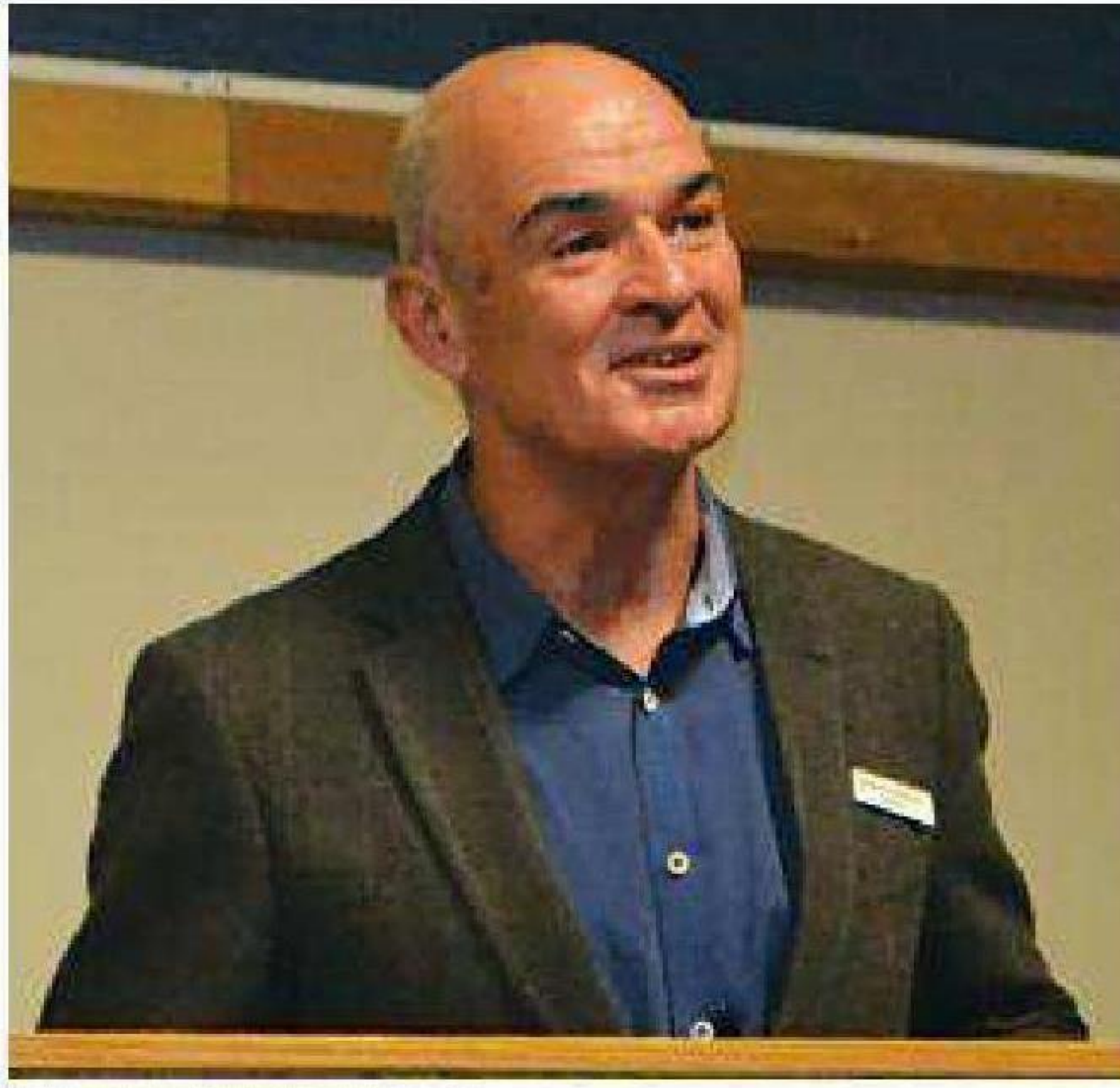


# Collaboration



Vaughan Rimbault

**E**CSA (Engineering Council of SA) has recognised that it needs better representation across the regions and also with institutes of learning. Thus it is rolling out satellite offices in DBN (KZN), East London (E Cape), Cape Town (W Cape) and Bloemfontein (Free State).

SAIMechE CEO Vaughan Rimbault, National Office Manager Anisa Nanabhay and Susan Custers, editor of "The SA Mechanical Engineer" joined an impressive group of engineers in November last year to hear about progress being made at ECSA's Free State satellite office.

Housed at the Central University of Technology on the Bloemfontein campus, a large group representing CESA (consulting), SAICE (civils), IMIESA (municipal) and SAIEE (electricals), as well as agricultural engineers, academics, students and Gerhard Slabbert of Merseta, attended the event.

With Prof Alf Goi, Chairman of CUT as programme director, this get-together is proof positive that traditional 'silos' across the disciplines are rapidly becoming blurred. As Vaughan told delegates, "Problems encountered by each profession bear a striking resemblance to those being addressed across

other disciplines and specialisations. And we are not limited to engineering.

"We will find ourselves increasingly collaborating with social sciences and humanities as machines take over more mundane functions (AI, Industry 4.0)."

## **Making a difference**

Collaboration will also be key to the success of ECSA's regional presence. Says ECSA CEO, Sipho Madonsela, "It's one thing to open an office and another to ensure it makes an impact. In this light, key performance indicators have been put in place including monitoring the number of registrations, keeping track of training programmes and CPD, with the purpose of providing real value to the engineers in each region."

Another drive for ECSA is opening up the field for a wider panel of assessors, tasked with awarding Pr Eng certification. Previously undertaken by the VA's (Voluntary Associations), ECSA has swollen the numbers with 25 new reviewers/moderators recruited and trained in July 2018. Another 30 will be trained up early this year.

## **On-line**

Although satellite offices will make it easier for engineers to earn CPD points on local ground, Sipho is of the opinion that on-line courses will take off exponentially. Having recently returned from Australia, he is a keen proponent of on-line training which he sees as taking root especially where there are no current vested interests in place. He cites the Sol Plaatjie University in N Cape (Kimberley) as an example. They have aspirations to add engineering to their curriculum which may be feasible given the opportunities presented by on-line education.

"I also support the idea of accrediting service providers as a group rather than the more cumbersome method of accrediting each course individually."

## **The floor**

When questions were invited from the floor, two main topics