



# @ A GLANCE 2020



DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY  
INYUVESI YASETHEKWINI YEZOBUCHWEPHESHE

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# ABOUT DUT



**DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY**  
**INYUVESI YASETHEKWINI YEZOBUCHWEPHESHE**

The Durban University of Technology (DUT) has approximately 33 000 students and is the first choice for higher education in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) located in the beautiful cities of Durban and Pietermaritzburg (PMB). As a university of technology, it prioritises the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that its academic staff possess the highest possible qualifications.

DUT is a result of the merger in 2002 of two prestigious Technikons – ML Sultan and Technikon Natal – and was named the Durban Institute of Technology, later to become the Durban University of Technology in line with the rest of the universities of technology.

A member of the International Association of Universities, DUT is a multi-campus university of technology at the forefront of higher education, technological training, research and innovation. In alignment with DUT's strategy ENVISION 2030, the University would like to see its staff and students become entrepreneurial and innovative.

In 2020, DUT was ranked among the top 500 universities globally, 10th for citations globally and fifth nationally.

DUT has six faculties: Accounting and Informatics, Applied Sciences, Management Sciences, Engineering and the Built Environment, Health Sciences and Arts & Design.

**More information, visit the website: [www.dut.ac.za](http://www.dut.ac.za)**

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**DUT - RANKED IN THE TOP 5 OF ALL SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES**

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# DUT'S PROF THANDWA MTHEMBU UNPACKS THE ENVISION 2030, COVID-19 AND DUT WORLD RANKINGS

## Building a sustainable and an impactful DUT for future generations.

**Story:** <https://www.dut.ac.za/prof-mthembu-focuses-on-building-a-sustainable-dut-for-future-generations/>

**YouTube link:** <https://youtu.be/xNOtqCqBmEc>

## Systems and processes as the heartbeat of a thriving DUT.

**Story:** <https://www.dut.ac.za/prof-mthembu-points-out-systems-and-processes-as-the-heartbeat-of-dut/>

**YouTube link:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ifwtLyZXsuo>

## The essence of stewardship at DUT.

**Story:** <https://www.dut.ac.za/prof-mthembu-speaks-on-the-essence-of-stewardship-at-dut/>

**YouTube link:** <https://youtu.be/muy4UFxBulg>

## DUT's DNA and the DUT way.

**Story:** <https://www.dut.ac.za/dut-vice-chancellor-and-principal-prof-thandwa-mthembu-unpacks-duts-dna/>

**YouTube link:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iFlpKpOrnUg&feature=youtu.be>

## DUT's performance in the Times Higher Education University World Rankings 2021. DUT was ranked in the Top 5 in South Africa, in Top 500 globally and ranked 10th in the world for Citations.

