

Global Climate Change in the Eastern Cape of South Africa

FRANCIS E. PUTZ & CLAUDIA ROMERO



With support from the Fulbright Senior Specialists Program, Francis E. “Jack” Putz and Claudia Romero from the Department of Biology returned to the Department of Environmental Science (DES) at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, South Africa for two months of undergraduate teaching and graduate student mentoring. In addition to Jack’s intensive course on global change, he and Claudia were involved in other on-campus and extension education activities that included students at Graeme College where their 13-year old son Antonio played on the rugby team and learned to speak some Xhosa and more Afrikaans.

Jack and Claudia presented

seminars on the weekly discussions held at DES: Jack on the topic of the bottlenecks and challenges for sustainability, and Claudia on a framework on which to base proper design of evaluation of conservation interventions. One of the high points for them was a guerilla theatre presentation on carbon trading in which Jack portrayed (a bit too effectively) a “Carbon Cowboy” and Claudia the “Informed Critic.” The audience, a group of conservation professionals from the SADC-countries on a 2-week course, were thoroughly engaged in the performance.

Since their 2009 sojourn in Grahamstown as visiting professors at Rhodes, Claudia and Jack have maintained active partnerships with several graduate students, post-

doctoral associates, and faculty at Rhodes. An exchange visit to Gainesville by Rhodes’ Ph.D. candidate Matt McConachie was intellectually invigorating for all concerned, and did wonders for the cricket prowess at UF.

Francis E. Putz is professor and Claudia Romero is courtesy assistant professor in the Department of Biology. They are affiliate faculty in the Center for African Studies. Funding was provided by the Fulbright Senior Specialist Program.