

NEWS

Oracle: slow start, big finish?

ERICA DREIJER

MOVING all Wits' records from an antiquated system to the extremely complex Oracle system will still take time and headaches, but it will make students' lives easier in the end.

This is the message from Registrar Derek Swemmer, in response to the flood of criticism over the university's new computer system.

In a campus poster, the Progressive

Youth League claims: "The supposedly efficient I-Wits Oracle system is nothing but a system set specifically to frustrate our students and put their futures at stake."

It forms part of a broader accusation that: "These unfortunate realities further strengthen our view that some reactionary sections of Wits management have secretly and illegally launched an anti-transformation

agenda to make the well being of particularly disadvantaged students more complex and harder than ever."

The Oracle system is based on newer technology, says Swemmer. In time, the plan is for students to have access to their own information and possibly even to register online.

However, he says the transition phase is bound to be difficult. The original Student Information Records

System (SIRS) was developed in 1983. It was written in an antiquated computer language, and was made up of 6 000 programs. All these had to be transferred.

Oracle consists of 800 different screens. It will take time to learn all the features on each.

Swemmer says staff will all be trained and glitches ironed out before management considers any intervention.

Responding to the Progressive Youth Alliance request for a Commission of Inquiry, Swemmer says: "The implementation of a complex system requires a period of implementation and the ironing out of any elements of the application that are not operating as smoothly as desired."

Any computer programming problems should be reported to the CNS helpline on 011-717-1717.

New student cards to replace cash on campus

VUVU VENA

FROM July this year students will notice that their student cards are no longer ordinary.

The cards have smart-card technology that will start operating from July. The quality of the card has also been improved, as its detectability.

Integrated Campus Management (ICAM) manager Giles Watermeyer said the new cards would last longer. However, he said the replacement fee had gone up to R85 because of the durability of the cards and the technology to replace them.

This means that the only reason for replacement is the loss of a card. Wits will not replace student cards every other year as they have done in the past.

According to Watermeyer, there are advantages that come with this new card, such as students being able to read online statements with the cards. He said that financial systems roll-out would increase and integrate Café Dulce, the libraries and eventually the Matrix.

This, as indicated in the ICAM website, is an attempt at "creating (as far as possible) a cashless campus".

"Instead of carrying cash to pay for purchases on campus, you can load money into your ICAM account and pay using your ICAM card," according to the website.

It will also create a uniformed system for payments throughout the campus. For



KNOCK, KNOCK: New student cards should make life easier for Witsies. *Photo: Vuvu Vena*

example, it will be valid for photocopying and printing in all the libraries.

The main campus card-centre times have been increased for student convenience. Weekdays from 7.30am to 5.30pm and weekends from 9am to 1pm.

Transformation player leaves Wits

A LEADING figure in the transformation process at Wits University, Dr Lulama Makhuleba, left the university at the end of February.

She has moved to the Development Bank of SA to head up the Research Unit in the Research Information Division.

Dr Makhuleba was head-hunted for banking job, which will take her back to her passion

of research and also harness her doctoral specialisation in Information Science.

The Vice-Chancellor of Wits, Prof Loyiso Nongxa, said Dr Makhuleba had made a meaningful impact on the Transformation Portfolio since joining Wits last year and had also established a number of valuable contacts at Wits with whom she will continue to work in her new role.

YOUR VOICE

WOULD YOU DATE OUTSIDE YOUR RACE?

Yes, I think it's interesting. I don't mind any race, we're all the same. I mean, it is a bit strange at first, you know, everybody will stare, but you will get used to it.
- **Claire-Lise Dalka, 19, 1st year BSc Physio**



I would, but I have no reason. If you are attracted to the person it's fine. I haven't yet but I wouldn't mind it.
- **Pragasen Naicker, 19, 2nd year Bsc Mining Engineering**

Yes, I already do. I don't see colour, just someone I enjoy being with.
- **Binita Ramla, 20, 3rd year Civil Engineering**



I would date outside my race, but initially it will be based on curiosity. Hey, I would not think twice about it just to see what it's like.
- **Monyane Tekateka, 19, 1st year International Relations and Politics**



