

## Renewed hope in the era of increased democratic fragility

South Africa's progression over the past 25 years of democratic rule has implored us to reflect, applaud strides made, heed persistent challenges, and self-introspect on our role as a citizenry of a liberal democratic regime. While much headway has been made to engender increased political participation, respect for diversity, fostering of gender equality, and the equitable distribution of public goods, there are still glaring challenges that perceptibly debase our democracy into a state of fragility and vulnerability. The lack of political accountability, increased socio-economic inequalities and the scourge of gender based violence, coupled with the triple burden of poverty, unemployment and pervasive government looting and corruption, are but a few gloomy confrontations that have undoubtedly set us into a state of national anxiety.

In spite of this seemingly trepidatious state of affairs, hope for a better future is what keeps us alive and buoyant. Hope affords us the opportunity to imagine and strive towards betterment in the face of much anxiety and banality. This issue of the Political Animal bears testament to some of the initiatives, academic engagements, and ideas by thought leaders that inspire and stimulate hopeful prospects for strengthening political participation, co-operation, collaboration and active global citizenry.

This issue commences with remarks from our HoD, Prof Suzanne Graham before focusing on our student's international engagements in the BRICS Summer School in China, the Global Climate Strike, and the 10th University Scholars Leadership Symposium (USLS) in Malaysia. We thereafter highlight the launch of the UJ Political Council, which is a student led forum under the auspices of the department, and aimed at stimulating an interest in political affairs among Political Science and International Relations students at UJ. Dr Lisa Otto, also penned down her reflections on the first inter UJ-WITS student conference which afforded students the chance to deepen their experience of academic writing and presentation skills with prospects of publishing.

We also feature contributions by our own Prof Victoria Graham; EngageSA founder, Brownwyn Dugtig; and international climate activist, Catherine Constantinides. Their pieces not only offer a critical perspective on contemporary political cultures but also offer much insight on understanding the challenges of political participation, contested statehood and geo-politics in Africa. Before going through the insightful write-up by our lead editor on finding an apt mentor for you, also see some of the seminars, conferences and book launches the department hosted in this concluding semester.

Much thanks goes to our contributors whose participation and contributions have made this a great second issue. Going forward we hope to welcome more contributions from both inside and outside of UJ. I would also like to extend my sincerest thanks to the Political Animal's editorial board for their stellar work and dedication. As Sven would say "You are indeed our Department's staunchest political animals!". Continue inspiring hope in this era of much political anxiety.

Happy holidays, see you all in 2020.

Best  
Tshepo Morabe, Assistant Lead Editor of Political Animal  
December 2019



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## From the HOD's Desk



Prof Suzanne Graham has been the HoD of the Department of Politics and International Relations since 2018.

Prof Graham's teaching and research interests include: foreign policy, terrorism, globalisation and international conflict.

Prof Graham has authored and co-authored several academic articles. She is also the author of the book, [\*Democratic South Africa's foreign policy: Voting Behaviour at the United Nations\*](#) (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

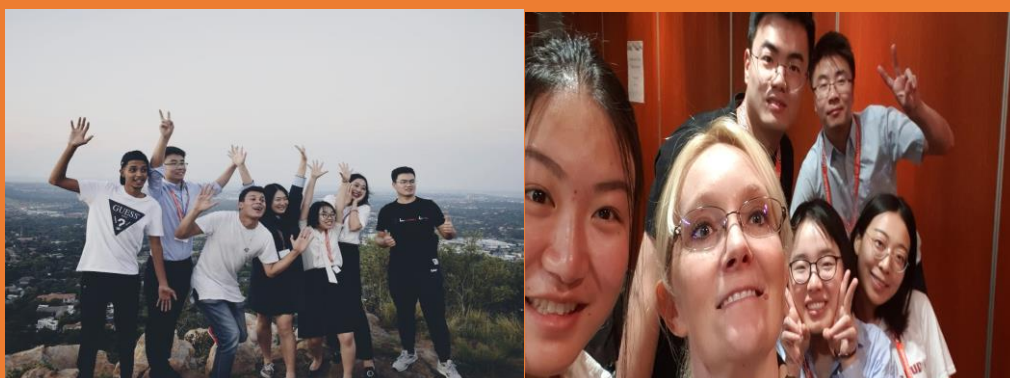
In November 2019 Prof Graham was named Co-president of RISC-RISE Consortium.

Greetings!

We are winding down now after another busy semester full of conferences, book launches, seminars, ambassadorial visits, foreign visits, graduations and normal semester B teaching and learning, among other activities. Thank you to Tshepo Morabe and Sven Botha for ensuring that the second edition of the 2019 Political Animal is complete! Thank you to the Politics and IR tutor group who have worked very hard this semester to manage and to coordinate large student groups on two campuses!

Thank you to Prof Vicky Graham for organising the 2019 RISC conference and to Rae Israel, Tracy Hoxobes and Zimkhitha Manyana for their support. When you host an international conference involving participants from over 16 countries you need to develop skills aside from academia, including becoming a host, a tour guide, a restaurant guide, a technical genius and general know-it-all. When you are considering your future career, bear this in mind... The Department also hosted colleagues and students from the University of Renmin, China, in late November 2019. This exchange included presentations from UJ staff, including Politics lecturer Dr Costa Georghiou, and was a huge success. Thank you to Nathan, Jordan and Zimkhitha for their support. It is so important to recognise different cultures and peoples and to discuss any similarities we all may share. Thank you to Dr Otto, Dr Nganje and Mr Ndzendze for organising and running the UJ/Wits student conference, based at UJ. The conference is an excellent initiative and the Dept. aims to ensure that it runs again in 2020.

Finally, thank you to the Politics and IR undergrad and postgraduate students who make teaching at UJ a fulfilling experience.



Postgraduate students from Renmin University of China

Best wishes  
S Graham

**Student News - Semester B 2019****BRICS Summer Programme**

Three students from the Department of Politics and International Relations were invited to study and experience life in China. The students, who were based in Shanghai from 6 July to 2 August 2019, were selected on academic merit and interest in Chinese politics. This BRICS Program initiative known as the Shanghai Summer School was a collaborative initiative between Fudan University in Shanghai China and the University of Johannesburg International House Office.

The three students from the University of Johannesburg (UJ) Department of Politics and International Relations were Busisiwe Sibizo, Zizipho Mkhosi (both 3<sup>rd</sup> year BA in Politics and International Relations students) and, Muthumuni Maimela (a 2<sup>nd</sup> year BA in Politics and International Relations student).

