

IMPORTANT VISITOR TO FABI

Tuesday 25 April 2006 was a red letter day for the DST/NRF Centre of Excellence in Tree Health Biotechnology (CTHB) at FABI, University of Pretoria, when the Deputy Minister of Science and Technology, the Honorable Derek Hanekom, Mr Joseph Tshikomba, Deputy-Director: Human Capital at DST and Ms Heibre Roos, also of DST, paid a visit to FABI.

Staff and students of the CTHB and the Tree Health Biotechnology Programme (TPCP) welcomed the guests to tea in the FABI courtyard. Prof Mike Wingfield introduced the Minister and his colleagues to the students and staff of the CTHB/TPCP. An informal tea followed allowing the members of DST to have some time to meet the students in the programme. This was followed by a smaller meeting of the CTHB Project leaders, Prof Mike Wingfield and the DST guests. Prof Mike Wingfield presented a short talk about the research being done at FABI and, in particular, the challenges and contribution the CTHB had made over the two years since its inception. Mr Hanekom and Mr Tshikomba asked very pertinent and in-depth questions about these research areas and were later taken on a tour of the FABI laboratories and other facilities. During the tour there were a number of opportunities for the DST guests to discuss projects with the students in the laboratories and demonstrate the workings of the state-of-the-art facilities and equipment in FABI 1 and FABI 2.

Prof Wingfield issued an open invitation to the Deputy Minister and his colleagues to visit FABI again in the future.



Deputy Minister Hanekom trying out the microscope at FABI

Brenda Wingfield showing Deputy Minister Hanekom, Heibre Roos and Joseph Tshikombe around the FABI laboratories



FABI students and staff enjoying tea with Deputy Minister Hanekom and the other visitors from DST