I would date out of my race, but not marry out of my race. I think if people are comfortable, then why not, if it suits your lifestyle. If it clashes with your family or your values then it's not fun.
- **Nerah Patel, 19, 2nd year Architecture**



I would, because at the end of it all, we are all human and some of the things we are looking for we can't always find in our own race.
- **Lina Kalinda, 21, 3rd year Internal Auditing**



No I won't, mixed culture is a problem. Say I am black and she is Indian the child would not know where she/he belongs when they go to school.
- **Lesedi Masisi, 23, 4th year Electrical Engineering**



Yes, why not? What difference should it make, if you love someone you love them!
- **Malcom Venter, 24, International Relations Honours**

NEWS

Law school offers course on Sharia

MOHAMMED RAVAT

A RELIGIOUS law course is being offered for the first time in the history of the Wits Law School.

The course, Islamic Law and Human Rights, is an unprecedented development in a legal culture where law lecturers have in the past been dissuaded from discussing religion and morality in their introductory law classes.

In a world post 9/11, the offering of such a course is important to dispel myths about Islam and terrorism, and to foster an understanding of the relationship between Islam and human rights thereby creating a spirit of tolerance.

This course was to be initially offered only to students participating in the International Human Rights Exchange programme with Bard College in the United States.

However, after recommendations put forward by LSC president Dillan Hirani at a quarterly meeting of the Commerce, Law and Management Faculty Board, it was unanimously agreed that the course would also be open to final-year law students.

Course co-ordinator Wesahl Agherdien, who holds an LLM in Islamic Law from Columbia University, says that the course will examine topics including the human-rights implications of Islamic criminal

law, family law and the position of Muslim women and human rights of Muslim minorities in non-Muslim states.

Final-year law student Bianca Wailer said: "I'm taking Islamic law because it's interesting and it provides a broad overview of the religion. I think it's of great relevance in a world dominated by Islamic fundamentalism and Islamophobia."

Faatima Bham, another final-year law student, said: "I'm taking Islamic law because it is totally unique from the other law courses I've taken. It offers an interesting and relevant perspective of Islam and it will enrich my understanding of my religion."



TUNE IN: Head of Education at Wits, Mary Metcalfe stands in front of the poster which will be used to raise funds for a new Steinway piano. Photo Erica Dreijer

88 keys for sale

ERICA DREIJER

YOU can own a stake in a Steinway concert grand piano by buying a key for R12 500.

Selling off the keys is how Wits University aims to raise the R1.1-million that a new Steinway grand, with its 88 keys, costs.

If the money is raised, the piano will stand in the Linder Auditorium at the Education School.

The campaign is a drive by the Linder to ensure that it continues to attract world-class pianists and ensure that audiences keep coming back.

The Linder is presently using a Bösendorfer piano which is 25 years old. Experts reckon that after 10 years, a piano winds down. Also, a Bösendorfer, does not have the same status and does not offer the same quality as a Steinway piano in music circles.

To acquire a new Steinway grand Wits University and Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra (JPO)

came up with a novel idea of selling individual piano keys.

The Linder hosts world-class pianists like David Helfgott, Yingdi Sun and Konstatin Soukhovetski, and in order to continue attracting them, a new Steinway is necessary. The Bösendorfer is not up to standard for these esteemed guests.

The campaign was launched on February 21 by the JPO with a poster that looks like a piano and has space to indicate individual sponsors on each note. Once all the keys have been sold, the piano will be bought.

The sponsor of each key will be acknowledged on a Steinway sponsorship plaque to be erected in the Linder foyer. In addition, the Wits Foundation will issue each sponsor with a tax certificate which will enable the donor to claim a tax deduction for their donation.

For more information, David Freemantle at the Linder Auditorium can be contacted.

Here's a bright idea

T KENICHI SERINO

A STUDENT-RUN organisation is looking for South Africa's "Brightest Young Minds".

The University of Stellenbosch-based organisation, Brightest Young Minds, is looking for the 100 most talented South African students.

BYM president Jaco van Tonder said the criteria for selection was "leadership, initiative, passion and drive".

