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Fulbright Scholar Keith Gottschalk brings African politics, culture to OU

By **Katie Land**, news editor

Fulbright scholar and political science professor Keith Gottschalk is not used to the cold. Hailing from Cape Town, South Africa, this is his first trip to the states and his first snowy winter.

Gottschalk's long journey to Oakland University began three years ago when Vincent Khapoya, OU professor emeritus, visited the University of the Western Cape. Impressed with intellectual caliber of its political science department, Khapoya and Paul Kubicek, an OU political science professor, applied for a coveted Fulbright Scholar in Residence grant to bring Gottschalk to Rochester.

Arriving in mid August 2009, Gottschalk taught two courses in the fall semester and currently teaches two courses relating to African politics and culture. His current research surrounds the African Union and South African party politics, but his new passion is to create a permanent link between Oakland and his South African university.

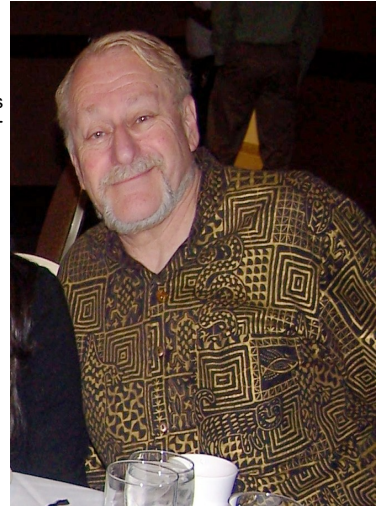
"I have been very impressed with OU's resources and its efficient use of them," he said. "At home, our political science department has four tenured faculty members, but Oakland has 14. It makes a big impression on someone from a Third World country like South Africa."

OU and UWC certainly share a number of similarities. Both universities have an enrollment of 18-19,000 students, and both are renowned for their nursing and occupational therapy programs.

"The best outcome would be to have OU students see UWC as the optimal choice for a semester abroad in their graduate and undergraduate studies, and create the same reciprocity for our students," Gottschalk said. Admittedly, the biggest challenge is to find the funding. Very few South African students can afford to come to America for a semester abroad, he added.

Gottschalk's academic opportunities have continued to expand in unexpected ways throughout his stay. After presenting at a seminar in East Lansing, he met a Michigan State University professor who invited him to co-author a book about the African Union.

His scholarly background and interests are diverse as well. Gottschalk's work has appeared in roughly 30 scholarly publications, including a book of anti-apartheid poetry titled "Emergency Poems." He also is drawn to astronautics and astronomy and presented a paper on South African space policy to the 60th International Astronautics Congress in Korea last October. Serving on the policy committee of the Space Affairs Council of South Africa in 2007 and 2008, he also is a member of the Planetary Society.



OU hosts Fulbright scholar and political science professor Keith Gottschalk.

SUMMARY

Fulbright scholar and political science professor Keith Gottschalk brings Cape Town, South African politics to Oakland University.

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