

CTHB MENTORSHIP STUDENTS WELCOMED TO FABI

FABI welcomed 17 DST-NRF Centre of Excellence in Tree Health Biotechnology (CTHB) mentorship students at a function on 3 March. Now in its 12th year, the mentorship programme allows second and third year students to better understand what it is to be a scientist and what the training at MSc or PhD level entails.

This year four students returned to the programme for a second year and 13 new students joined the programme. The undergraduate students are paired with a postgraduate student or postdoctoral fellow. These successful candidates were interviewed by a selection panel and chosen based on their academic achievements and scientific interest in one of these fields; entomology, genetics, microbiology or plant pathology.



Students are required to work six hours per week excluding exam times and holidays. The idea is that they are an extra pair of hands in the laboratory by making a meaningful contribution to their mentor's research project while learning basic laboratory skills such as sterile, molecular and culturing techniques, morphological work, using bioinformatics programmes and conducting pathogenicity trials.

The students were welcomed by the Deputy Director of the CHTB, Prof. Emma Steenkamp, core team member Dr. Martin Coetzee and mentorship programme coordinators Dr Markus Wilken, Mmatshepo Phasha and Benedicta Swalarsk-Parry before enjoying some pizza and drinks where they could become better acquainted with their mentor and start planning for the first week's work.