"We're not looking for the cleverest but the brightest." The 100 students selected will attend an expenses-paid conference and have the opportunity to listen to guest speakers.

Van Tonder called the conference an opportunity for students to "reach their potential" and a networking opportunity.

Potential bright young minds should go to www.bym.co.za to apply. Applications will close on March 16.

After your blood

LENYARO SELLO

BLOOD donors at Wits have increased compared with this time last year.

By this time last year, 272 students had given blood, according to Sini Subrayen, of the SA National Blood Service (SANBS). By March this year 291 students had donated.

"We get 18% of our blood donations from schools and universities, and we always encourage students to donate," said Subrayen.

The SANBS needs 3 000 donors every day to balance its daily outflow to hospitals. Annually SANBS collects 750 000 units of blood.

The most critical of the blood types needed is O blood group that is used in emergencies. The blood is used until the patients' blood type is determined and their blood type is available.

YOUR VOICE

WHICH IS BETTER EAST OR WEST CAMPUS?



East is like Joburg and West is like Durban.

Aslam Bulbuhia, 18, BA, 1st year



East is definitely better. West is too serious, quiet and boring.

Noxolo Mwandla, 19, LLB, 2nd year



West is better. East is a bit crowded and noisy.

Davis Mantsho, 19, BSc, 1st year



East is the place to be because it's happening and that's that.

Ntombi Makuleni, BA, 1st year,



East is more atmospheric, more vibey and West is more academic. **Branham Mannering, 19, Bcom Law, 1st year**

NEWS

Get involved, M & G editor tells Witsies

ERICA DREIJER AND
JACKIE BISCHOF

STUDENT leadership and passive citizenry are serious concerns with which the country needs to deal, said Mail & Guardian editor Ferial Haffajee in an interview this week with Vuvuzela.

The interview followed Haffajee's presentation at the launch of the Wits Democracy lecture series. She said she was troubled about current leadership and did not think student leaders were being as thoroughly trained as liberation leaders had been.

She did not believe that the current student leadership positions were being taken up by the best South Africa had to offer: "The cream of the crop has gone into the private sector, the public sector or overseas. And I'm not sure we're getting the top people becoming political leaders".

The media and the government could

do more to encourage students to return to South Africa, said Haffajee.

Slowing down the intellectual diaspora could be done only by making South Africa a "safe, interesting developing country". Universities should also do their part to create informed and empowered citizenship among students.

"The universities need to reinvent themselves, reinvent how they do debate, make themselves 'sexier,' she said. "It is vital to graduate [as] an involved, interested young people."

Empowered citizenship was a core part of Haffajee's speech entitled "Be Quiet While We Deliver".

She used the words of Joel Netshitenzhe to illustrate the importance of citizenship: "In simple terms, the question is whether this generation of leaders and members wishes to carry on its shoulders the historical curse of having been the ones

who destroyed, in an act of self-serving irrationality, a movement that is the hope of a nation and a continent."

Netshitenzhe is head of the Presidential Policy Unit and a member of the ANC's national executive committee.

In her speech Haffajee urged the audience to become more active citizens in fighting for South Africa's democracy.

"The future requires our active engagement, not blind trust. There are a mix of ways to find our voices.

We must stand. And deliver. Or we will have failed those who died for this democracy and upon whose shoulders we walk today."

The speech was well attended and a lively question and answer session was had afterwards.

For more information on the content of the speech visit www.vuvuzelaonline.com.



CALLING THE SHOTS: Mail & Guardian Editor, Ferial Haffajee talks to Witsies during the Wits democracy lecture series for 2007. Photo: Bate Felix

CAMPUS CELEBRITIES



Statues of long standing

What are your names? I'm Guy-on-the-left, she's Girl-in-the-middle and that's Guy-on-the-right.

How long have you been here?

Since 1970, so if you don't know your mathematics .This is our 27th year.

You guys seem to just stand around all day.

Guy-on-the-left:

Hey we're artists, people stare at us for long periods of time in awe. Besides, this six-pack didn't just happen overnight okay. Punch me. C'mon, punch me.

Guy-on-the-right:

Um, ja but we also make sure all the students are safe, right

guys?

