

IDACA

Cape Town International Student Support Network

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NEWSLETTER

Compiled by Shannon Dowdall of IDACA

Our warmest greetings to you from Cape Town and some news about the success of the 2017 first semester group at UCT.

The group from Princeton and a small number from other schools, arrived in early February to spend a month attending UCT School courses both for credits and for interest. These classes were varied, interesting and mostly focused on Africa. The classes were small and offered students the opportunity to engage closely with the lecturers as well as with international students from Europe. They also had time to get to know Cape Town and pass on their know-how to the later arrivals which made for a very smooth transition for the others.



The academic year for everyone began in March without any disruptions. Examinations in late June went well with most students choosing to write here. Some students opted to write these online back home because of internship commitments and the unusual late start to the academic year due to the #Fees Must Fall activism last year.



Academically, as always, the students worked hard to keep up with deadlines and attended a wide variety of classes from Art of Africa, Anthropology, African Literature and African Dance to Gender Studies, Environmental Sciences and Information Technology. They were enthusiastic and positive about different perspectives offered in course content and the outspoken and passionate discussions during class as students and staff negotiate changes at UCT. Some students went on field trips in places like the De Hoop Nature Reserve on the east coast (famous for its whale trail); or on trips to informal settlements in the Cape Town area

where the very issues they were debating during classes emerged in stimulating and intellectually challenging encounters.



Many students joined SHAWCO, the UCT student-run outreach voluntary work programme where they went on a weekly basis to tutor children in the townships. Most of them valued this opportunity to work in areas close to but very different from the middle-class areas of Cape Town.



Most of the group participated fully in clubs and societies this semester. Sarah Emerson (UCB) joined the UCT Choir and many of us attended their performance at UCT's Baxter Theatre Complex listening to a wide range of Western and traditional Xhosa songs. Camryn Hicks (BC) made the UCT's Women's 1st Team Soccer and toured with them. Elan Markovitz (UCLA) also played team soccer and joined the Wakeboarding Club. Alastair Wong (P) and Dahlia Kaki (P) joined the Rowing Club and Kayleigh Cook (UCB) and Joslyn Rogers (UCSB) both

went on Birding Trips on the east coast. Daniel Minter (UCSB) joined the Mountain and Ski Club and the Scuba Diving Club and during the Easter break spent six days hiking the beautiful Tsitsikama Mountains. Kasey Mitchell (UCB) managed to arrange two stints working with the Shark Research Unit in the Gansbaai area on the east coast. Those studying African Dance were part of a performance hosted by UCT's School of Dance and which was one of the events organized to celebrate Africa Week. Kayleigh Rishovd (UCLA), wrote a very good blog on their teacher as well as interviews with some of the IDACA students who took this course.



The group from Princeton once again did a four day trip to the Eastern Cape with Professor Francis Wilson where they visited schools, met teachers and principals as well as with NGO's staff involved in education.



This adventurous group took every opportunity to explore Cape Town as well as to travel in Southern Africa.



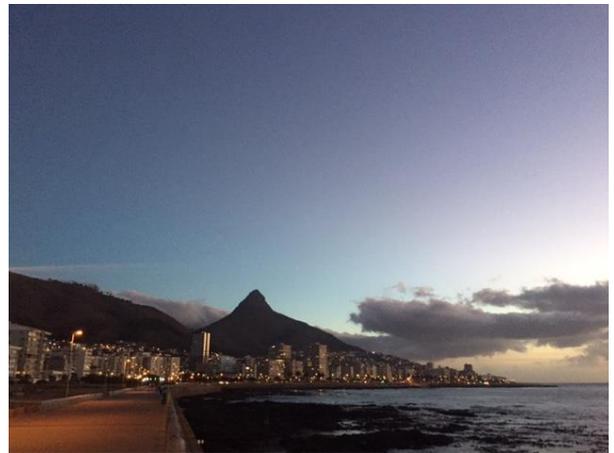
They hiked the mountains regularly from Table Mountain to the remote Cedarburg with its rock art paintings. They explored the food from braais at the famous Mzoli's or Ethiopian restaurants as well as some of the top restaurants in South Africa and indeed the world! They travelled through Namibia, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Botswana and within South Africa from Durban on the east coast to Karoo desert and the beautiful winelands closer to Cape Town. A group of them once again attended the Afrika Burn (similar to Burning Man in Nevada) in the Tankwa Karoo area during unusually high temperatures but all survived without heat stroke!



A great many of their parents, siblings and friends made the long trip to visit students this semester and from all accounts loved being here and being shown around by the students well experienced in seeking out the most stimulating things to do.



From the feedback of this group at our farewell dinner a few weeks ago, it was a highly successful semester. They left looking healthy, happy and enriched and with firm friendships made with both international and local students.



We thank you for your continued support, advice and for preparing your students for the semester here. This group once again demonstrated the benefits and privileged of a semester abroad.

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