

NEWS CLIP

October 2009

Notices:

- Upcoming Events

Bioforum: TIA
2 December 2009

Innovation Hub

TIA representatives will discuss the developments in TIA and answer questions of concern from our stakeholders.

HCD Workshop
30 November 2009

Innovation Hub

Exploring Human Capacity Development for Biotechnology

Bioforum
21 January 2010

Innovation Hub

*Prof Stefan C. Schuster
Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
Penn State University
USA*

Esta Van Heerden wins TWAS Young Scientist Award

Professor Esta Van Heerden, manager of BioPAD Metagenomics Platform, has been awarded the TWAS Young Scientist Award. The ceremony took place at the CSIR International Convention Centre in Pretoria on 5 October 2009. This award is given jointly by the Academy of Sciences for the Developing World (TWAS), the Department of Science and Technology and the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf).

Prof Esta van Heerden is Associate Professor in the Department of Microbial, Biochemical and Food Biotechnology at the University of Free State. She specializes in Extremophile Biochemistry. As BioPAD's Metagenomics Platform Manager, she is driving bioprospecting for novel bio-material from extreme environments. Esta's research concentrates on metagenomics, novel gene product discovery, proteomics, and applications to improve polluted environments. Her group has attracted international recognition and the popular themes have made documentaries on BBC, Discovery Channel and National Geographic possible. She serves on the International Astrobiology Society and has addressed the National Astrobiology Executive Council Meeting (NASA) and the National Science Foundation (NSF-USA) to ensure their participation in developing Astrobiology in South Africa. This research inspires our ideas about life on other planets.

This award adds to a growing number of awards in her relatively short career. She has previously won an entrepreneurial award in 2007 and was the recipient of the Women in International Scientific Cooperation (WISC) award.



L-R: Minister Naledi Pandor, Prof Esta Van Heerden and Prof Robin Crewe (President ASSAf)



L-R: Prof Frans Swanepoel (Director of Research Development, UFS), Prof Esta Van Heerden, Prof Jonathan Jansen (Rector and Vice-Chancellor UFS and Vice-President AFS), Prof Johan Henning (Dean Faculty of Law, UFS) and Prof Neil Heideman (Vice-Dean Faculty Natural and Agricultural Sciences, UFS)