The Shanghai Summer School (BRICS Program) is a short-term educational program that provides an opportunity for undergraduates, postgraduates and junior researchers from the BRICS countries to live and study in Shanghai (China) for a Month cites Busisiwe Sibizo. The program's package includes around one-month lectures, consisting of three modules: 'Global Governance and Cooperation' among BRICS, 'China's Politics and Diplomacy' and 'Happy in Shanghai.' Themes discussed in lectures include restructuring of global governance in BRICS, global multipolarity and BRICS cooperation, global energy cooperation and BRICS countries, China's public policy, China and Africa, amongst others.

The students noted that the academic engagement and exposure, cultural exchange and cultural tours helped them in understanding Chinese development in global politics. In addition, they also applauded the program for seeking to strengthen cohesion between BRICS people, by sharing their experiences in a non-political environment. This promoted the person-to-person interaction between the BRICS nations and its people.



### Student News Continued

Bongani Dlamini, a third year Politics and International Relations student in the Department, has made remarkable strides this past semester. Bongani participated in the Global Climate Strike wherein he was interviewed by *Voice of America* (VOA) to provide an African perspective on climate change. You can listen to the interview [here](#).

More recently, Bongani also had the opportunity of enhancing the skillset of 10 young Africans by teaching them how to make short films. This undertaking enjoyed support from GSMA, Vodacom and the United Nations Children's Education Fund (UNICEF). Learn more [here](#)!

Congratulations Bongani! We are proud of you!

### PhD student attends the 10<sup>th</sup> University Scholars Leadership Symposium

Ayabulela Dlakavu, a PhD student in the Department of Politics and International Relations attended the 10<sup>th</sup> University Scholars Leadership Symposium (USLS) hosted by Humanitarian Affairs Asia and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The symposium was hosted in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and spanned from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup> of August 2019.

The Symposium brought together 1500 students from the world's top 500 universities to stimulate dialogue and critical thinking on issues facing the world at present. The 2019 symposium focused on the ideas of servant leadership, economic development as well as the influence of the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution as a force for good as the world moves to eradicate poverty, inequality and other global ills.

Noteworthy speakers at the Symposium included: Malaysian Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Bin and the President of the National University of Singapore, Prof Tan Eng Chye.



South African delegates attending the 10<sup>th</sup> University Scholars Leadership Symposium. Delegates came from the University of Johannesburg, Stellenbosch University and Northwest University

### UJ Students Launch the UJ Political Council

The Department of Politics and International Relations has launched a student led initiative to spark interest in political affairs among Politics students at the University. The initiative, called the UJ Political Council seeks to get students to participate in political, social and economic matters at different levels while also acting as a think tank to produce new knowledge and disseminate existing knowledge. This initiative has been welcomed warmly by students who are already involved with different projects and organizations such as the United Nations Association of South Africa (UNASA), Amnesty International and UNICEF Association of UJ who believe this will allow them to enrich their practical experience.

Lecturers also indicated that this council presents endless opportunities for students and thus pledged their support for the initiative. Mr Nezo Sobekwa, an associate lecturer at the department highlighted an array of opportunities that the newly formed body could exploit. He further suggested that this initiative could play a huge role in influencing the decision of prospective students to study at the University of Johannesburg, meaning that the Department could now attract and retain top students who will go on to contribute to national and international politics.

The UJ Political Council, in its short existence, has already had some successes including hosting an event addressed by the Ambassador of Germany, HE Dr Martin Schäfer in a panel discussion where the Political Culture of South Africa was discussed and contrasted with that of Germany while also discussing multiculturalism in South Africa. The council also has ambitious plans for the foreseeable future, including organizing visits to parliament, Union Buildings and getting its members involved with other organizations such as the South African Institute for Foreign Affairs. Students have also been encouraged to use this platform for the different advantages it possesses.

Students have also been asked to make contributions and decide what kind of work and activities the council will pursue in the 2020 calendar year by sending suggestions to [ujpcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:ujpcouncil@gmail.com). Suggestions may include inviting the Council to events, lecturers, seminars and other activities related to politics, policy making and analysis.



Left to Right:  
Ambassador of the  
Federal Republic  
of Germany, Dr  
Martin Schäfer,  
Sven Botha and  
Prof Suzy Graham



### The Publications Showcase

The Publications Showcase is a new feature designed with a dual purpose. Firstly, this feature aims to showcase the prolific publishing culture of the Department of Politics and International Relations at UJ. Secondly, it is hoped that students will use this information to identify political mentors and supervisors with greater ease. The Publications Showcase features publications published by both staff and students over the last two years as well one publication which is put under the Publication spotlight.

Given that this feature is still under development this issue will only showcase recent student publications as well as the Publication Spotlight! In preparation for issue 3, the Editors would like to invite all lecturers, researchers and students in the department to submit a list of their latest research outputs (2018 and 2019 only) via email to: [uj.politicalanimal@gmail.com](mailto:uj.politicalanimal@gmail.com) by **no later than the 31<sup>st</sup> of June 2020. Please note that only submitted publications will appear in this feature.**

### Join the Publications Working Group for Politics and International Relations Students

The Department remains committed to assisting students produce and promote impactful research that helps to stimulate the academic discourse within Political Science, International Relations and related disciplines. It is for this reason that the Department has established the Publications Working Group for Politics and International Relations Students (the Working Group). The Working Group is an informal forum that meets monthly where students at all levels of study master the art of academic publishing. Founded in October 2019, the Working Group meets monthly to allow for the creation of a space where students can share their ideas, discuss common challenges and find common solutions to these challenges in academic publishing. The primary aim of the Working Group is to increase the rate of impactful research being produced by students.

Students interested in joining the Working Group should get in touch via email: [219119824@student.uj.ac.za](mailto:219119824@student.uj.ac.za)

## Other Exciting News! The Voice of Africa



The Voice of Africa will establish an internet online television channel that aims to educate the youth of South Africa and also being the most recognized channel that uplifts and change the lives of the youth. In addition, the channel will be equipping the youth with the educational programs such as entrepreneurial shows, entrepreneurial career expo and also other socio issues faced by the youth such as suicidal issues faced by young unemployed graduates and undergraduates. Furthermore, it also aims to voice up the political activists in various institutions and their academia voices in regards to the issues concerning the Southern Africa. Therefore, the channel will be delivering this content to its target through blog, talk shows and live shows.

