

EMC welcomes US Cadets on an educational visit to Durban



US Cadets with EMC and Kwa-Zulu Natal DoE officials

Fourteen cadets from the Massachusetts Maritime Academy (MMA) arrived in Durban today on a two week tour during which they will spend time at local schools that teach maritime subjects, tutoring learners in mathematics and science as well as assisting teachers.

Their visit, led by MMA Associate Professor Portia Ndlovu is in partnership with EThekwin Maritime Cluster (EMC) and one of EMC's initiatives in facilitating academic performance in Mathematics and Science and the development of a maritime curriculum.

EMC Training and Skills Programme Manager Zenzile Makelo said "Most careers in the maritime industry require mathematics and science, but the achievement levels in these subjects keeps dropping and we are therefore using our networks and sister City relationships to assist where we can to make a difference.

"Over and over again we hear from tertiary institutions that the mathematics and science challenges at high school level are impacting the intake of new entrants into maritime studies as many are not meeting the entry requirements," she said.

Among the high schools that the cadets will attend are Zwelibanzi, Vukuzakhe, New Forest, Mowat Park, Sithengile, AJ Mwelase, and JG Zuma.

The US Consul General Mrs. Frances Chisholm was at EMC to welcome the cadets saying the US supported the maritime sector in the country and she hoped to continue supporting maritime education initiatives such as the visit of the cadets.

EMC Managing Director Thato Tsautse thanked Massachusetts Maritime Academy for making the cadet's visit possible and would like to continue relationship that would also see young South African's visiting the US to learn about their maritime industry. She asked the

cadets to share their knowledge in a way that would change the lives of the youngsters they would meet for good.

"We are hoping to strengthen the relationship and would like to work with other naval academies that EMC visited in September 2015 to ensure that more cadets come to South Africa.

Other officials who were there to meet the cadets were Ms Thembile Dlamini, Acting Chief Director: Curriculum for Grade 10 – 12, Dr. Nathi Hlongwa, Chief Education Specialist (Mathematics) and Professor Trevor Jones, head of the Unit of Maritime Law and Maritime Studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal and a Board Member of EMC.

The MMA cadets visit is one of several initiatives that EMC has undertaken in the past year. In March 2016 EMC brought a senior maritime curriculum development specialist Mr. Frank Van Wezel, from the Netherlands with the assistance of the PUM (Senior Expert Programme) to KZN on a fact finding mission.

The recommendations from van Wezel led to a workshop with tertiary institutions and representatives from the maritime sector to develop a first draft of a new maritime curriculum to be offered by one KwaZulu-Natal's tertiary institutions.

Another initiative during the 2016 was a mini-maritime skills summit held at UKZN looking at the mismatch between the courses that tertiary institutions offer and the skills challenges facing the maritime sector. EMC also facilitated a maritime training course for teachers of maritime studies in KZN in partnership with the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban University Technology, Transnet Maritime School of Excellence and the South African Association of Marine Biological Research.



US Cadets from Massachusetts Maritime Academy on arrival