**Story:** <https://www.dut.ac.za/dut-is-one-of-the-five-top-south-african-universities-among-the-finest-in-the-world/>

**YouTube link:** <https://youtu.be/EswNYV2yTc>

## Giving thanks to those committed to excellence at DUT.

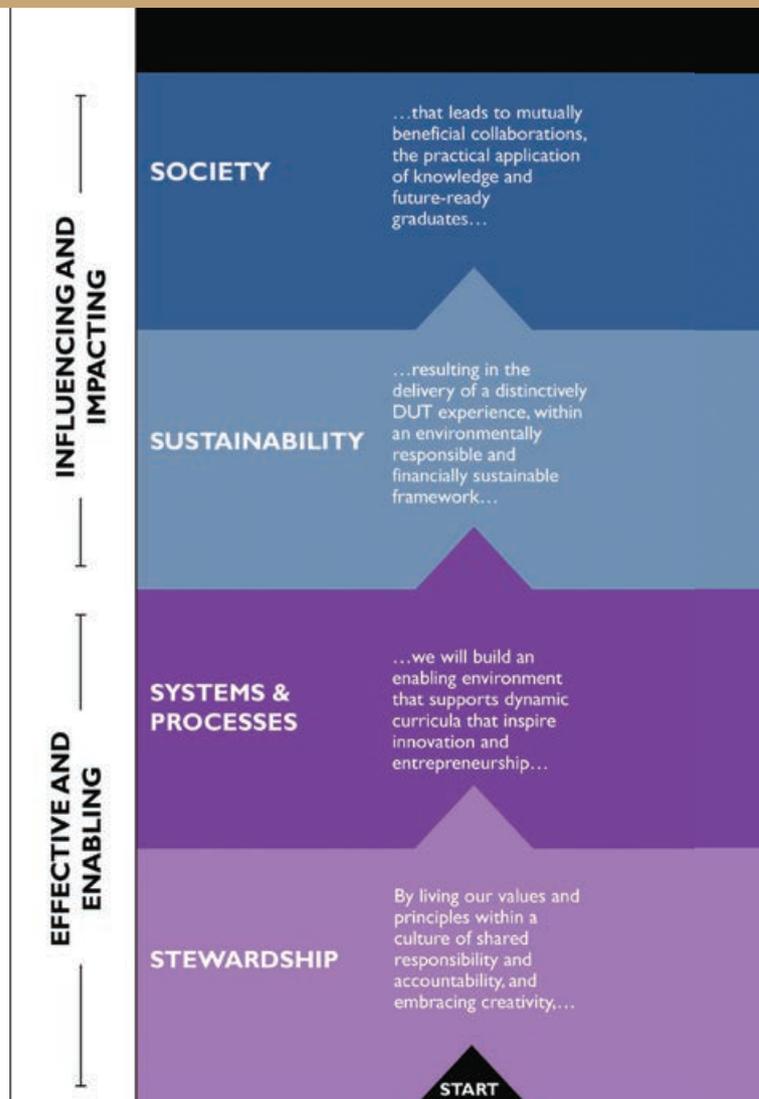
**Story:** <https://www.dut.ac.za/prof-mthembu-gives-thanks-to-the-right-people-living-the-principles-of-commitment-and-excellence/>