The Voice of Africa will have online television show that will be monthly pre-recorded 30 minutes online show that will have panel of not more than 3 or 4 guests based on specific issues that relates to TVA content. In addition, it will also have five minutes video clip each week or an article each week. The Voice of Africa consists of Five (5) young passionate entrepreneurs who are committed in improving the life of the marginalized group through this channel and lastly the Voice of Africa it is expected to be launched in October 2019.

## See you at SAAPS 2020?

The South African Association of Political Studies (SAAPS) is delighted to announce the call for papers for the 15<sup>th</sup> Biennial SAAPS Conference is now available. The conference will be held at Rhodes University from the 27<sup>th</sup> until the 29<sup>th</sup> of August 2020. The conference organisers invite interested scholars, both established and emerging to submit paper and panel abstracts of no more than 300 words to [saaps2020@ru.ac.za](mailto:saaps2020@ru.ac.za) by no later than the 29<sup>th</sup> of February 2020. To read the full call for papers, please visit the [SAAPS website](http://www.saaps.org.za).



South African Association of  
Political Studies

For more on SAAPS  
Twitter: @SAAPSA  
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## Departmental Seminars and Conferences - Semester B 2019

### Discussing Zimbabwe's Challenges and Prospects with Ambassador David Hamadziripi

What will it take for Zimbabwe to rise from its ruins and for its economy to thrive? Well, there is a new dispensation that is tackling accumulated challenges in that country. The University of Johannesburg's Africa-China Institute, in August 2019, hosted HE Dr David Hamadziripi, Ambassador of Zimbabwe to South Africa, in a library discussion titled "Tackling Accumulated Challenges in Zimbabwe: Understanding Zimbabwe's Prospects" with Professor Chris Landsberg of the Department of Politics and International Relations; School of Leadership; South African Research Chair in African Diplomacy and Foreign Policy Professor in International Relations being the respondent for the evening in a discussion moderated by Dr Nolitha Vukuza.

The discussion was centred on the challenges and the plans of the Emmerson Mnangagwa administration which replaced the Robert Mugabe administration in 2017. While at first, Mugabe's rule promised a lot for the people of Zimbabwe, by the time he was removed from office the country was amongst the most impoverished in the world while also facing crippling sanctions from global powerhouses like the USA and Great Britain. This leaves the 'ED' as he is affectionately known, administration with the mammoth task, not only to revive the economy but to restore the rule of law, improve the standard of living and stop the country's brain drain, challenges the ambassador feels are not insurmountable.

To try and address these challenges, the ambassador suggested that Zimbabwe is trying to mend its broken relationship with the West by constantly urging countries like USA to abandon their sanctions against Zimbabwe and consider it a friendly nation that is open for business and reform. This is coupled with efforts to secure aid from the World Bank and other global and regional financial institutions even if this might expose Zimbabwe to the dreaded Structural Adjustment Programs. The West, however, does not seem to be moved by the change of leadership in Zimbabwe as Donald Trump announced last year that the USA would maintain its sanctions on Zimbabwe, further denting the hopes of accelerated growth in the country. In recent months Zimbabwe has seen a growth in anti-sanctions protests with individuals from all walks of life in that country joining in on the call for sanctions to be dropped.

Professor Chris Landsberg, however noted, it was always going to be tough to convince the world that Zimbabwe is undergoing reform considering that there is high levels of state-sanctioned violence against citizens, media censoring and generally the abuse of some of the basic freedoms such as the freedom of expression. This coupled with the fact that the "new man" is not new at all, as he served as the Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs of Zimbabwe from 1989 to 2000 and as Vice President from 2014 to 2017 amongst other portfolios dented hopes of Zimbabwe being seen in a new light. He further stated that regional actors such as SADC and the African Union should use tools such as the African Peer Review Mechanism to cultivate a culture of good governance and avoid replicating events that Zimbabwe underwent in the past. He further suggested that some, if not most of Zimbabwe's issues have to be addressed internally with the help of vibrant democracies like South Africa. This should not be done to gain favour from the global powerhouses but because it is the right thing to do for the wellbeing of Zimbabweans.

### DR Riaan Eksteen Book Launch

Dr Riaan Eksteen, a former South African Ambassador to the USA, who also enjoyed a career spanning over 50 years in diplomacy recently published a book discussing the role of the highest courts of the EU, South Africa and the USA in influencing foreign policy. The book, titled "The Role of the Highest Courts of the United States of America and South Africa, and the European Court of Justice in Foreign Affairs" evaluates the role of the judiciary in foreign policy processes. Dr Eksteen contends that the influence of the judiciary in shaping foreign affairs is understudied but in a world that is growing ever connected the role of the courts should be brought under the microscope.

Having obtained his PhD from the University of Johannesburg in 2018 he has went on to convert the PhD into a book. The book is set to benefit scholars, students, researchers and practitioners of both law and politics as it contains a very rich and comprehensive list of references, it is also expected to benefit professionals working within the legislatures in the European Union, USA and South Africa while those in the judiciary could also massively gain from this book. The book also inspects the role of Supreme Court of the USA, the role of the Constitutional Court and the Supreme Court of Appeal in South Africa and the European Court of Justice in the EU in foreign affairs as the author believes that the footprints of the judiciary in Foreign Policy Analysis is vehemently ignored and there is little to no scholarly work on this subject even though, very clearly, the judiciary has not shied away from using its authority to influence foreign affairs, particularly issues dealing with presidential overreach.

The book was welcomed by other scholars of Politics, International Relations and Law such as Professor Deon Geldenhuys, Dr Costa Georghiou, Justice Edwin Cameron and Professor Suzy Graham who expressed admiration for the book while highlighting that this book presents an opening for further exploration by aspiring scholars interested in International Relations and Law. Readers of the book will find it truly enriching and will be directed to a list of courts cases where the judgements had a direct impact on foreign policy. It also brings in a new front to the study and analysis of foreign policy (FPA) as it is the first of its kind to focus on the judiciary.