Guy-on-the-left and Girl-in-the-middle: Ahem, cough cough, oh definitely yes.

Some of the students have complained that you give them the silent treatment.

Why?

Girl-in-the-middle:

Only the students who make fun of us. One girl had the nerve to call me fat. I'm not fat! I'm just big boned.

Why are you naked?

Guy-on-the-left: We're not naked. We're nude. Don't you know anything about art?

What do you do for fun?

Girl-on-the-left: Sometimes

when the weather turns from hot to cold really quickly, we try to see which one of us can expand the most.

What is your worst fear?

Guy-on-the-left, Girl-in-the-middle and Guy-on-the-right: Pigeons!

What gets on your nerves?

Guy-on-the-left:

Students think they can feel us up whenever they want. We have feelings too you know.

Where do you see yourself in 2010?

Guy-on-the-right: Er...

Girl-in-the-middle: Um...

Guy-on-the-left: Eish.

Derrrrrrrr at Wits

PIGGING OUT

Get carried away at the Curry Basket

Curry Basket, The Matrix, East Campus

Hours: 8am to 9pm weekdays
8am to 11pm Saturdays and 11am to 8pm Sundays



KIM HAWKEY

AS ITS name suggests, Indian food is the specialty at the Curry Basket. With vegetable, meat and chicken options available, the fare includes Durban curries, bunny chow, roti rolls and breyani.

Specialty chip rolls cost between R8.95 (plain) and R9.95 (cheese, salad and sauce or either vienna or fried polony).

If you want to lose the roll, chips will cost you R7.95 and R9.95 if you would like to add either vienna or fried polony.

If you are looking for more run of the mill fare, competitively priced breakfasts and toasted sandwiches are also available.

A number of Curry Basket customers are res students, who no doubt appreciate the long opening hours and reasonable prices.

As an added benefit to res students, the Curry Basket

also sells cheese, viennas and cold meats separately.

Best buy for R 20: for R19.95 you can buy either a chicken Durban curry, served with rice or a roti, or the Curry Basket Famous Burger – a jumbo lamb burger with chips, salad and cheese.

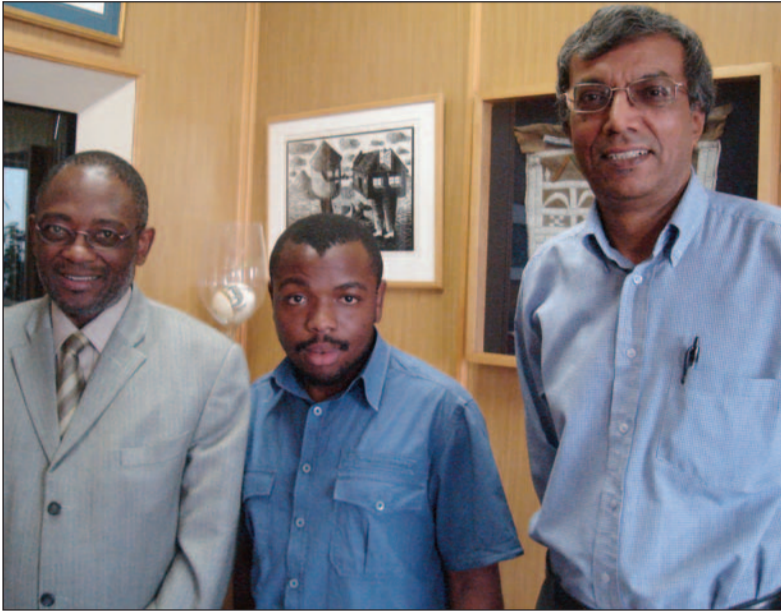
A recommended buy is the lamb breyani, served with sauce or a salad, which sells for R24.95, although Vuvuzela has it on good authority that the price can be negotiated down to R20.

Verdict: 6.5/10. For the size of this eatery, the menu is fairly large. The prices are difficult to beat and the opening hours are convenient, especially for res students.

