

## TWO PHD PRESTIGE SEMINAR CELEBRATIONS AT FABI

Two PhD prestige seminars were presented in FABI in the second week of November. We congratulate Gerda Fourie and Markus Wilken from the TPCP/CTHB research groups for excellent seminars as well as passing the oral examinations.



PhD Prestige seminars mark the second last step towards earning a PhD degree in FABI. After examination of the written PhD has been completed, the candidates present a summative seminar that is open to all of FABI and family and friends, to their external examiners. The seminar is followed by a closed oral examination with only the candidate, examiners, supervisors and head of the relevant academic department present. This final step serves to confirm that the candidates actually conducted the research and have written the thesis themselves.

Gerda Fourie and Markus Wilken respectively presented their PhD projects on November 11 and November 12. By passing their oral examinations, they brought the number of PhD degrees completed in FABI so far this year to 11.

In her presentation titled: “Evolution of mitochondrial genomes in the *Fusarium fujikuroi* species complex”, Gerda highlighted the role that mitochondria play in explaining the fungal

species' origins. Gerda's supervisors were Professors Emma Steenkamp, Mike Wingfield, Brenda Wingfield and Dr Albe van der Merwe. Her external examiners were Prof. Jarkko Hantula from The Finnish Forest Research Institute (METLA) in Finland and Dr Bridget Crampton of the University of Pretoria.



Markus's seminar was titled: "Mating in *Ceratocystis*" and he explained how he unravelled some of the highly complex mating systems in this fungal genus. His PhD was supervised by Professors Brenda Wingfield, Emma Steenkamp, Mike Wingfield and Dr Wilhelm de Beer. His external examiners were Profs Louis Bernier from Université Laval in Québec City, Canada and Prof. Hantula from METLA.