



# WATERFORD KAMHLABA

## United World College of Southern Africa

5<sup>th</sup> March 2010

Letter 6/2010

Dear Parents

In a conversation yesterday, a former senior member of staff at a sister UWC expressed incredulity that WK has a policy of locking residences after check-in (for IB students, on weekday evenings this is at 10.30pm). (Of course there are fire escapes!) He wondered whether this was consistent with a UWC ethos of allowing senior students the opportunity to develop in the context of (as great a degree as possible of) freedom and personal responsibility.

In my view this is a neat example of the dilemmas UWC faces if we wish to embrace students, teachers and communities representing the tensions in society. Possibly because UWC started in Western/ Northern Europe and North America, possibly because all the Heads of the UWCs that offer the IB Diploma have been Western/Northern European or North American or essentially from within that tradition (now with the welcome exception of the Head of Costa Rica UWC), in broad terms UWC has evolved a liberal or libertarian approach. Of course, being liberal in for instance Scandinavia may be a very different thing from being liberal in southern Africa! Yet at so many of the UWCs I have visited, individual students from more conservative backgrounds have reported a discomfort with, amongst other things, residential arrangements. Students have reported seeking alternative sleeping arrangements (including in one instance in the library!) because of not wanting to be in the same space as their fellow students with boyfriends or girlfriends. Some students report recognizing the remarkable opportunities provided by a UWC education (including access to good tertiary education on scholarship) but feeling unable to report back home on some of the realities within their campuses because they fear their parents simply would remove them if the truth were to be known.

Of course we wish that students who feel offended by the behaviour of their peers would have the courage and ability to negotiate with their peers, to find and demand acceptable solutions. Surely that is a necessary growth for all our students. But the reality is that power relations within our colleges are not equal, not even between students. Experience suggests that, in general, students from backgrounds where young people are not encouraged to state their views and to demand attention need to reach some sort of critical mass in percentage terms before they feel as if they have the ability to articulate their needs and even quietly demand some form of accommodation.

In all their imperfection of articulation and application, Waterford Kamhlaba's rules in this respect simply reflect a compromise, what I like to think of as a UWC-inspired compromise. At the IB level, WK *does* allow mixed socializing in student rooms during the day and until check in. Many of our more conservative parents, teachers and students are uncomfortable about this. At night, after check in, girls and boys are completely separated and the residences locked. Many of our liberal parents, teachers and students are uncomfortable about that aspect of the arrangements. Most of us find ourselves in a position where we have to compromise to some extent on what we think is a fundamentally important aspect of students from 16 to 20 growing up in the context of a school; our compromise comes in different directions and at different times.

Just so that there is no misunderstanding, mixed socializing is not allowed in the boys and girls wings of the residences of the Forms students. And any students of any age found engaging in sexual intercourse on campus will be required to leave WK. (For the precise wording, please refer to the General Information Brochure (GIB) which is issued at the start of every year to each student and is available on the WK website [www.waterford.sz](http://www.waterford.sz)) Again, a compromise.

PO Box 52, Mbabane H100  
Kingdom of Swaziland  
Tel +268 4220866/7/8  
Fax +268 4220088  
Email [principal@waterford.sz](mailto:principal@waterford.sz)  
Web [www.waterford.sz](http://www.waterford.sz)

You may know that UWC seeks a far greater presence in the Middle East as well as a greater representation of students from that troubled region in the existing colleges. Jennifer Dueck, a UWC and Oxford graduate who heads the UWC initiative in the Middle East, has reported difficulty in persuading many leaders in those parts that UWCs might provide a suitable social environment especially for female students. Do we within UWC walk away, in regret, that many communities within the Middle East cannot see what to us are the blindingly clear moral and intellectual advantages of our liberal approach, or do we start to contemplate, in that context, what new compromises of approach are needed and possible to indeed unite people, nations and cultures for peace and a sustainable future?

### Special Activities and Events

Both the senior girls and boys basketball teams emerged as winners at the international tournament in Johannesburg last weekend. The girls were defending champions, the boys last won this tournament in 1999. Congratulations to all concerned.