**YouTube link:** <https://youtu.be/EswNYV2yTc>

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# ENVISION2030

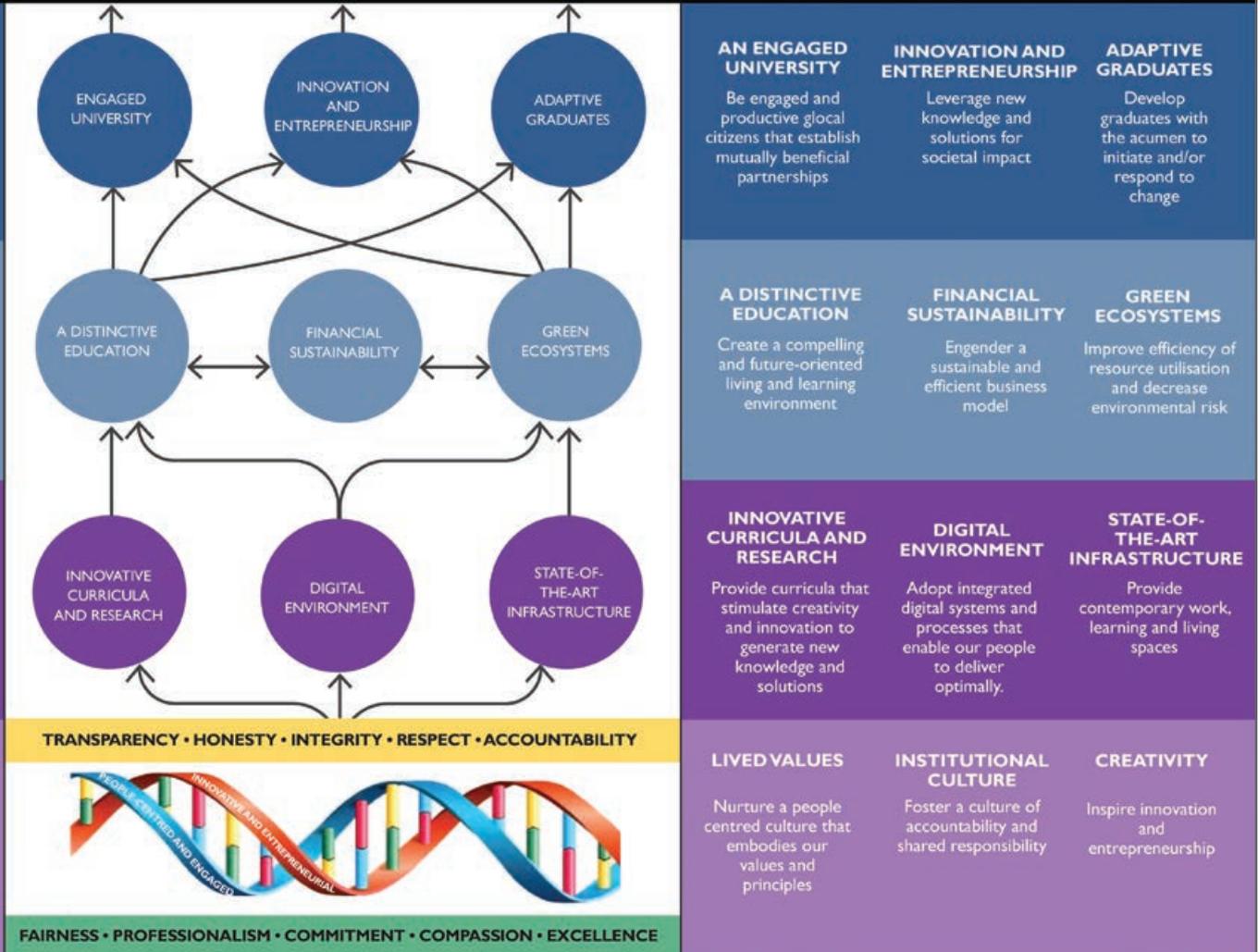
## 2030 STATEMENT OF INTENT

By 2030,

Our people will be creative, innovative, entrepreneurial and adaptive to changes in the world;  
 Our people will participate productively in the development of our region, country and the world;  
 Our state-of-the-art infrastructure and systems will enhance an ecosystem created to achieve this vision.

...and thus contributing to

## IMPROVING LIVES AND LIVELIHOODS



# NGCOBO TACKLES FOOD SECURITY THROUGH THE BOOK CALLED *UBUNGQABAVU* (VITALITY)

Being passionate about research and looking deeper into food security in higher education is what led Sboniso T. Ngcobo, a BTech student at DUT in Consumer Science: Food and Nutrition, to publish a book called *Ubungqabavu (Vitality) – Food and Nutrition Security: Student voice@DUT*.

Ngcobo said that the book came about after attending the National Siyaphumelela Conference in 2018 and participating in Siyaphumelela workshops, as well as using the data collected to gain more information on food security for university students.

“With all the information gathered, under the supervision of Dr Delysia Timm (Former Advisor: Special project office of the DVC Teaching and Learning) and Dr Heleen Grobbelaar (Lecturer: Consumer Sciences: Food and Nutrition), we compiled this book, which is definitely for students by students with students,” he said.

Ngcobo said that the book communicates the benefits of healthier food choices within students’ limited budgets and how to support them as they plan, shop, prepare, cook and eat healthy meals.

“In the same way, some studies have analysed the association between nutrition security and food security in student populations attending institutions of higher learning and the findings shows increased consumption of unhealthy foods (such as biscuits, sweets, meat, fried food, sugar-sweetened beverages, and salty snack foods) among university students,” he said.

Ngcobo further stressed that a survey was used to determine students’



*Pictured: Sboniso Ngcobo*



eating habits, food choices, and food-related coping mechanisms.

“This book has been designed and developed as part of the food security project of Siyaphumelela – We Succeed at DUT. The book provides the knowledge required to select a nutritious diet and make wise lifestyle choices. The project also aims to produce at least one book every three years,” he said.

For more information on how to get a copy of the book, go to the e-book: <https://openbooks.dut.ac.za>.

**Waheeda Peters**

“The book communicates the benefits of healthier food choices within students’ limited budgets and how to support them as they plan, shop, prepare, cook and eat healthy meals. – Sboniso T. Ngcobo”



# NDLOVU IS SELECTED FOR THE MICROSOFT IMAGINE CUP FINAL SUMMIT IN AMSTERDAM

**D**UT's Fanie Ndlovu, a Master's student in Information and Communications Technology (ICT), was selected by Microsoft to represent South Africa at the Microsoft Imagine Cup Final Summit in Amsterdam, Netherlands in March 2020.

For nearly two decades, students from around the world have participated in Microsoft's global technology competition, to bring their unique tech solutions to life. More than just a competition, it is where students can network with professionals, gain new skills and obtain an opportunity to gain mentorship and win cash prizes.

"I would like to thank DUT for creating an environment that makes us globally competitive. Last year, Gomo Mohapi, a DUT IT student, represented South Africa in Amsterdam at the same event, and this year I am representing South Africa in Amsterdam," he said excitedly.

The technology-driven Ndlovu said that he feels blessed to be part of DUT because without the support he received from the IT department, DVC RIE office and Faculty of Accounting and Informatics office, he would not have been selected.