### Tackling extremism in Africa: A discussion on Extremisms in Africa Vol 2

The rise of extremism in Africa, is what initiated the public dialogue with the Good Governance Africa in partnership with the UJ Library and the Department of Politics and International Relations at the University of Johannesburg on Tuesday the 27<sup>th</sup> of August 2019. In her opening statement at the public dialogue, Prof Suzanne Graham - an Associate Professor of International Relations at HoD of the Department of Politics and International Relations said: "We all know we live in a continent that is full of Extremes. There are contrasts we see on a daily basis. We have unparalleled beauty on the continent of Africa on a daily basis, alongside devastating poverty. We have migration challenges and then we have xenophobic challenges. We have all sorts of problems and yet we are not actually the newest in the world to appropriate Industrialisation and actually, we can re-imagine our future for ourselves right now. One of the ways to do that is for policy makers and practitioners actually being advised on corporate communication and due processes. This is important because it offers advice and at the end of the day, policy makers need advice. They need to draw on this to create the policies that are supposed to govern our societies across the continent, and this is all so important ".

Prof Graham later welcomed some of the contributors of the Extremists in Africa Vol. 2 and panellists of the public dialogue; Stephen Buchanan-Clarke – Lead Researcher, National Security Programme and Good Governance Africa as well as Sven Botha - a post-graduate student at the UJ department of Politics and International Relations alongside the moderator of the day, Dr Craig Moffat - Security Specialist at Good Governance Africa. Speaking about the Book- *Extremisms in Africa Vol. 2*, Stephen noted that "This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Series of an analogy of the Extremism in Africa. The first volume was published in 2017 - took case-studies of some of the preeminent groups such as the ISIS. It looked at specific geographic and organisations. It also included Boko Haram in Nigeria". Africa has increasingly become one of the most important emergent battlefield for extremists in states such as Egypt, Algeria, Libya and Nigeria. One of the most popular extremists groups is al-Shabaab, Boko Haram, along with Al Qaeda and ISIS affiliates whose epicentre for violent extremist activity has been identified in West Africa and the Sahel- a regional border of the Southern area of the Sahara Desert which is claimed to be home to longstanding illegal drug, contraband, and human trafficking networks for decades. As a result, Stephen said all African countries have started taking extremism and terrorism seriously.

Stephen posited that the major facilitating factors for Islamic extremism in South Africa are accentuated by SA's positionality and role as a transport, business and communication hub on the continent, and this makes SA increasingly vulnerable to extremism. "The ease of travelling on a South African passport relative to other passports, high level of corruption especially at Home Affairs, SA's proximity to list of trade networks in the regions, trafficking, ivory trade, drug trade and low levels of corporate awareness of terrorism and funding mechanisms, are some of the factors often cited as Terrorism mechanisms," Stephen said.

Sven presented on the prominence of E-Jihad in the age of interactive social media, he took a closer look at Al-Shabaab, ISIS and Boko Haram which included: Drivers of radicalisation on religion and socio-economic factors as well as the use of social media to attract the youth to join Extremist groups. Sven's chapter also posed some cortical policy recommendations, which placed a strong emphasis on the need for grass roots enagement and the instalments of counter-narratives. Some of the questions and comments raised from the audience included what motivates people to start extremism groups in Africa, and why the government can't exercise their powers towards combating Social Media in trying to eradicate extremism and terrorism.

**Democracy Discounted with Prof Laurence Piper**

Democracy is often seen as a national construct and an international standard. Prof Piper encourages us to think of democracy in local terms by assessing how citizen practice democracy within the context of cities located in the Global South. Prof Piper, the co-author, with Dr Fiona Anciano, of *Democracy Disconnected*, discussed the merits of his book at the University of Johannesburg. He stressed the importance of democracy being understood, particularly by the civil society and citizens of the cities. His study focused on the protection of cities, their development and their transformation to serve the purpose of the people. The book also entails a section of disconnection as experienced by the economic order and dismantled locations of the civilians within the city. His main focus was the city of Cape Town and all the regions that are found within the City of Cape Town.

The Executive Director of the University of Johannesburg Political Council asked a question that “as government officials are drafting, approving and presenting plans that seek to integrate the townships, rural places – to a certain extent and sub-suburbs into one city, are the civilians having the willingness to integrate those coming from lower levels into their privileged circumstances”? Prof Piper replied by noting the dying plans of integration, making example of the Alexandra development project, moreover, he went to state that “there is no sense of willingness to integrate anyone coming from different of lower levels of privilege by those whom are highly privileged. Furthermore he noted that “those whom are privileged have some level of superiority and thus security becomes a very high commodity to them, hence, they regard whoever coming from outside of the borders of their estates as being a traitor and an intruder to their territory and locally privatized security has to act upon them”. His presentation went into revealing the importance of security in the City of Cape Town, however, that security is seen to be of very different levels, taking note of the different levels that come with the general dwelling. Townships will have Community Police Forums, with in effective police service (SAPS). Whilst the upper level get privatized security from privatized services.

*Democracy Disconnected* clearly illustrates the real and practical disconnection and the level of understanding democracy by those whom are just deemed “potential voters” and the need to reform and restructure the service delivery system, the protection of those who can afford and those who cannot. Moreover, those who are willing to participate on the process of development and transformation. Democracy disconnected is not ultimately the disconnection of democracy, rather the omissions of principles, values, morals and norms of democracy that are missing.



Left to right:  
Bosele Tladi  
(MA Student),  
Prof L. Piper,  
Prof V. Graham  
and Zimkhitha  
Manyana (MA  
Student)

### Students to the frontlines of academia: The 2019 Student Conference

Insert written by: Dr Lisa Otto

In October this year, the Department of Politics and International Relations, in collaboration with the SARCHI Chair: African Diplomacy, played host to its first (and hopefully annual) student conference. The event, co-hosted with our colleagues at Wits University, provided postgraduate students, primarily from the discipline of Politics and International Relations but also from the broader faculty, the chance to deepen their experience of academic writing and presentation.

The day was opened by Prof Chris Landsberg, who holds the aforementioned SARCHI Chair, and who welcomed the 26 students who attended. These students prepared and presented papers on an array of topics organised into six sessions: Diplomacy and Foreign Policy, Conflict and Crime, Political Systems, Trade and Finance, Development, and International Organisations. Each panel was chaired and facilitated by an academic either from UJ or Wits, with peers in attendance to listen, learn, engage and offer critical feedback.

The conference followed the usual academic format with a view to exposing students to how the process of attending and participating in a conference works, and to allow for the establishment of peer knowledge communities, alongside the ability to both give and receive constructive criticism.

While nerves were certainly high in the lead-up to the day, I think I can speak for my colleagues in saying that we were all enormously impressed by just how well our students fared and that they grasped the opportunity to learn from one another with both hands. Indeed, a selection of the very best papers have been put forward to be considered for publication in South Africa's foremost International Relations journal, the *South African Journal for International Affairs*, and the organising committee, as well as the students' supervisors are standing by to assist them through the peer review process. We hope that you, dear reader, will join us in eagerly anticipating their publication in the course of 2020.