Ms Joy Dumsile Ndwandwe, guest speaker at Wednesday's assembly, spoke passionately on how we in Swaziland and southern Africa and indeed throughout the world need to reconstruct our social context. We need to reclaim the wisdom of our forbears, promoting values such as harmony and mutual understanding. Ms Ndwandwe's mission is to contribute to world peace. One of her heroes is King Sobhuza II, whose philosophy and wisdom in being able to recognize the essence of a situation is the subject of her recent book "*Akusiko Kwami, Kwebantfu*" Unearthing King Sobhuza II's Philosophy".

The IB2 Biology SL and 'Environmental Systems and Societies' students departed yesterday for a four-day field trip to Malolotja Nature Reserve.

All tickets to the PSA Medieval Fun Auction on Saturday evening have been sold. Thank you for the support, and particular thanks to the organizing committee.

Next week we host the first of several international university admissions officer visits. Pat Kirby from Westminster College in Missouri, USA will be at WK from Monday 8<sup>th</sup> to Wednesday. He will be giving a presentation at 6.30pm on Monday in the Emhlabeni TV Room. Especially local parents who have children considering applying to the USA are well advised to attend several such presentations, to get a sense of the range of universities and colleges in the USA, what they have in common and where they differ, both in program, ethos and location.

There is an evening of Theatre Sports on Monday 8<sup>th</sup>, starting at 7.30pm. Parents are invited to join in this evening of noisy fun and improvisation. In addition to preparations for the Theatre Sports evening, the Theatre Arts department holds auditions from today for a whole school production to be performed in the 2<sup>nd</sup> term.

Interhouse Athletics is scheduled to run from 10am on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup>, starting at 10am. Parents are invited to attend. Some of the field events will be held on Monday after classes.

The IB1 and IB2 Visual Arts Trip to Johannesburg departs on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> with Ms Patel and Ms Frampton.

Ms Patel writes: Some top names from the South African art world have been lined up in our hectic 4-day schedule. We will see thirty etchings by William Kentridge, who incidentally cannot host us in his studio as his opera 'The Nose' by Shostakovich opens at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York, concurrently with his exhibition of etchings in Johannesburg.

David Koloane and Pat Mutlaou, two renowned contemporary South African painters, will host us in their studios and we will all benefit from seeing their work in progress. Curator, Natalie Knight, will guide us through an exhibition entitled 'Symphony of Soweto' by the well-known Sowetan artist Ephraim Ngatane. In addition, we will see an exhibition of photographs and a video installation entitled 'Halaal Art' by Capetonian twin brothers Hasan and Husain Essop and a print exhibition entitled 'Notebook from an Island' by Bonita Alice.



# WATERFORD KAMHLABA

## United World College of Southern Africa

There is a new architectural wonder in Johannesburg: a gallery known as Circa on Jellicoe. This is a brain-child of Mark Read who wanted to place something world class in South Africa. Rooted in its African landscape, Read says, "It is a highveld building; the shape has been inspired by a kraal, while the tall fins are the dirty shades of burnt veld." Mark Read has offered a guided tour of the gallery that the press has termed, "The Guggenheim of Johannesburg"!

This year's print workshop on 'Monotypes' will be run by Genevieve Wood, Lecturer and Studio Manager for Printmaking at Wits School of Art. The workshop is organised by David Andrew (SA WK 74-76), senior lecturer in Visual Arts at Wits, who opened our annual art exhibition last year and remains very keen to maintain contact with WK.

To round off our experience of the great metropolis, we will fit in a dance performance and have Saturday night at the cinema.

### Entrance Testing Dates for entry in January 2011

Saturday March 20<sup>th</sup> at WK, for the Forms and IB

Saturday April 10<sup>th</sup> at WK, for the Forms

Saturday May 8<sup>th</sup>, in Gaborone and, to be confirmed, in Nairobi, Dar es Salaam and Lilongwe (Saturday June 5<sup>th</sup>, in Maputo for the Forms and IB

### Parent Staff Association

Please find attached a letter from the PSA, outlining its invaluable role in the life of WK. The PSA AGM is at 5.30pm on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> March. Parents and guardians are reminded that the AGM is followed by a Forms 1 and 2 Parent Teacher evening (with Form 1 and 2 teachers and tutors available for short individual meetings up to 8.30pm). Parents and guardians of new students in Forms 3 and above also are invited to contact their child's tutor to set up meetings.

Yours sincerely

Laurence Nodder  
Principal