"I was chosen based on the work I had been doing on campus teaching DUT students and the Durban Community Artificial Intelligence (AI), Cloud Computing, Entrepreneurship and Software Development," he enthused.

Despite experiencing hardships in his life, Ndlovu persevered and vowed to do all that he could to make his dreams come true for him and his mom, passing his matric with flying colours and accepting an offer to study IT at DUT in 2017.

"The reason I chose IT was because while attending a career exhibition in 2012, I became inspired about how technology makes peoples' lives easier," he said.



*Pictured: Fanie Ndlovu*

After leaving his job at Multichoice, he decided to become a tutor at DUT. "I love to teach student modules (programming). However, the tutorials were so limiting in terms of new technology in demand at industry level, I decided to stop doing them in 2018 and focus on training around Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) technologies," he said.

Ndlovu further added that the training opened new opportunities for him to work with Google and Microsoft and led to the establishment of his DUT Innovation Club to teach leadership and the latest technology to students, as well as winning many accolades.

Ndlovu stressed that it is vital for DUT to be part of IT-related events internationally because 90% of digital technologies that are used on a daily basis come from outside South Africa. "DUT needs to become part of conversations to understand models used by other countries, to innovate and educate DUT students and the South African communities," he said.

Ndlovu also stressed that it is vital for students to be digitally savvy and to keep abreast of new technologies.

"Cloud computing is one of the core pillars of 4IR. Microsoft, Oracle, Amazon and Huawei are still investing billions of rands to build cloud computing data centres in South Africa and to move business infrastructures to the Cloud. It is very important for students to be aware of Cloud computing as these skills will be a mandatory requirement for any job," he said.

One of his goals is to establish an Innovation Centre across Africa that supports and enables the African youth to solve local problems without depending on government or countries abroad.

**Waheeda Peters**



# MOHAPI AIMS TO UPSKILL MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

**T**he charismatic Gomolemo Mohapi, a young, passionate Applications Development student from DUT completing his Advanced Diploma in ICT, presented at the Microsoft Ignite | The Tour Johannesburg, held at the Sandton Convention Centre at the end of January 2020.

Mohapi is part of the prestigious Microsoft Student Partner Programme – a community of university students around the world with a deep interest in technology and passion for sharing their knowledge with others.

Mohapi stressed that Microsoft Ignite is an annual conference that is hosted in the States. He said the purpose of Microsoft Ignite | The Tour (which is open to students and professionals who have either a technical or non-technical background), is to provide technical training led by Microsoft experts and people within the developer community.

“I have been involved with Microsoft through the Microsoft Student Partner (MSP) programme for a while now. My dedication to it has led me to become one of the few MSPs to have reached the gold milestone, which is the highest milestone that a MSP can reach. However, I had never presented at an official Microsoft Conference. This was such a huge honour for me and despite all the doubts and challenges that I have been faced with, I have something valuable to share,” he said proudly.

Speaking more on his presentations, Mohapi said that the first presentation that he did was called Creating Interactive Documentation with Try.NET. “I am a big advocate of using modern techniques when teaching students how to code. The old way of



*Pictured: Gomolemo Mohapi at the conference.*

standing in front of a lecture and reading from the same boring slides is not cutting it anymore,” he said.

The second presentation that he did was called the Impostor Syndrome Banishing Spell.

“Being a part of this conference as a DUT student just goes to show that DUT produces high-quality, industry-standard students with a broad knowledge of new and current technologies and that we are able to compete on a global stage. And what is great about representing DUT is that other DUT students can see what they are also capable of and hopefully go on to do bigger and better things,” he added.

He hosts workshops on and off campus, educating students about the latest in cloud computing, web development and artificial intelligence. He also has a keen interest in learning about Microsoft tools and technologies such as C#, .Net and Microsoft Azure.

For Mohapi, his goals going forward are to work with other MSPs across the country to conduct programming workshops that can be used to upskill members of the community in preparation for the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

“We will be leveraging the knowledge gained from conferences such as Ignite to ensure that people are learning about the latest technologies. There are a few local and international conferences that I am looking at, however, nothing has been confirmed as yet,” said Mohapi.

**Waheeda Peters**



# DUT HELPS GUIDE EMERGING ENTREPRENEURS THROUGH THE CENTRE FOR SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

**D**UT has been instrumental in helping and guiding young and emerging entrepreneurs through the Centre for Social Entrepreneurship (CSE), situated at ML Sultan Campus, by ensuring that they understand the culture of building entrepreneurship.