Prof Suzy Graham, our Head of Department, in her closing remarks congratulated students for their courage to stand up in front of a room full of people and speak about their research but also commended them for rising to the occasion to do so.

We certainly hope that you enjoyed the conference, we welcome your feedback, and we hope to see many more of you participating in the next instalment of this event.



**Students and staff from UJ and Wits participating in the 2019 Student Conference.**

**Congratulations to all whom participated and huge congratulations to Dr Otto for establishing this excellent initiative.**



**Conference participants interested in publishing their work should consider joining the Publishing Working for Politics and IR students. See page 6.**



### UJ hosts the 2019 RISC conference: Migration issues come under the spotlight

From the 4<sup>th</sup> until the 5<sup>th</sup> of November 2019, UJ's Department of Politics and International Relations in collaboration with the Universities of Helsinki and Luxemburg, and the INECOL (GAMMA) hosted the 2019 Conference of the Consortium for Comparative Research on Regional Integration and Social Cohesion (RISC). The conference was followed by a post-doctoral school for emerging scholars.

RISC 2019 focused on the issue of migration by addressing themes pertaining to: academic mobility, migrant flows, the agency of migrants, the health and well-being of migrants, as well as the emergence of inclusive societies. The conference was attended by a wide array of academics and practitioners from across the globe; countries represented at RISC 2019 included: South Africa, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Canada, Mexico, Germany and Luxemburg among others. In addition to the various panel discussions, the conference also hosted a conference dinner and a memorial service for long-time RISC member, Prof Robert VH Dover, who passed away in December 2018.

As of November 2019, RISC has been renamed RISC-RISE with the latter standing for Regional Integration and Social Cohesion-Social Elevation. In addition to the upgraded structure that is now RISC-RISE, the consortium will be moving its headquarters from the University of Helsinki to the University of Johannesburg. The Department is both delighted and honoured to be afforded this privilege. Lastly, the Editors and Department are delighted to announce that Professors Vicky and Suzy Graham have been named Executive Director and Co-President of RISC-RISE respectively. Congratulations Vicky and Suzy; we look forward to watching you take RISC-RISE from strength to strength.

### RISC 2019: A montage







Prof Victoria Graham is an associate professor in the Department of Politics and International Relations at UJ as well as the Executive Director of the RISC-RISE consortium.

Prof Graham's research interests include: Democracy Studies, diplomacy, comparative politics and foreign policy.

Prof Graham has authored several publications including a book, *Pass for Fail? Assessing the Quality of Dormancy in South Africa*.

**Voter apathy, not political apathy? 'Informal' youth participation and hashtag politics (extract from forthcoming publication)**

**By Prof Victoria Graham**

"Many young people have become disillusioned with formal avenues of participation. The 2016 Commonwealth Global Youth Development Index and Report noted that "consciously or not, many young people are abstaining from voting and also opting out of other formal modes of political participation such as joining political parties or standing for public office."<sup>1</sup> However, this decline in formal, traditional participation does not mean that young people are disengaged from civic and political affairs. Rather, the reverse is true as evidenced by a rising tide of grassroots, youth-led protest movements and issue-based campaigns that are indicative of **a youth becoming more, not less, politically conscious**.

In recent years, waves of heightened political awareness have seen increasing numbers of youth engaging in protests to demand good governance and accountability from their leaders and some actively mobilising their peers to vote and contest in elections.<sup>2</sup> In Ghana's 2016 general elections, for example, growing youth unemployment and general resentment played a key role in the defeat of John Mahama, the first time a sitting president has lost an election in Ghana.<sup>3</sup> In Zimbabwe in 2014-2016, the youth led 'Occupy Africa Unity Square' movement attracted international attention as disaffected youth protested against Mugabe's repressive regime.<sup>4</sup> In another example, in South Africa in 2015/2016, youth demonstrations against an increase in university tuition fees in the #FeesMustFall campaign forced the government to promise free tertiary education for young people from poor families.

Evidently young people increasingly prefer to use alternative, often creative methods to rally their peers and to share information. Some are doing it through art and music (as with the Botswana Young Voters Rock movement), and many are engaging in growing internet-based communication platforms, particularly social network sites such as Twitter and Facebook for example, Zimbabwe's 2016/2017 #ThisFlag movement which had a huge social media reach). In the run up to the 2015 elections in Tanzania, youth group Tanzania Bora Initiative launched a multimedia campaign called 'Uchaguzi2015TZ' to educate youth on the importance of their vote through television shows, videos on YouTube and integrated social media accounts on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook.<sup>5</sup>

Twitter, especially, offers an attractive alternative to formal participation in several ways, not least of which is its ease of usage and ability to reach many people instantly. Twitter also supports multiple opportunities for a digitally savvy youth keen on participating on their own terms, including creating, tagging and sharing content, as well as reading, watching and following hashtags.<sup>6</sup> Through Twitter, youth have an opportunity to participate in political discussions online, which they might otherwise not have chosen to engage with offline. Bosch<sup>7</sup> refers to this engagement as a "new biography of citizenship characterized by more individualized forms of sub activism" wherein young people act not towards the state but towards specific issues or causes that might be seen to be more personal but no less political.<sup>8</sup>

Research conducted by the Centre for Social Development in Africa in 2017, confirms that South African youth use social media widely both to voice protest as well as to share issue-based views. These range from issues



concerns about xenophobia. Youth responses affirmed that “all these approaches were more appealing, meaningful and accessible than political party membership and voting.”<sup>9</sup> In Nigeria too, where many young people are active users of social media, hashtag campaigns and online engagement, social media is considered to be particularly powerful because it allows individual users to broadcast their personal experiences and link them with a wider effort and broader community, as was the case in 2017 when the Youth Initiative for Advocacy, Growth, and Advancement launched the #BounceCorruption initiative.<sup>10</sup>

