NWU hosts CAIR FAIR 2018
26 November 2018

NWU recently hosted the annual fair of the national Centre for Artificial Intelligence Research (CAIR), a national research network that supports capacity development and advanced research in Artificial Intelligence (AI). Managed by the CSIR and sponsored by the Department of Science and Technology, CAIR consists of nodes based at the universities of Cape Town, KwaZulu Natal, Pretoria, Stellenbosch and North-West.

CAIR FAIR 2018 was held in Hermanus from 7-9 November. This year, the theme was *Deep Learning*. Marelie Davel and Etienne Barnard from MuST (an AI-focussed research entity at NWU's Faculty of Engineering) curated the three-day programme. The programme consisted of a set of introductory tutorials, a research symposium where researchers and students presented works in progress, and debates around scientific, social and philosophical issues related to deep learning and AI.

The fair was attended by some 40 attendees and the opening address was delivered by the strategic research manager of the CSIR Meraka Institute, Dr Quentin Williams. The presentations covered diverse fields, ranging from theoretical research on deep neural networks, the utilisation of deep learning in space physics applications, and even the ethical implications of AI in social robotics and autonomous weapon systems.

The response to the fair was overwhelmingly positive, to the extent that the node representatives agreed to investigate the feasibility of setting up an accredited version of the FAIR in 2019, to create a local platform for researchers and students in AI-related fields to present their work.

CAIR FAIR 2018 attendees