



DIVISION OF DERMATOLOGY

Winning the war on skin conditions



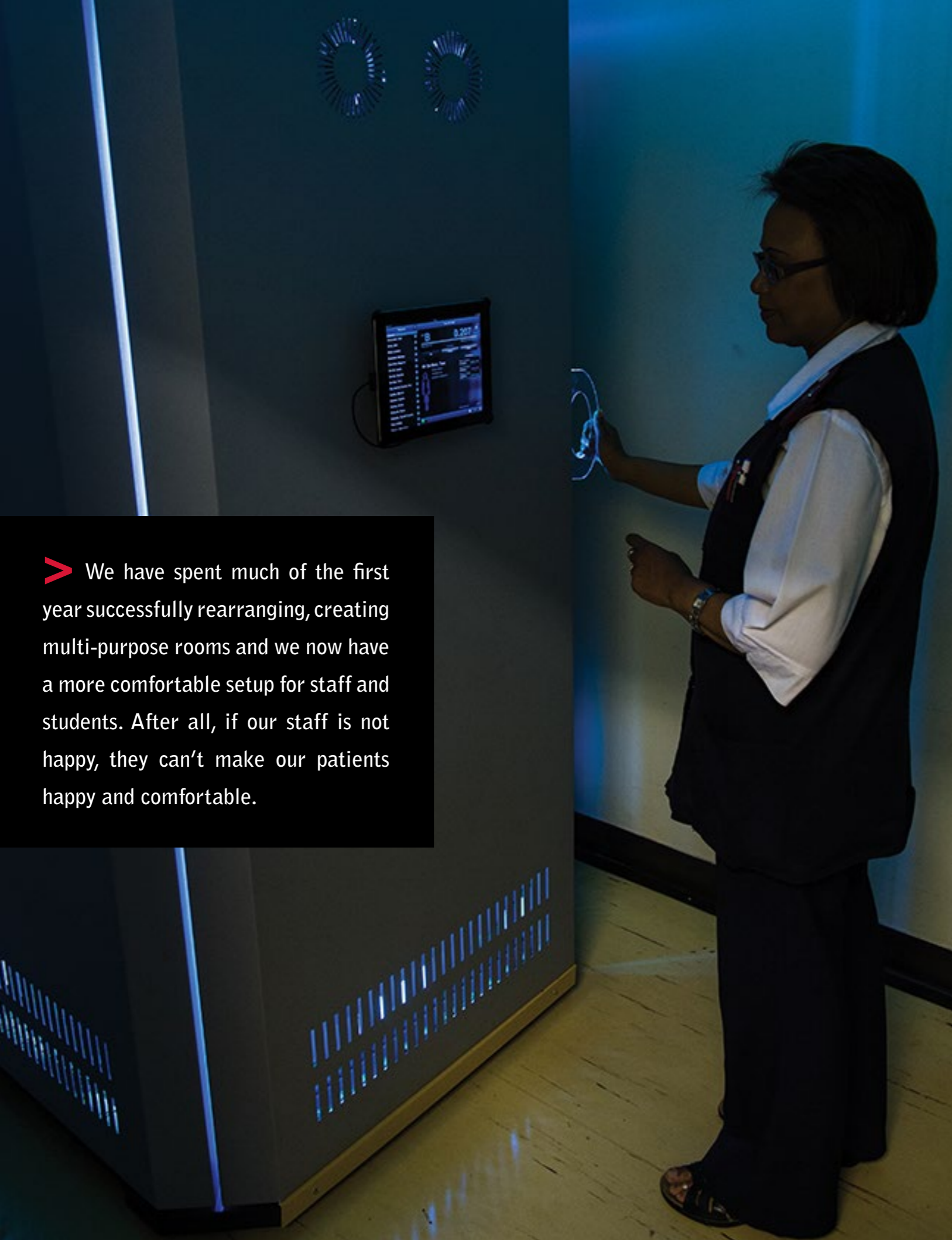
Professor Nonhlanhla Khumalo Head of Dermatology

From the disfiguring to the life threatening, the Division of Dermatology in the Department of Medicine is dedicated to improving patient care, as well as researching ways to treat and alleviate a variety of skin conditions.

Professor Khumalo has been at the helm of the division for the past 14 months. She says the most exciting part of her job is its variety, and says “no day is the same.”

“Looking after patients, teaching, supervising and collaborating in research projects with scientists and clinicians is what we do and this adds variety to each day,” she says.

The division offers clinical management of a variety of acute and chronic skin conditions. “We have general and specialist (phototherapy, skin tumour, hair, infectious disease: occupational) adult and paediatric outpatient clinics. Our 18-bed ward allows for the management of



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The Dermatology team, from left to right: Sister Pat Kelly, Cecily Heunis, Doctor Laduma Ngwanya, Vanessa Strydom, Doctor Sue Jessop, Professor Nonhlanhla Khumalo, Doctor Ranks Lehloeny, Sister Lynne Kennedy, and Nurse Judy Esterhuizen.

severely disfiguring dermatoses (such as extensive psoriasis and eczema) as well as life threatening drug reactions.”

Professor Khumalo's division also boasts an in-house dermatology laser unit, the only one in a public facility in South Africa, a phototherapy and a daycare unit, which treats around 60 patients a week.

While there have been a number of highlights as unit head, Khumalo says establishing the Hair Testing and Skin Toxicology Laboratory stands out. “This is an initial growth spurt in our aim to increase the basic science component to the work we do,” she says.

But running this division has its own set of challenges and according to Professor Khumalo, staff cited work-space as one of their biggest hurdles. “We spent much of the first year successfully rearranging space and we now have a more comfortable setup for both staff and students. After all, happy staff leads to happy patients,” she says.

When asked about her vision for the future, Professor Khumalo adds, “We already have a strong culture of world class clinical practice. Strengthening the basic sciences is achievable because our team includes young enthusiastic clinician scientists.”