It is a truism that social media sites and other online communication platforms are making it easier to access information and ideas, and therefore to mobilise and empower young people. However, critics warn that ‘clicktivism’, a term used to describe low-level, online engagement such as signing e-petitions, sharing posts or using hashtags may in fact stand in the way of committed participation. That is, while technology has made it fairly easy to support a cause, the engagement is often superficial and short-lived, with questionable tangible consequences for positive change.<sup>11</sup> South African students in the 2015 #RhodesMustFall campaign might argue with this notion, however. The student-led protest which campaigned to remove the statue of British colonialist Cecil John Rhodes from the University of Cape Town on the grounds that it promoted institutionalized racism and a culture of exclusion particularly for black students, was successful. The statue was removed a month later. In this campaign social media communication was used for self-representation, self-organisation and interaction with the media, university administration and opponents to the campaign.<sup>12</sup> This example, among others, represents the potential power of student activism among the African youth. It demonstrates a sense of student protestors’ increasing belief in their own political agency, and also reveals the increasing power of youth groups to act as a catalyst for change.<sup>13</sup>

Of course, if the internet is going to continue to be the platform most utilised by the youth as an enabler for participation, then it follows that improved mobile internet connectivity is an imperative. Even though Africa lags behind the rest of the world in terms of mobile connectivity, mobile internet penetration is growing. The 2019 State of Mobile Internet Connectivity Report, which measures the performance of 163 countries in terms of mobile internet penetration, reveals an improvement across Sub-Saharan Africa from 13% in 2014 to 24% in 2018.<sup>14</sup> The higher the percentage, the better the mobile internet penetration. South Africa, Ghana and Kenya have improved in the last year improving their scores with 59%, 51% and 50% respectively. Botswana, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda, Lesotho and Zimbabwe are considered ‘emerging’ with scores in the high 30% and 40% range, while Zambia and Malawi bring up the rear with 33% and 24% respectively.”



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Prior to her appointment at the University of Oxford, Bronwyn was Head of Community Engagement at Monash South Africa.

## Helping youth find their voice in democracy

By Bronwyn Dugtig

We are convinced that in order for young people to participate meaningfully in a democracy, they first need to have an understanding of themselves, of society, of the functioning of a democracy, their rights and responsibilities and roles of an active citizen.

South African's young democracy is still celebrated around the world, with our progressive and inclusive constitution and the powerful legacy of Nelson Mandela. However South Africa over recent years show a preoccupying weakening of our democratic processes and its institutions. South Africa is battling with a vast variety of serious social and economic ills such as high levels of poverty and inequality, increasing unemployment, poor public education and insufficient service delivery to mention only a few. These social and economic problems effect the most vulnerable of our population, and our greatest resource, our youth.

A democracy is a complex system of representation and power distribution that, when fine-tuned, should allow for all voices of a country to be heard and represented and for leaders to be held accountable at all times. In South Africa we see a very high level of disengagement of youth from the political and social decision-making processes. Data from the International Youth Foundation's 2017 Global Youth Wellbeing Index indicates that today's youth is seriously concerned about social and political issues but feels disconnected from their government and its excluded from decision-making processes. According to the study, 90% of surveyed youth globally consider inequality a major concern, 92% of youth in Sub-Saharan Africa are very concerned about corruption and 83% of South African youth agree that the government does not care about their wants and needs.

This combination of our youths' concern for socio-political issues and the feeling of disconnection from political decision-making bears many risks, particularly in South Africa, where 41% of the population are between the ages of 14 and 35 (UNFPA).

The Engage South Africa team believe that promotion of strong and meaningful participation of youth in democracy, as well as providing platforms for the youth's voice to be heard is therefore more important than ever. We are convinced that in order to tackle our vast social and economic needs we first and foremost need to stabilise our political system and have a functioning democracy. At the core of any functioning democracy is active and engaged young citizens. This is why we target youth at school level, before they become of voting age to teach them the importance of participating in government decisions and how to have their voices heard. Research has shown that a "greater interaction with political ideas is likely to result in more positive judgments about democracy, and correspondingly, more negative views about autocratic forms of governance." (Mattes from Democracy in Africa Research Unit).

The **my.voice** Leadership and Active Citizenship programme offered by Engage South Africa seeks to close this gap by meaningfully engaging young people to help them find their voice in society. **my.voice** was developed by a team of experienced teaching professionals from University of Oxford, Windesheim University, University of Johannesburg and Monash South Africa in collaboration with experienced local youth facilitators. We are non-partisan and **my.voice** does not affiliate itself with any particular political party, religion or ideology. The curriculum is proudly African and fosters decolonized and diverse perspectives, promoting the Sustainable Development Goals, human rights, and the peace education and the South Africa's constitution.

The methodology of delivery is based on transformative training theory, experiential learning and encourages inclusivity of the youth voice in the training room. The course develops and measures the learners' progress in six critical development areas: **critical thinking, public speaking, debating, responsible leadership and activities citizenship**. **my.voice** is designed as a pedagogic process that allows learners to gradually acquire a relevant set of knowledge and set of skills. The sessions include scaffolding on the following topics; **Exploring identities and self, engaging with others and stereotypes; effective tools for dialogue and debate, understanding human rights and state forms and functions, practicing elections, system-thinking and channels of democratic participation.**

Since 2018 Engage South Africa has trained 11 my.voice facilitators and worked with 9 high schools reaching close to 400 high school learners in both private and public schools. Our data indicates a measurable positive change in knowledge 75-79% , behaviour 55-82% and opinion 72-86%.

We are convinced that in order for young people to participate meaningfully in a democracy, they first need to have an understanding of themselves, of society, of the functioning of a democracy, their rights and responsibilities and roles of an active citizen.

**Feedback from youth participants:**

“my.voice changed or rather influenced the way I think a lot because I usually thought that all the constraints/problems that we have as a country or communities are issues that only the government must deal with, not us. But now I know that us as the youth or future leaders of tomorrow, we can make a change in our society.”

“I feel more aware about what is going on in our world and my surroundings. I now know that you should know who you are, how to treat other people and how you see the world. I now act responsible and mature. Due to the leadership session I treat people with respect and hear them out before judging.”

“my.voice influenced the way I act towards others. I learned how to treat and respect others, regardless of their colour, race, religion, work, community and gender. We are all the same. The course made me feel happy because I learned a lot and I had more fun than I had before. I feel great and awesome because my.voice brought positive change in my Life”

**Contact us:**

If you would like to know more about the my.voice course or want to get in touch with the Engage South Africa team please visit [www.engagesa.com](http://www.engagesa.com) or email: [diana@engagesa.com](mailto:diana@engagesa.com) please follow us on Facebook and twitter.

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Catherine Constantinides is an international climate activist, human rights defender and an Archbishop Tutu African Oxford Fellow.