Open till late

NEWS

Maths boffin takes VC prize



BRIGHT MINDS: Vice-Chancellor, Prof Loyiso Nongxa, third year BSc student Qinisela Molefe and Dean of Sciences, Prof Ramesh Bharuthram. Photo: Wits Marketing

SELLO SELEBI

THE Basotho people have a piece of advice for all who would be parents: Bitso lebe ke seromo!

The dictum is used as a warning to parents not to choose the wrong name for their child because doing so would lead to the child being the epitome of the name. Choosing the right name, however, is naturally assumed to be an affirmation of the child's destiny.

The latter seems to be the case when it comes to the first Mosa Limakatso

Memorial Scholar Qinisela Molefe, 20. Molefe's name literally means "persevere" and he has lived up to it.

Molefe has persevered his way out of the township of Umlazi in KwaZulu-Natal. Armed with his love of mathematics and an inspirational Witsie older brother Mhlonipheni, Molefe went on to achieve four distinctions for matric. This led him to follow in his electrical engineer brother's footsteps by enrolling at Wits.

Molefe, who names mathematician Blaise Pascal as his hero, could easily agree with his hero who once uttered: "All men's miseries derive from not being able to sit in a quiet room alone." Molefe maintains a diligent schedule which leaves little room for anything else and yet he seems content. "I party at least once a year and that is during O-Week," said Molefe. The scholarship is the brainchild of Wits Vice-Chancellor and Principal Prof Loyiso Nongxa and is awarded annually to a student from a modest background in their third-year of study in the mathematical sciences.

The student has to have maintained an average of 70% in their first two years of study. "The idea was conceived last year as part of a bigger initiative called the Wits Future Generation bursary/scholarship," said Prof Nongxa. He added that this initiative was to encourage all members of the Wits community to contribute to a fund to secure future skills.

Prof Nongxa said he was partly inspired by an alumni member David Lobel, who in his personal capacity pledged to sponsor gifted students. This idea inspired Prof Nongxa to start the scholarship and to contribute towards it personally until he retires from Wits.

The scholarship also allowed Prof Nongxa to pay tribute to his daughter who died at the age of eight. This is why the scholarship is named after her, Mosa Limakatso. Molefe was selected because of his second-year results and was then recommended by the head of department to the dean.

"He struck me as a quietly confident young man," Prof Nongxa said after meeting Molefe. Molefe said that his brother and mother, Makhosazana Molefe, were the winds beneath his wings.



THE WRITE STUFF: Whodunit author, Prof Jane Taylor. Photo: Erica Dreijer

ERICA DREIJER AND SEAN RITCHIE

A SENIOR Wits academic has won a literary prize for a murder mystery – her first published novel.

Prof Jane Taylor, Skye Chair of Dramatic Art, won the 2006 Olive Schreiner Prize for a whodunit, *Of Wild Dogs*.

The prize is awarded annually by the English Academy of South Africa. Categories include drama, play, poetry and prose.

Of Wild Dogs is about Hannah Viljoen, an artist at a museum, who dies while collecting flora from a wild-dog diorama.

A former lover combines forces with police inspectors Cicero Matyobeni and Helena de Villiers to uncover her murderer.

Prof Taylor has previously written on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

In 1996 she curated a series of cultural responses to the TRC called *Fault Lines* which included an art exhibition, a play, a series of readings, a conference and a workshop for

Murder, she wrote ... and then she won

journalists covering the commission.

In her murder mystery, Prof Taylor uses the museum as a metaphor to explore the complexities of South Africa.

The novel delves into the recent past and the present to understand where South Africa is heading.

The novel keeps readers guessing by creating a sense of infinite possibilities on each page instead of letting a straight-forward murder mystery unfold.

For Prof Taylor this reflects on the way people create narratives in their own daily lives. They constantly construct a story to place themselves in the world.

Whether they cast themselves as the villain or the hero is up to them. Prof Taylor is head of the drama division at Wits School of Arts.

She has a PhD in English from Northwestern University, Chicago, on Restoration theatre and the new commodity markets.

Prof Taylor is working on her second novel, the subject matter of which is a closely guarded secret.

Visitors charged - to raise funds

TWO women's residences on campus came up with a novel way to raise funds: they charged men visitors an entrance fee.

Men who paid R10 could visit women in their rooms at Medhurst and Reith Hall last Sunday between 11am and 5pm.

