‘Lead from where you are’, a series of leadership conversations presented by UWC’s Alumni Association, got off to an excellent start with the presentation of the inaugural event at the New Science Building on 19 July.

Taswell Papier, UWC alumnus, past president of the Law Society of South Africa’s Pro Bono Committee and director of Edward Nathan Sonnenbergs, was the main speaker at the well-attended event, which focused on the leadership challenges in business.

Mr Papier said that while he feels privileged to be in a leadership role in his career, taking the decision to be in charge was not always easy. “As a leader you will sometimes have to go against the tide. But as leaders we should strive to lead through example through integrity, hard work and passion,” he said.

Denzel Pedro Smit, UWC alumnus and facilitator for the programme reminded students that leadership was not only a future goal but a behaviour to practice today. “We need to prepare our youth to become leaders of tomorrow by making them realise they are already leaders today. You must be a leader in what you do, whether you are a student or a professor. Leadership is about what you are doing now and about the impact you are have on people today, not only when you get there one day,” said Denzel.

Prof. Michelle Esau, acting Head of Department for the Economic and Management Sciences Faculty, said the launch of the “Lead from where you are” series was an exciting moment for UWC, especially in light of the recent celebration of former president Nelson Mandela’s 94th birthday.

“During this time of celebrating Nelson Mandela’s birthday, many of us will think we could never fill his shoes – and would we really want to? It’s an important question to reflect upon. In my opinion leadership is about vision, trust and courage,” said Michelle.
The challenge of Leadership

Following the successful launch of the ‘Lead from where you are’ programme, ‘Three-Sixt-e’ asked Prof. Michelle Esau, the Acting Dean of Economic and Management Sciences, to reflect on the philosophical meaning of ‘leadership’.

Leadership is one of the most widely discussed constructs and attributes. We are confronted with leadership as part of our everyday lives being members of families, communities, organisations and broader society. Arguably, the functionality and dysfunctionality of these units can directly be attributed to leadership. Therefore a succinct overview of what contributes to functionality and dysfunctionality is important.

In my opinion leadership is about vision, trust and courage. Dee Hock writes, “if you seek to lead, invest at least 50 percent of your time leading yourself – your own purpose, ethics, principles, motivation and conduct.” The emphasis, in this context, is placed on introspection on the part of leadership. What is the motivation for advancing a particular vision? Is my behaviour worthy of the trust of others? Do I have the conviction to pursue this vision amidst adversity in the short term? Do I have the courage to admit to failure and accept the ideas, experiences and viewpoints of others? These are but some of the reflective questions that can assist in distinguishing between a leadership that contributes to a functional unit and one that results in a dysfunctional unit.

In our society, however, there are too many examples that illustrate a leadership that seemingly is not prepared to spend 50 percent of their time on looking inward. Various statutes and policies reflect government’s commitment to addressing problems of poverty, unemployment and inferior education. However, the increasing levels of poverty and income inequality, the high level of unemployed youth (including university graduates), and ongoing corruption and mismanagement are but some of the issues that raise fundamental questions about the motivations of leadership. It is time that the leadership “go back to their roots” through service to the communities, societies and organizations that they come from.

The reality is that we exist in a dual society as a consequence of the architecture of apartheid. As a result these two worlds will continue to confront our everyday existence and business. We can choose to travel the route that shelters us from this reality. Or we can choose the route of vision, trust and courage and use our knowledge, experiences and God-given talents to make a positive difference in the lives of millions of South Africans.
A family’s recipe for success

The Maasdorp family does not only believe a good education is their recipe for success – when a recipe works, they stick with it. All seven Maasdorp siblings are graduates of the University of the Western Cape!

Although their parents never matriculated, or perhaps because of it, their parents encouraged them to get the best education possible. “We came from a very structured family that inspired us all to have a drive for education and success. Back then our parents used to tell us that the only doors that could be opened for us were through education. After 1994 there was more freedom for young people but I told my daughters that the world may be their playground and education can still open a lot of doors for them,” said Romeo, the oldest of the seven.

