



RHODES UNIVERSITY

Honours bursaries available 2017

Two honours assistantship bursaries to the value of R20 000 are on offer for students who are interested in being part of an exciting interdisciplinary project based at Rhodes University.

Professor Michelle Cocks and Professor Charlie Shackleton are offering two honours assistantship bursaries to suitably qualified and motivated students for 2017 to support research projects on topics falling within their interdisciplinary project entitled: A place to belong: urban planning, housing and greening. The project aims to towards enhancing our understanding of meanings and experiences that urban residents attach to nature and green spaces. This research project forms part of a collaboration of researchers from the Biocultural Diversity Conservation Programme (BCDC) and SARChI Chair in 'Interdisciplinary Science in Land & Natural Resource Use for Sustainable Livelihoods' based at Rhodes University. This collaboration brings together an in-depth understanding of links between biodiversity and human well-being in the Eastern Cape with an urban planning and greening perspective. The research is facilitated by Professor Michelle Cocks (BCDC Research Program – Anthropology Department and Professor Charlie Shackleton (SARChI Chair – Environmental Science Department).

Our ongoing research has shown that many Xhosa speaking residents in the Eastern Cape have strong material and spiritual links to nature. Nature provides resources for utilitarian use, traditional customs, and rites and religious functions and contributes to a sense of personal well-being. Indeed, the benefits of nature experience to human well-being and quality of life is increasingly acknowledged locally and internationally. Yet during the last century most urbanisation processes in South Africa have resulted in reduced areas of green space and biodiversity, especially in the poorer township and RDP areas.

We suggest that urban development in South Africa undermines the cultural needs and contexts of most South African urban residents negatively affecting quality of life, identity and place making. The project therefore aims to investigate the multiple realities of urban dwellers' worldviews, appreciation, needs and uses of urban greenspaces (in the broad sense) and elements therein. The proposed research will be undertaken in small/medium sized towns in the Eastern Cape.

Students with a background in social anthropology and or environmental science are encouraged to apply. Requirements include a second (minimum of 65%) to upper second pass in graduate degree, fluency in isiXhosa and a driver's licence will be an advantage.

To apply please send the following information to m.cocks@ru.ac.za:

- 1-page motivation including your research interests
- Your academic qualifications and results
- CV
- Two contactable references

Please contact Michelle Cocks (m.cocks@ru.ac.za) or Charlie Shackleton (c.shackleton@ru.ac.za) for more information and to discuss the application process. Closing date for application is the 5th of January 2017.