Guests had to be invited and were entertained by a live DJ.

YOUR VOICE

DO YOU FEEL SAFE WALKING AROUND JOBURG CBD?



Yes, I don't think I'd walk in Braamfontein alone at night. But I don't feel unsafe during the day. **Thandi Guilherme, 21, 3rd year B.A Philosophy and History**



I don't feel safe, but I never show that I'm scared. Never walk alone. During the day it's perfectly safe, you just puff up the chest. **Thabang Koole, 21 yrs, 2nd year B.A Psychology and Sociology**



About two weeks back no, but now yes. I don't like the fact that I have to put my phone on silent and hide my jewellery. **Palesa Litha, 19, B.A 2nd year Fine Art**



No, it's just not safe for anybody to walk there. If you wanna walk there you need to be vigilant. **Tlhfelo Motloug, 19, 2nd year B.A**



Most of the times I feel safe, because I know the place and people could help. Unlike London, where they'll take your wallet and people won't help. **Jenna Eager, 23, 3rd year B.A Psychology**

NEWS



Wits gymnast gears up for Beijing 2008

CAMPUS CELEB: ODETTE RICHARD

ODETTE RICHARD, a first-year business science student, is also an aspiring Olympic gymnast. **ERICA DREIJER** spoke to her about gymnastics and her hopes and dreams.

What does it mean to be a rhythmic gymnast as opposed to an artistic gymnast?

Rhythmic gymnastics is more balletic. We use apparatus like balls, hoops, clubs, rope and ribbon. There are individual and group acts. Artistic gymnastics uses beams and bars and uses more strength. Rhythmic gymnastics is more about control and dance.

What does your sponsorship from Olympic Solidarity Funding mean?

They select about 200 athletes from around the world and provide them with funding. They pay for sporting expenses to help you train for the Olympics.

You still need to make the requirements to go for the Olympics, but they pay for the training to get there. The qualifiers for the Olympics are at the championships in September in Greece.

My federation sent in my name and portfolio and they selected me.

How often do you train?

I train for seven hours a day. I have two sessions a day

and an hour of ballet training daily. My first session is from 8am to 12am and ballet training is from 2pm to 3pm. On Saturdays we only have five hours training in the morning.

If two wishes could come true, what would they be?

I have already been to the Commonwealth Games. But I would like to win a Commonwealth medal and compete in the Olympics.

What motivates you to get out of bed in the morning?

It's easier to get started in the competition season when you compete and get to see other gymnasts.

It is much harder out of season when you only train. First, I think of the end goal and I also think that the coach is going to be there.

I feel too guilty when I sit at home and I have to be training, so I just go to training.

What would you like to achieve from life?

Happiness. There are a lot of things that I would like to do, but ultimately I want a happy life.

A snip that helps, but won't stop Aids

FARHANA ISMAIL

CIRCUMCISED men shouldn't consider themselves immune to HIV, according to Aids activists and health professionals on campus.

The Wits chapter of the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) has responded with caution to current evidence that circumcised men have a lower risk of contracting the HI virus.

The TAC's anxiety is that this may be interpreted as licence to engage in unprotected sex and irresponsible sexual behaviour.

The conclusive evidence emerged last year after clinical trials in Uganda and Kenya.

It confirmed a 2005 South African study in Orange Farm that circumcised men were 50 to 60% less likely to contract the HI virus. The tests also showed that transmission to women was significantly reduced.

Phyllis Phukubuye, the TAC campus spokesperson, said circumcision was only one of the many complex HIV/Aids interventions. It could not be the primary prevention tool.

"We hope that this evidence will not result in the false belief that safe-sex practices are no longer required, thus worsening the incidence of HIV infection," she said.

This sentiment is shared by journalism student Phakamisa Ndzabela. "I know a lot of circumcised people who got infected. I definitely wouldn't take the risk of foolish behaviour," he said.

Ndzabela, who was circumcised at 18 according to Hlube tradition, said the empirical evidence could in itself be quite dangerous.

"It may be interpreted as: 'You won't get Aids if you're

circumcised', when what it is really saying is that the risks are probably just lower.

