this modest man spoke of his pride in his African name, which he asked that *Vuvuzela* use, and his job.

"I don't see this as just a job. It is a game, a form of entertainment for me," Nemaungani said. "I'm always playing with food. I use trimmings and offcuts and I make flowers out of food."

Who do you prepare meals for?

I cook for the staff on the 11th



floor as well as students that have been invited, and many different visitors.

How long have you been at Wits and what do you like about working here?

I've been here six years and I like that I'm able to work independently. I have the space to be creative.

What is the most challenging aspect of your job?

Preparing the hot and cold foods in one kitchen is a challenge. Normally, in other places, the cold kitchen is separate from the hot

kitchen.

So for example the mousse, which is a very delicate food to prepare, is challenging. But I do my best.

What has been the highlight of your stint at Wits?

When the new deputy vice chancellor was installed, there were lots of dignitaries that came to campus. I got to showcase my talents.

It was rewarding to prepare meals that I know people enjoyed.

What kind of meals do you prepare?

Hot and cold meals. Vegetarian, kosher, halaal. There are many requests for special orders.

What inspires you?

My music, which is always on. I love African jazz. If I had a cd player, that's all I'd listen to.

But now I listen mainly to Kaya FM.

What are some of your best desserts?

It's difficult to ask a chef that. I can only enjoy someone else's creation. I'm very critical of my own food. It never seems good enough to me.

Anyone for a rubber glove?

MELISSA DOUMAN

STAFF at Campus Health reported a strong response to a recent article in *Vuvuzela* that urged students to know their HIV status by being tested.

This week the AIDS Awareness message in *Vuvuzela* focuses on various methods of contraception. When one is in a monogamous relationship, one feels safe and trusting of their partner and often chooses not to use a condom as a method of contraception. Women often go on a contraceptive pill like Nordette and Triphasil, or the injection, which are offered free of charge at Campus Health.

The pill, loop, injection and patch are just contraceptives, used to prevent pregnancy. They do not provide protection against the contraction of HIV. They also have side effects. Sometimes they make the user feel nauseous, bloated, retain water, increase

blood pressure etc. They are effective but they are not safe against the prevention of HIV.

This does not mean that one should not trust one's partner if both have been tested for HIV and found to be negative.

But how safe is the pill, injection, loop, or patch against the risk of falling pregnant? Studies show that all these methods are not 100% safe.

Sometimes due to the fact that they have been on antibiotics, which reduces the effectiveness of these drugs, or sometimes due to the fact that they have had an excessive intake of alcohol, stress, or have not taken these pills at the same time everyday from the start of their period, these methods fail and women fall pregnant even after following all the correct steps.

No sex is safe sex.

There are consequences to everything,

however, the use of a condom every single time one has a sexual encounter proves to be one the safest methods of contraception and the only method that may prevent one from contracting HIV.

Condoms do break if not worn correctly or if they are handled too roughly. Consider using double contraception if you are having sex regularly, like the pill and a condom.

Every action in life has a consequence. Even when we make informed decisions we sometimes find ourselves in a predicament.

However, every action does not have to lead to health risks or financial strain.

A condom is not 100% safe as it can break during intercourse. It is however the only method, apart from abstaining from sex, that helps prevent HIV and, coupled with another form of contraception, an unplanned pregnancy.



Rugby World Cup

Ashwin Willemse, who played for the Wits team for one match when they played against Impala for the Pirates Grand Challenge in Rustenburg, has been selected to play for the national team in the upcoming World Cup Rugby in France. We wish him the best of luck in representing our country.

Wits gymnast raises the bar

ERICA DREIJER

A WITS gymnast was part of the national gymnastics team that came third in the 2007 All Africa Games, currently being held in Algeria.

Ross Ferguson, a third year Actuarial Science student, returned earlier this week after his team received a bronze medal and he achieved sixth place in the high bar event.

Ferguson was unable to take part in the trials for the Games in April, after he broke his wrist. This meant he was left out of the national team. But three weeks before the Games, he was asked to step in when a team member was injured and could not take part.

Since his wrist was still recovering, he took part in only three events: high bar, vault and floor.

Before the All Africa Games, he was training to take part in the 24th Universiade in Bangkok. Derived from university and Olympiad, the Universiade is an Olympic Games for students, and is second to it in sporting importance. It begins on August 8.

The Universiade, governed by the International University Sports Federation, is hosted every two years. Over seven thousand athletes from 200 countries are expected to participate this year.

Ferguson started practising gymnastics seriously when he was five, after his parents



HIGH ASPIRATIONS: Gymnast Ross Ferguson has just come back from the All Africa Games and will be leaving for the Universiade in Bangkok next week. Photo: Erica Dreijer

enrolled him in Monkeynastics. His parents say he "was always doing handstands and cartwheels" from an early age.

At the age of nine, he participated in his first national championships and the team received a silver medal at the 2004 Commonwealth

Youth Games.

Gymnastics is something he enjoys. And he realised early that, if he worked at it, he could be good. This is his secret: To train hard and stay focused "even though at times it gets boring and repetitive".

He says it's the only way to get to the top of your game when you have a talent. You have to realise the rewards may sometimes be slow to materialise, but you should just "keep at it".

He dreams of qualifying for the 2010 Commonwealth team, but is realistic enough to accept there isn't a sustainable living to be made from gymnastics. Both his studies and gymnastics are priorities for him. Not content just with sporting success, he intends also to complete an honours degree.

It's a balancing act for him (in more ways than one). It means he has time for little else, but he is nonetheless an active member of his church.

Gymnastics remains a challenge as "it's something you can never be perfect at and there is always a lot more to learn", says Ferguson. He trains three times a day, six days a week. He loves being part of a team and going on tour, especially when he gets to compete overseas.

* Odette Richards, another Wits student, will also be participating in the Universiade, which is open to students between the ages of 17 and 28 who are registered at a university.

Wits bow out of rugby cup

ERICA DREIJER

A FINE run in the Bailey Cup rugby competition came to an abrupt and disappointing halt for Wits when they were beaten 32-26 by Pirates in the semi-final played on 16 July in Germiston.

Leading 21-10 at halftime thanks to a storming start and two early tries, Wits then lost the plot by making several crucial mistakes in both attack and defence throughout the second half.

Wits coach Bruce Thorne said that the loss was due to chances not being taken and the team losing possession on numerous occasions when on attack and within easy scoring distance.

New flyhalf Richard Osborne had a good match despite his two year lay-off, while the rest of the team did what was expected of them.

"Pirates scored two quick tries, which made us desperate to get the ball. This led to several mistakes. Although we defended well with only one try going against us in the first 10 minutes of the second half, the game slipped away from us," Thorne said.

Wits will now form part of the Southern Warriors with Union and Police to compete in the regional competition that starts next week.

Points scorers for Wits against Pirates: Tries: Henri Muchurayo, James Kapay, Richard Osborne, Chris Eyre. Conversions: Grant Wilcox (3).

Setting the pace



A number of Wits students have excelled in sports this year. Among them is Ricky Robinson, above, who was one of three Wits sailors to represent South Africa in the Mirror World Yachting Championships in Port Elizabeth earlier this year. Ricky Robinson and Jeremy Holdcroft. Wits' mens A8+ rowing team, below, were the best-placed university team at the Grand Challenge Competition at the Vaal Regatta in February. The Clever Boys showed true football spirit in their Premier League match against Mamelodi Sundowns at the Bidvest stadium in April. Wits' Byron Hendriks, right, tackles Godfrey Sapula.

Photos: Courtesy of Jeremy Woodcraft, Sowetan and Steven Coomber

