

## CONGRATULATIONS TO FABIANS FOR AMAZING ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE 2<sup>ND</sup> SEMESTER OF 2014

*Prepared by Jenny Hale*

Each year FABIans extend the boundaries of achievement both in their personal and academic lives and make us all proud to acknowledge these successes and try to emulate them ourselves.

### ***FABI students achievements/awards***

FABI's presence was felt and seen at the Autumn Graduation Ceremony of the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Science that took place on Wednesday 9 April. PhD degrees were awarded to seven FABI students, while six more earned MSc and ten BSc Honours degrees. The PhD students were Dr Rodrigo Ahumada, Dr Nicky Creux, Dr Dawit Degefu, Dr Fahimeh Jami and Dr Eshchar Mizrachi. The MSc students were Jonathan Botha, Jane Bredenkamp, Caryn Oates, Darryl Herron, Ronel Roberts and Nicole Rudolph.



**Autumn PhD graduates (2014). Doctors Nicky Creux and Eschar Mizrachi with Prof Zander Myburg (left photo). Right photo, left to right Doctors Rodrigo Ahumada, Fahimeh Jami and Dawit Degefu with Professors Mike Wingfield (left) and Bernard Slippers (right)**

At the Spring Graduation Ceremony of the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences, which took place on 4 September 2014, FABI's impact on the faculty was visible with 4 of the 7 PhD and 8 of the 13 MSc students (5 *cum laude*) from the institute receiving their well-earned degrees. The PhD students were Dr Nanette Christie, Dr Steven Hussey, Dr Michael

Mbenoun and Dr Divine Shyntum. The MSc students were Marike du Plessis, Arista Fourie, Anandi Reitmann, Miekie Haasbroek, Mkhululi Maphosa, Desre Pinard, Ariska van der Nest and Amy Wooding.



**Spring graduates (2014). Photo left: Group photo of spring graduates and FABI research leaders. Photo right: Professors Emma Steenkamp and Fanus Venter with MSc graduate Ariska Fourie**

#### ***Awards to FABI academic staff***

Our FABI academic staff members also excelled in winning various awards, advancing their research excellence and standing, and serving on various international and national research societies and bodies.

FABI was once again in the limelight of the 2013/14 NSTF-BHP Billiton gala dinner and awards ceremony hosted by the NSTF. Prof Brenda Wingfield received one of the highly recognized awards for her outstanding contribution to SET (Science, Engineering and Technology) through research capacity development over the last 5 to 10 years.



**Prof Brenda Wingfield receiving her NSTF award**

At the University of Pretoria Academic Achievers Awards function, held on Tuesday 6 May, awards were made for 'Exceptional Researchers', 'Exceptional Young Researchers' and 'Teaching Excellence and Innovation'. Professors Zander Myburg and Jolanda Roux each received the UP Exceptional Academic achievers' award.



**Professors Jolanda Roux (left photo) and Zander Myburg (right photo) receiving their awards from Prof Cheryl de la Rey**

Over the past year young researchers at FABI have succeeded in being awarded an NRF rating and other rated researchers at FABI have improved their NRF ratings. Prof Brenda Wingfield was awarded an A rating, Dr Wilhelm de Beer a B2 rating, Prof Emma Steenkamp a B3 rating, Prof Gerhard Pietersen a C1 rating, and Drs Jeff Garnas, Juan Vorster, Lucy Moleleki and Irene Barnes, a Y rating. These ratings reflect evaluations of peers around the

world of the quality and impact of the research of the candidates. FABI was well represented amongst those researchers at the University of Pretoria receiving/improving NRF ratings.



**Dr Jeff Garnas being congratulated by Dr Albert van Jaarsveld (Chief Executive Officer of the National Research Foundation) with his Y rating**

***FABlans nominated to serve on international and national bodies***

On 10 October 2014, at Salt Lake City, Utah, USA, Prof Mike Wingfield was appointed as the new President of the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) for the next four years and succeeds Prof Niels Elers Koch, Denmark. IUFRO is the only worldwide organization devoted to forest research and related sciences. This is a huge honour and equally great challenge for Prof Wingfield. (Refer to Press Release of IUFRO and [www.iufro.org](http://www.iufro.org)).





**Prof Mike Wingfield being congratulated by Prof Niels Elers**

Dr Wilhelm de Beer was elected to the Executive Board of the International Commission on the Taxonomy of Fungi (ICTF) at the recent international Mycological Congress in Bangkok. The activities of the ICTF are also closely aligned with the Nomenclature Committee for Fungi (NFCF) where Wilhelm serves on the Special Subcommittee on Governance of the Code with respect to Fungi (SSGCF).

Dr Fanus Venter was elected to the Executive Board of the International Committee on Systematics of Prokaryotes (ICSP) at the recent meeting of the International Meeting of Microbiological Societies (IUMS) held in Montreal, Canada.

**Congratulations to all of our FABlans who have achieved so well – we are proud of you!**