"This is where the media have a great responsibility to educate and inform people correctly," he said.

Sister Yvonne Mathimba of Campus Health said she had received many queries after the trial results went public.

"Mainly male students asked: 'If I go for circumcision does this mean I will never contract sexually transmitted infections and HIV?'"

"A lot more education needs to be put in place, especially for men. Men do not talk about reproductive health."

If a Witsie asks Campus Health for Aids counselling, they won't be told about this intervention unless they specifically ask.

Mathimba said this was, in part, due to the ongoing nature of the study, which still had to be extrapolated and applied in other settings. There was also controversy around male circumcision. "Some argue it is mutilation," she said.

"The research is also still in process. Stats in rural areas, where men are circumcised, show no reduction in incidence of HIV."

But Dr Neil Martinson, of the Wits Health Consortium, said this was the best we had for the time being and action was needed.

"Current campaigns like 'Love Life' are not making a big enough impact on the pandemic. Twenty-five percent of young women are still HIV positive and that stat is not coming down."

Mathimba did stress that if a student asked about circumcision at Campus Health "it would create an opportunity to talk about overall sexual health". In this light, she would also personally recommend it.

Apart from protection against HIV/Aids, circumcision can also protect against other sexually transmitted diseases. This is because the protective effect of circumcision is provided by the removal of the thin sensitive inner lining of the foreskin, which is more vulnerable to disease than the vaginal lining. Its efficacy is largely dependent on a safe hygienic surgical procedure.

But both Martinson and Mathimba said public hospitals did not perform circumcisions without a valid medical reason. So a man choosing this as an intervention would have to pay a private doctor.

Some Eastern Cape students discovered this when they approached Campus Health to ask about having the operation done in a hospital before taking part in the important cultural coming-of-age ritual.

This is where Aids clinics like Zuzimpilo in the Johannesburg CBD come in.

The clinic was established to bridge the gap between the private and public health sectors. It has recently started a training programme for doctors to perform circumcisions.

Martinson, who also heads Zuzimpilo, said there would not be a marked impact on new infections until there was a marked increase in circumcisions.

"That would require a sensitive marketing campaign targeted at young men and possibly their mothers, selling the idea that male circumcision may be a life-saving procedure, especially when the circumcision is performed prior to sexual debut."

* For more information, contact Campus Health or 0860 ZUZIMPILO.

Come here to drink, not eat

Nino's, The Matrix, East Campus
Hours: 7am to 5pm weekdays, 8am to 1pm Saturdays, closed Sundays

A MINI version of your average Nino's, the Matrix eatery preserves the standard design and menu of the franchise, although on a much smaller scale.

The menu offers a limited number of light meals, including tramazzinis (R12-R28), toasted sandwiches and croissants (R6 for a basic jam and butter sandwich - R25 for a chicken mayo croissant), prego rolls (R20-R25), hot chips (R6.50) and salads (R17 for savoury and R13-R16 for fruit). A small number of pastries

and breakfasts are also available. Breakfasts are served until 11am.

While the mediocre food may not lure you in, the assortment of drinks may.

There are a number of thirst-quenchers on offer, whether you're looking for something hot or cold.

The popular Slo-Jo range includes smoothies, fruit frenzies, chai lattes and frappes, which cost R 14 apiece. For a bit less, you can get a fruit shake (R13), a milkshake or a chocolaccino (both R11), a hot chocolate, a Horlicks or a Milo (all R9). A standard coffee is R7 and tea is R6. Soft drinks and Nestle ice cream at R4 a scoop are also available.

Best buy for R20: Any one of the specialty drinks, depending on your personal preference.

PIGGING OUT

If you would rather fill your belly, the di pollo chicken pasta, a pasta dish comprising of chicken, mushrooms, herbs, chili and cream, will cost you R20 for a small (although not too small) portion.

Verdict: 7/10. Nino's is the ideal venue for a quick drink as the service is fast and the drinks' menu varied, although the seating is limited.



GATHER AROUND: Although it has limited seating, Nino's in the Matrix is a great venue for a quick catch-up with buddies.
Photo by Kim Hawkey.