Constantinides is the co-founder of Generation Earth, a youth-led environmental organisation

Follow Catherine on Twitter @ChangeAgentS A to stay up-to-date with her work.

### Morocco continues to plunder and the World looks away By Catherine Constantinides

The Western Sahara; also commonly referred to as the 'Last Colony in Africa', continues to be violated daily through the injustice taking place and being maintained by EU taxpayers and the corporate involvement of private business and multi-nationals around the world who continue to trade and do business 'illegally' with Morocco on the Saharawi territory, turning a blind eye to an occupation and people forgotten by the world, one of the most recent in the spotlight are New Zealand based fertilizer companies that continue to trade with Morocco, importing phosphate rock of Western Sahara, the only significant commercial source of the element phosphorus, and also termed as 'blood phosphates' by the Saharawi people themselves as the trade of this natural resource, amongst others as fisheries, continues to fuel and fund the illegal occupation and its atrocities.

Morocco withdrew itself from the African Union (the Organisation of African Unity; OAU) in 1984 to protest against the admission of Western Sahara as a full member of the organization. In 1975 Morocco invaded the territory following the withdrawal of the Spanish colonial administration. This move was contested by the Polisario Front, which engaged in armed conflict with the Moroccan government until a ceasefire in 1991.

The Saharawi people have foresworn armed struggle and placed their trust in the United Nations (UN) system and international law to resolve the issue. In response, Morocco has repeatedly aggravated the situation and prevented the referendum from being held. Morocco has also flooded Western Sahara with Moroccan settlers and engaged in widely documented human rights abuses — including torture, imprisonment, unlawful detention and harassment of Saharawis in the occupied territory.

Unfortunately, the international community seems to have turned a blind eye towards Western Sahara and its struggles. Morocco, seizing this opportunity, has placed significant restrictions on freedom of expression and association, particularly around issues of Western Saharan independence. Numerous journalists, publishers, and media activists have been prosecuted for criticizing the Moroccan government, resulting in a climate of fear and self-censorship.

To date, more than a hundred United Nations resolutions have called for the Saharawi people's right to self-determination to be respected. However, their own call and efforts to resolve this conflict have become futile. In the past 18 months renewed efforts by the UN Special Envoy to Western Sahara, as appointed by the UN Security Council have tried to bring all stakeholders to the same table in order to find common ground to move forward and finally resolve a conflict and occupation spanning more than forty years, but still these remain unsuccessful.

Why occupation you may ask? And the answer is simple, natural resources of course, phosphates, agricultural trade opportunity, fisheries and more. Natural resources that should have been used by the Saharawi people of Western Sahara to build and develop their own economy allowing them to take ownership of their own development and future. They should manage and have the right to trade, invest, harness and develop as they see fit. In 2016 the European Union Court of Justice ruled that Morocco and Western Sahara are 'separate and distinct' territories and that trade agreements with Morocco do not cover the territory of Western Sahara. Yet, over the past few years alone Morocco has earned around 200 Million dollars annually from the export of minerals from the territory alone. However, the exploitation of phosphates means that when the right to self-determination for the Saharawi people is realized there will be no more phosphate to mine as Morocco has already sold all of the high-quality phosphate.

According to Western Sahara Resource Watch (WSRW), 'The Moroccan state earns massively from the mine it controls in the occupied territory (Bou Craa Mine in Western Sahara). The maths is easy: multiply the volume exported by the international phosphate price. The value of exported phosphate has been stable at around 200 Million dollars a year, over a number of years. In comparison to the value of annual multilateral humanitarian aid to the Saharawi Refugee Camps, which sits at approximately 30 Million Euros.'

Morocco also use this economic gain to fund the occupation, managing to place themselves in a very important position geopolitically. With control over not only its own phosphorus reserves but also that of Western Sahara, the Moroccan government now controls an estimated 71% of global phosphate reserves.

It is documented with success, that voicing these facts, dirty dealings and illegal trade agreements puts pressure in the right place, as many of these dirty operations and deals have retracted from the territory with the right kind of media exposure, continued pressure by Saharawi's on the ground who continuously protest despite the brutal repression and shame these multi-nationals who come in to exploit and violate their land, push back against the international pressure and come to fight to save what is left of their image.

We now wait on those who continue to trade with an occupying power, that is exploiting the inalienable rights of a forgotten people; will they do the right thing, or will they continue business as usual?









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Sven is also a member of the National Executive Council of the South African Association of Political Studies (SAAPS) as well as the chairperson of the SAAPS Research Committee on Early-Career Research.

Sven's research interests include: terrorism and counter-terrorism in the Global South as well as the facilitation and promotion of early-career research.

## ***Research Skills for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (Number 2)***

### ***Finding your mentor in a pool of excellence***

***By Sven Botha***

While acquiring a mentor is not exactly a research skill, the inclusion of this topic in this feature is justifiable when one considers the complexities of domestic affairs, studies and, sometimes, work. Mentors can help navigate these complexities by offering an ear, some conventional wisdom and shoulder, dependent on the circumstances. But, how does one select a mentor? This question becomes particularly relevant as it is easy for eager and inexperienced scholars to be lured to potential mentors by their specialisation, academic profile, academic merits and, sometimes, bold personalities. And, while traits are important qualities for what comprises a good mentor, they are not all the traits one should look out for when choosing a mentor, nor should these traits serve as the foundations for mentor selection.

While no exact criteria or formula for selecting a mentor exists, I have decided to share a few 'guiding principles' which have served me well in my time both as a non-career politician and fledgling researcher:

- I. Just because someone is a brilliant academic, does not make them an ideal mentor. Take your time in choosing a mentor; watch the actions and mannerisms for consistency so as to ensure that all which is on the surface is also present below. Ask yourself: do they follow through on their promises, do they invest in their students over the long-term and do they help nurture your intellectual interests?
- II. Choose someone who is interested in helping you grow. From this perspective make sure that you mentor helps you develop your intellectual abilities. Allow yourself to be guided and grow together. In my experience, collective growth is imperative as students and academics are reliant each other for mutual benefit. You will most likely revert to a lecturer requesting a reference letter for your dream job or to aid your scholarship application so that you can advance your studies. On the other hand, an academic (dis)investing in the interests of his or her students can help to inform public opinion of academics, which can influence the choices of students when it comes to postgraduate supervision. Moreover, if an academic interest in their students, students are far more likely be loyal administrative and research assistance.
- III. Accept that you may benefit from having more than one mentor at any given time. The existence of multiple mentors is advantageous for many reasons. Firstly, you have access to a deeper pool of knowledge and perspective when seeking advice. Secondly, having the privilege of assessing multiple perspectives allows you to critically reflect on your situation and draw insight from the one you most identify with. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, having access to multiple perspectives offers you the luxury of reflecting on those perspectives you do not necessarily agree with to try and broaden the understanding of the circumstances you face.
- IV. Mentors are often seen as senior to the mentee; however, this is not the case. Peer mentorship is equally important. This is largely due to the fact that peers can often best relate to the challenges you are going through as he or she is going through the 'study experience' with you.