After his studies Romeo BA(LLB) practiced as an advocate before joining the Western Cape Provincial Parliament, where today he heads the legal services department. A published poet, Romeo is a member of the Cape Cultural Collective. Younger brother Leslie, who many alumni will remember as SRC president in the mid-1980s, completed a BA in 1987 and went on to do his masters at the London School of Economics. Leslie is currently an international adviser to Goldman Sachs International.

Sister Mirinthia Maasdorp completed a BA degree followed by a postgraduate diploma in education. She was the principal of Noorder Paarl High School in Paarl for eight years before leaving teaching last year. Younger sister Roleen completed her BCom (Accounting) honours degree and works at Volkswagen Motors in Johannesburg. Badian Maasdorp also completed his BA(LLB) degree at UWC. He was a partner at Cliffe Dekker Hofmeyr Ltd until he resigned last year to complete his MBA. The youngest brother, Herschel, completed BA honours as well as a post-graduate diploma in Development Economics. He is the executive director of STC-Southern Africa, an international transport logistics and training company. Chrischar, the youngest Maasdorp sibling, completed honours in BA Gender Development Studies, followed by a teaching diploma. She emigrated to the UK where she is head of citizenship at Haverstock School Business and Enterprise College in London. Romeo is proud of his younger siblings’ accomplishments. “Knowing what they have achieved in life just gives me a warm feeling. Many families who lived in the area where we grew up [in Port Elizabeth] just fell by the wayside, but through their own effort my siblings have all improved themselves,” said Romeo.
The world is facing an energy crisis (something we’re only too aware of in South Africa). Gcineka Mbambisa, Chemistry PhD student from UWC, is doing her part to help fix the problem. She has been selected as one of ten recipients of the prestigious 2012 L’Oreal-UNESCO Regional Fellowship for Women in Science (FWIS) in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Gcineka’s PhD research focuses on the production and characterisation of composite polymeric materials and nano-alloys in terms of their application in the construction of hybrid photovoltaic devices.

“Existing energy supplies, mainly derived from non-renewable fuels, are not able to satisfy demand, so more renewable forms of energy are being explored,” she says. “The overall goal of my research is to develop highly efficient photovoltaic materials at a very low cost, to make solar energy accessible to communities across Africa.”

Born in the Eastern Cape, Gcineka had to overcome the loss of her mother during her first year of high school, and of her brother when she was in Grade 11. A government loan enabled Gcineka to overcome severe financial obstacles and complete her undergraduate and honours degree in chemistry at Rhodes University. She went on to qualify for the PhD programme at UWC.

“Learning and research came with a strong sense of fulfilment, and pursuing my PhD seemed to make little sense to anyone but me in the face of such financial constraints. But I believed in the idea, even when the reality was a financial nightmare,” she says.

Gcineka hopes winning a L’Oréal UNESCO fellowship will provide a platform to share her inspiring story with fellow women who - in the face of similar adversities - might otherwise never follow their dreams.
De Villiers at the helm

The University of the Western Cape recently appointed former Springbok rugby coach Peter de Villiers as UWC’s Director for Rugby and Sports Development.

“Peter brings decades of knowledge relating to rugby and other sports to the UWC community. He will motivate students and staff alike and his impact on the entire sports programme will be immense,” said UWC Rector Prof. Brian O’Connell.

De Villiers said he was very excited about his new position which he considered a bigger challenge than being the Springbok coach. “Working at UWC will be about more than coaching. It will be about fitting into the culture of UWC which I consider one of the best universities in the country. In this position I will try to take sport to the same high level as academics. I was asked how one follows up on coaching the national side at international level. The answer is simple: by giving back and transforming sport at grassroots level – and through this position at UWC, I get to do this and fulfill a lifelong ambition,” said De Villiers.

De Villiers has experienced coaching at all levels of the game and has a wealth of experience of coaching amateurs and youth. He was the coach for the under-19 national team that came third in the 1999 World Junior Rugby Championships.

He was the national coach for the under-21 team from 2004 to 2007, after which he was appointed coach of the Springboks.

Besides his coaching expertise, De Villiers’s brief includes establishing a UWC-based resource centre that will create a new generation of coaches, players, referees and administrators from local clubs and schools, as well as from UWC.

