

Media networking day: Developing new relationships

Posted on **December 06, 2021**



Prof Marinda Oosthuizen, Deputy Dean: Research and PG Studies gave an introductory talk about the Faculty (Photo: Ursula Human, Plaasmedia)

On Thursday, 25 November 10 members of the media attended an insightful and exciting networking day at the Faculty. The visit was part of a two-day visit arranged by the Department of Institutional Advancement (DIA) of the University of Pretoria and the two Faculties (Veterinary Science and EBIT) they visited. The Faculty featured extensively in the media during 2020 and 2021, and this event provided a further opportunity to touch base and develop new and even better relationships with members of the media.

The journalists, representing the Cape Times, Cape Argus, Cape Talk/702, SABC Radio, Landbouweekblad, SABC News, Landbouradio and Plaasmedia, respectively, were treated to a short but interesting programme during which various senior experts in the Faculty featured in dedicated discussions with them. They were accompanied by Ms Prim Gower, Ms Liesel Swart and Ms Mecayla Maseka from DIA/UP. A tour through the Faculty's Onderstepoort Veterinary Academic Hospital (OVAH) including the OVAH's wildlife clinic also formed part of the programme.

After a charming introduction to the Faculty by Prof Marinda Oosthuizen, Deputy Dean: Research and Postgraduate Studies, the journalists had a chance to hear from Prof Gerhard Steenkamp, veterinary dentistry specialist and maxillofacial surgeon. Prof Steenkamp, in collaboration with colleagues and other stakeholders was, over many years, responsible for numerous exciting and

pioneering surgical procedures. These range from nasal surgery on Makokou, the gorilla from the Johannesburg Zoo in 2020 to more recently providing Max the parrot with the first 3D-printed titanium beak in South Africa.



Prof Gerhard Steenkamp (left) and Prof Leith Meyer (Photos: Ursula Human, Plaasmedia)

A tour of the Faculty's well-known veterinary hospital was next on the list and the Director of the OVAH, Dr Paul van Dam indeed made sure that they left the hospital with much food for thought. An interesting discussion followed between the journos and Prof Tshepo Matjila, head of the Department of Veterinary Tropical Diseases (DVTD) and Prof Henriette van Heerden, also from the DVTD during which numerous questions were answered about the prevalence of brucellosis, anthrax, foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) and bovine TB, among other things.

The formal part of the programme was concluded with two quite enlightening talks by both Dr Rebone Moerane, head of the Department of Production Animal Studies and Prof Leith Meyer, Director of the Faculty's Centre for Veterinary Wildlife Research (CVWR).



Dr Rebone Moerane (left, photo: Ursula Human, Plaasmedia). Ms Liesel Swart (second from right in the back) and Ms Mecayla Maseka (front right) from DIA/UP with a few of the journos.

After enjoying lunch in the form of delicious individual lunch boxes (courtesy of the Faculty's Crisp Health cafeteria), the journalists made one last stop when they were taken on a tour of the OVAH's wildlife clinic by wildlife veterinarian, Dr Jacques O'Dell. While no patients were present in the clinic at the time, the tour turned out to be very popular among the journalists.

They came, they saw and they went away amazed and in good spirits. Not only was this a very successful event but already the Faculty has received numerous requests from these members of the media for interviews with the people they have met during the day.



The journalists were also taken on a tour of the OVAH's wildlife clinic.

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-Published by Chris van Blerk



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