By now it should be clear that finding a mentor is a near essential task for most, but by no means an easy one. As the academic year draws to a close, take some time to reflect on who your mentor(s) will be going forward.

**"If you want to go quickly, go alone. If you want to go far go together."-African Proverb**

## Advice for incoming Honours students

### Written by Sumaiyah Patel

Honours is a journey. A journey of emotions, challenges and rewards. Finding out that you've been accepted into the honours programme is an achievement, well done to you! Although you're filled with excitement and uncertainty that the opportunity presents, it's important to note that it will entail ten months of hard work. That being said, it is best that you try to figure out where your interests lie and what themes or topics you enjoy exploring. The more read you are, the better. This will ensure you have a good direction in terms of your long essay. Seek passionate topics that will motivate and inspire you. Think long term, make your degree meaningful.

Given the uncertainty that life presents, it's always best to implement good time management skills. Work on essays and assignments ahead of time, you never know when Eskom will decide to implement Stage Four Loadshedding- skipping stages one to three, or when you will be hit with a universe curveball, therefore it helps to be able to adapt and overcome these unforeseen events instead of falling behind and setting yourself up for additional stress and pressure. Set realistic expectations when it comes to completing any task, @scibry once tweeted that "research is spending 6 hours reading 35 papers, so you can write one sentence containing two references," don't take any research lightly.

Support systems make a difference. It is in your best interest to create good professional relationships with you supervisor/s and lecturers, they will help carry you through stressful periods and help you when you are struggling. Similarly, get to know your colleagues, you're all in the same boat together and will relate with one another the best.

UJ offers many services which are also available to students, one being The Centre for Psychological Services and Career Development (PsyCaD), which provides many services including counselling, career guidance and assessment. The Academic Development Centre is also worth visiting, their main focus areas include Academic Literacies Development, Writing Centres, Learning Development and Tutor Development. Seek self-care for yourself. Allow yourself to get involved in a few (not too many) activities or hobbies, you will need it to ensure a balanced mind-set.

Honours is a time when you will learn some of the most interesting aspects to politics and international relations. You will explore modules that detail evolutions of events/topics and organizations. Question what you're learning and what role it plays in the current world that we live in. Most of all through all the chaos, remain interested and invested and it will pay off at the end.

### Written by Heike Verhoef

Self-discipline, routine, a good relationship with your peers and a little passion will take you far in Honours. The first year of post-graduate studies at the University of Johannesburg was not a walk in the park but one of the most rewarding experiences in my university career so far. I studied African Studies in 2019, focussing on History and Politics. I was reading every day and handing in coursework twice a week while working hard and reading some more for my research paper. I set myself a schedule that I tried to stick with. Those moments when I procrastinated, a bad habit that I had to get rid of fast, could have meant that an all-nighter was in store.

It is for this reason that I say routine and self-discipline is important. Get up every morning, dress up and show up. Do a bit of work every day. Do not allow the work to pile up.

The most exciting thing about honours was the chance to carry out my own research. This is a daunting task and the one that requires the most self-discipline. But you have your peers, and if you tap into that resource you come out better and less stressed at the end. My classmates and I would exchange sources and actively chat on WhatsApp groups. These relationships are valuable; they know what you are going through. However, one of the most important relationships you develop starts when you get assigned your supervisor. A supervisor is a well of knowledge and know-how assigned to you to help you with your research. But as is it with most things in honours, the onus rests on you to keep that relationship going, you have to set up meetings regularly and keep them updated on your progress.

I say a little passion will take you far and I mean it. I saw some peers struggle because doing their honours was their second or third choice. If you value academia, the highly demanding nature of an Honours degree becomes more doable. But the truth is, everyone's experiences are different. I enjoyed doing my honours. I enjoyed the culture of academia. If doing an honours degree was the easiest thing it would not feel as rewarding. I worked hard to meet the deadlines and I wanted to meet them well. After completing my final examinations I realised that I got more than just an honours degree, in addition to valuable skills I came out the other end with even more valuable relationships.

## Advice for incoming Honours students

**Written by Robert Henwood**

Had someone told me a few years ago that I'd complete an Honours degree in Politics and International Relations, I would have taken that lightly and would have probably needed a great deal of "convincing". It goes without saying that any undergraduate degree presents challenges of its own, let alone an Honours degree. So having experienced those challenges, I had very little to no interest in pursuing a postgraduate degree. That all changed, thanks to a number of insightful conversations with family, friends and peers, coupled of course by the advice offered by the department's prestigious and reputable lecturers. Once registered for the 2019 Honours degree, the weeks leading up to the commencement of lectures were daunting, to say the least. Feelings of anxiety and uncertainty were the order of each day, as I had no idea what to expect. Now that I've successfully completed the degree, I'm able to look back and say with confidence that not only was it possible, but it was done to what I believe was the best of my ability. As cliché as this may sound; commitment, dedication, prioritising and seeing tasks through, character traits that when combined, bring out a student's greatest potential.

Given the demands of the degree, I learnt just how important it is to equip oneself by reading and conducting as much research as possible. The importance of expanding one's knowledge on current Politics and international relations cannot be understated. In fact, it was something that I had to get accustomed to since I hadn't done very much of that during my undergrad years. So yes, this postgraduate degree was undoubtedly demanding, yet being able to meet those demands is part of what got me through it. To the incoming class of 2020 I say this; do not focus on the demands and challenges, but rather on the solutions to those. Avoid becoming despondent when things get difficult and believe me, they will. Keep in mind that you do not have to do things on your own, so make use of the support that you're guaranteed to have. Above all, remember to relax and take the time to unwind—life is about balance. Before you know it, you will be looking back with great joy and satisfaction. Wishing you all nothing but the best!

## Thinking of doing a Masters or PhD, why not consider Sweden?

The Editors wish to thank the Embassy of the Kingdom of Sweden in Pretoria for passing this information along.

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### Endnotes for all contributions

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