New student cards to replace cash on campus

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

The card also has smart-card technology which will replace cash on campus. The system is based on an attempt at “creating (as far as possible) a cashless campus”. According to Watermeyer, there are advantages that come with this new card, such as students being to read online statements with the cards. He said that financial systems roll-out would increase 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.

If you lose your ICAM card, “according to the website. 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 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.

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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 Wenaah 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.”

Fatima 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.”

Here’s a bright idea

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 “we’re not looking for the cleverest but the brightest.”

“We’re looking for the cleverest but the brightest,” he said.

The 100 students selected will attend an expenses-paid conference and 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.bymsa.co.za to apply. Applications will close on March 16.

After your blood

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 patient’s blood type is determined and their blood type is available.

88 keys for sale

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 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 Konstantin 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.
Get involved, M & G editor tells Witsies

ERICA DREIJER AND JACKIE BISCHOF

STUDENT leadership and the diaspora 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, not sure we’re getting the top people in the public sector or overseas. And I’m becoming political leaders”.

Slowing down the intellectual diaspora could be done only by making South Africa a “safe, interesting place to use one’s brains”.

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: Kate Felix

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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.”

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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: “It 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. He added that that this initiative was to encourage all members of the Wits community to contribute to a fund to secure future skills.

Professor Nongxa said he was partly inspired by an alumnus 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.

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. 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. He added that that this initiative was to encourage all members of the Wits community to contribute to a fund to secure future skills.

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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.

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. 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.

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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 HIV 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 HIV virus. The tests also showed that transmission to women was significantly reduced.

Phyllis Phakubooye, 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 Ndzamela. “I know a lot of circumcised people who got infected,” she said.

Ndzamela, who was circumcised at 18 according to Hlube Ndhlovu, said 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,” she added.

Dr Neil Martinson, of the Wits Health Consortium, 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.

“This is where the media have a great responsibility to educate,” said Mathimba.

For a bit less, you can get a fruit shake or a smoothie, which cost R 14 apiece. There are also a number of thirst-quenchers for the budget-conscious, including prego rolls (R20-R25), hot chips (R6.50) and salads (R 17 for savoury and R13-R16 for fruit). A small number of pastries and breakfasts are also available. Breakfasts are served until 11am. While the medley 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 S0-Jo range includes smoothies, fruit frappes, tea lattes and frappes, which cost R 14 apiece. For a bit less, you can get a fruit shake (R13), a milkshake or a chocolacino (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.