“UWC has great facilities and it is hoped that this programme will attract aspiring top players to join UWC both in lecture halls and on the field. UWC must become the university of choice for sport and a place from which provincial and national sides are selected. But first, we will show what we have by being promoted from Varsity Shield to Varsity Cup,” said a confident De Villiers.

No smoke and mirrors

Ludwig May is a good example of a career built through hard work and dedication, founded on a solid, quality tertiary education. He completed a BSc (Computer Science and Information Systems) degree at UWC in 1998, and then did a Bcom and BCom Honours in Operations Management. After graduating, he started working as a management trainee at the British American Tobacco (BAT) factory in Paarl. He rose through the ranks, reaching his current position as a business controls manager at BAT’s London headquarters.

Here’s what Ludwig had to say when we spoke to him about his time at UWC:

“I was drawn to UWC because of the excellent courses available and the tuition costs, and because it was the institution my father and older sister attended (my younger brother also completed a degree at UWC in 2007). The distance to my house was another factor – UWC being just 5km away was a huge bonus.

One of my greatest inspirations while studying was Anton Grutter – he not only lectured me in Operations Management but also implemented many of the principles in his life and the way in which he conducted the course. I worked closely with him as his lead tutor for Operations, and learned a lot from him.

My advice to aspiring UWC students wanting to work abroad is this: ask and you may receive (don’t ask and you definitely won’t), be resilient, and build sustainable productive relationships.”

UWC Golf Day to be held at the King David Golf Club in Montana on Monday 13 November 2012. For more information, contact Marlene Scholtz at tel. 021 959 2482.
Alumna Carmen Christian (B Econ Honours, 2010), has come full circle since graduating in 2010. Last year she went back to the classroom – this time on the other side of the divide – as an Economics lecturer at UWC.

Carmen completed a BSc(Physiotherapy) degree at the University of Cape Town (UCT) in 2003. After four years in both the public and private health care sectors, she felt something was lacking. “I found myself in a position where I started questioning my ability to make economic decisions as a health professional,” she says.

So Carmen decided to go back to school. “My aim was to learn a few economic principles and apply them to relevant scenarios in the health sector. I discovered that UWC was one of the few institutions that offered accredited programmes to individuals who worked full-time and wanted to study part-time. Based on recognition of prior learning, I was accepted at UWC via an advanced bridging course, which led me to begin my journey towards completing my BEcon(Honours),” Carmen said.

Working and studying proved to be a great challenge, but her hard work paid off when she made the Dean’s List for Outstanding Academic Performance in Economic and Management Science at Honours Level, received the UWC Outstanding Academic Performance Award, and also received the Economic Research South Africa (ERSA) Award for Outstanding Performance.

Carmen is now pursuing her masters in Economics.
DID YOU KNOW?

Solomon Lechesa Tsenoli, Deputy Minister for Rural Development and Land Reform, holds a Certificate in Public Policy Management from UWC.

Cassel Charlie Mathale, Premier of Free State, completed his BA Social Sciences (UWC).

Meet the Members of the Alumni Association

Ashley Uys
(BSc Honours, Biotechnology, 2003)

At only 30 years old, UWC alumnus, scientist and entrepreneur Ashley Uys has already achieved more than many people twice his age.

While interning at a medical technology company, Ashley created a simplified HIV testing kit. In 2006, he started his own medical technology company called Real World Diagnostics in Cape Town. In 2008, still only 25 years old, Ashley won the top prize at the SAB KickStart Awards for his HIV test kits. Real World Diagnostics was also named Business of the Year. The company has since developed medical test kits for pregnancy, syphilis, malaria, HIV/AIDS and a multiple drug testing kit, and counts a number of government departments among its clients.

ON THE BOOKSHELVES

Poetic justice

UWC alumna Ronelda S. Kamfer’s 2011 Afrikaans collection of poetry, grond/Santekraam, beautifully illustrates the stories of ordinary people in 59 captivating pages.

The BA Hons (Afrikaans en Nederlands) graduate’s second collection of poems, published by Kwela Books, cleverly makes nature the beautiful constant to her characters’ raw, real life experiences. Through characters like Mal Maria, Ronelda brings to life the aftermath of apartheid and the legacy of District Six. Through darker poems dealing with domestic violence, like “Shaun”, she allows her characters to tell their story – without any censorship.

