

## MEET AND GREET KICKS OFF 2015 MENTORSHIP PROGRAM



**Group photo of FABI mentors and their mentees**

The Centre of Excellence for Tree Health and Biotechnology (CTHB) has been running a highly successful mentorship programme for over a decade. The aim of the programme is to expose eager young undergraduate students to the running of a postgraduate research programme. Each year, applications for the programme are received from 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year BSc students. These applications are screened for academic proficiency and scientific interests, before a subset of successful candidates are invited for an interview. The selection panel, consisting of Mmatshapho Phasa, Markus Wilken and Mashudu Nxumalo had the tough job of selecting 18 candidates to join the program for 2015.

A meet and greet function for the successful mentees and their mentors was held in February in the FABI courtyard. Each mentee was paired with a postgraduate mentor from the departments of Genetics, Microbiology and Plant Pathology or Zoology and Entomology. The mentors were encouraged to expose the mentees to every aspect of research, from cleaning lab benches to data analysis. In turn, the mentees were encouraged to learn from

their mentors the skills required to complete a postgraduate degree. After a brief welcoming address by Prof Brenda Wingfield, mentor and mentee pairs became better acquainted over pizza. It was the perfect start to what promises to be another successful year in the CTHB/TPCP mentorship programme.