Ronelda’s first poems were published in 2005 in the anthology Nuwe Stemme 3, edited by her former UWC lecturer, Antjie Krog. Her debut collection of poetry, Noudat slapende honde, was published in 2008 and won the Eugene Marais Award in 2009. A Dutch translation of the collection was released later that year, and translations of her work have been published in French, Portuguese and Turkish.

Denzel Pedro Smit
(BProc)

Denzel Pedro Smit, a John Maxwell-certified leadership and personal development coach, is an avid advocate of the power of positive thinking. After matriculating in 1981 he did not have the means to study further and joined the SA Navy before working at the House of Representatives for ten years.

He was only able to pursue his BProc degree in 1993, by which time he was considerably older than most of his classmates. He considers his more mature frame of mind to have been an advantage as he was not easily distracted from his studies.

In 2004, after six years of practising law, Denzel started Zecan Solutions, an organisation that focuses on helping individuals to understand themselves better and develop holistically. Denzel feels his true calling is to help people think their way to success and believes that UWC has a role to play in helping students to develop as individuals.

“UWC has even more potential to nurture South Africa’s future leaders than when I was a student. We need to focus now on developing them,” said Denzel.

To join the UWC Alumni Association or update your details, visit www.uwc.ac.za/alumni or contact the Alumni Relations office at 021 959 2143, or mail us at alumni@uwc.ac.za.
A day of golf and giving

A record 112 players ensured that the eighth Annual Johannesburg UWC Golf Day that took place on 24 July 2012 at the Randpark Golf Club in Randburg was a roaring success.

Despite a cold start, the day and the competition soon warmed up. This year’s winners were UWC alumnus Eugene Mackay and friends Jafta Benjamin and Gerald Thomas, who came out on top despite being one man short. The winning team was awarded the UWC Johannesburg Corporate Golf Day floating trophy by Rector and Vice-Chancellor Professor Brian O’Connell. Several other teams were handed prizes at the evening’s celebration.

The main objectives of the Johannesburg Golf Day were to nurture relationships between alumni and UWC and to raise funds for the UWC Development Fund, which is administered by the UWC Foundation. Dr Raymond Patel, Chairperson of the Gauteng Alumni Chapter and CEO of merSETA (Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Sector Education and Training Authority) announced that merSETA would sponsor the Department of Statistics and Population Studies’ Outreach Programme for Mathematics school teachers in the Western Cape to the tune of R43 000. A number of other alumni contributed R10 000 each towards other UWC projects, including Student Financial Aid, academic support programmes, equipment and outreach projects.

“Dedicated UWC staff and former staff members, Gauteng Alumni Chapter members, corporate and individual sponsors have slogged hard to make the event a success over the past eight years,” said Marlene Scholtz, the Golf Day organiser, who also expressed a “special word of thanks to the watering hole sponsors, the sponsors who contributed towards our prizes and to the players who participated, for making the 2012 Johannesburg Golf Day such a success.”

Why Three-Sixt-e?

‘Three-Sixt-e’ symbolically describes the unique value chain of being a UWC graduate. As part of our journey, we travel from being a student, to graduating, to following a career path. When we complete our journey by ‘coming back’ through joining the alumni community, we’ve come full-circle (that is, 360 degrees). Through reconnecting and networking with our peers and the institution, lie possibilities of assisting the younger generations embarking on their own UWC journey. It’s a circle of opportunity for everyone, and we hope to keep you in the loop through the Three-Sixt-e newsletter.

DID YOU KNOW?

Thandi Vivian Tobias-Pokolo, Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry, holds an Advanced Diploma in Economic Policy (UWC).

Celebrity Corner

United States Secretary of State, Ms Hillary Rodham Clinton delivered her public speech, “Going Global: the US - South Africa Partnership” at the Main Hall, UWC on the 8th of August 2012.

Join the UWC Alumni Association & get your free UWC Alumni T-shirt!

Download the Alumni Membership form at www.uwc.ac.za/alumni
Stay connected and update your latest contact details on www.uwc.ac.za/alumni

Should you have any questions please email us at alumni@uwc.ac.za or call us at 021 959 2143.