The CSE was established at DUT in 2015 as a result of a partnership agreement between the University and the Department of Small Business Development (DSBD) to develop student enterprises at DUT, as well as sustainable enterprises along the value chain of the Footwear and Leather, Clothing and Textile and Agriculture sectors of the economy using an asset-based model that was designed by Dr Poppet Pillay, Director of the CSE.

However, when SEDA took over the Monitoring and Evaluation function for the Department of Small Business, the CSE had to align the model to the SEDA National Business Incubation model and adopt the SEDA key performance indicators (KPIs). So the CSE has two key programmes: one is the Rapid Business Incubation Programme for supporting student and community enterprises and the other programme focuses on the enterprise projects in the three sectors mentioned above. The CSE, therefore, reports to SEDA and the University on both programmes and the objectives of the CSE are aligned to the National and Provincial Development Plan Targets as well as the DUT Strategic Plan.

Dr Pillay said that since its inception, they are always pleasantly surprised by students' interest in entrepreneurship and the ideas they come up with for their enterprises. "But entrepreneurship and innovation are more than just ideas and it's the actions and dedication that sifts the real entrepreneurs from those just interested in the concept. We believe that while not all students will become entrepreneurs, we hope that they would have learnt to think entrepreneurially through the workshops we offer," she said.



*Pictured: CSE's Dr Poppet Pillay and Snelisiwe Hlongwane, at an exhibition.*

Dr Pillay said that the two main objectives of the Centre are to develop sustainable new enterprises that will address the challenge of the high level of youth unemployment in the country and for the CSE to become more self-sustainable and less reliant on SEDA funding.

She added that the Centre has been growing steadily and in order to cater for the growth, they have started renovations to convert the space into a Rapid Business Incubator and Maker Space to be accessible to all students and staff. "This will be a very creative space where students from all faculties may spend their spare time generating and fine-tuning their ideas that can then be commercialised. The Maker Space, in particular, will have 3-D printing equipment as well as laser-cutting machines for students to use," she said.



Dr Pillay said that The Centre is collaborating with a Fab Lab specialist from Namibia that they were introduced to through the International Office and are also collaborating with the Maker Space Foundation based in Durban in order to provide training and to support students with their innovative designs and concepts. “We are also working on developing other streams of income for the CSE, such as working with industry and possibly running paying workshops on entrepreneurship over weekends,” she said.

In terms of future goals, Dr Pillay added that the CSE needs to have a coordinated approach where a course on entrepreneurship is embedded into the curriculum of every faculty at DUT and not just in the Faculty of Management Sciences.

“Lecturers teaching entrepreneurship will be able to identify those students who have the potential to become entrepreneurs and refer them to the CSE incubator where we can then provide the support and mentorship needed for those students to develop their businesses,” she said.

The CSE uses the SEDA Rapid Business Incubation Service Flow Model to take a student’s business from ideation stage through to commercialisation over a period of 18 months. Taking into account that businesses don’t follow a linear pattern, the CSE team has developed three programmes to address the needs of the different stages of businesses.

These include:

**Ideation Stage:** This is for students and youth who have an idea but haven’t tested it. The workshops for this stage focus on participants having a better understanding of their business idea and whether it is viable. Tools such as the Lean Canvas Model and Design Systems Thinking are used to flesh out business ideas.

**Pre-Incubation:** This stage is for start-up enterprises that are still not making sufficient profit to be a sustainable business. For this group of enterprises, there is a workshop to assist start-ups with having a better understanding of their enterprises through the Growth Wheel tool and one-on-one sessions.

**Incubation:** The workshops for this group are different and focus on sustainability of the business through a combination of in-depth Growth Wheel workshops, mentorship programmes and site visits to evaluate the business within the environment within which it operates. At the end of 18 months, businesses graduate to allow new businesses to enter incubation.

“As the businesses develop and grow during the 18-month period, they graduate from ideation and pre-incubation stages into full incubation. The CSE has approached the Rotary Club in Durban to assist with mentorship and coaching of our incubates,” said Dr Pillay.

Besides being responsible for the development of the Centre as the Director, Dr Poppet Pillay is the Convenor for the Communities of Practice of Entrepreneurial Universities within the Entrepreneurship Development in Higher Education (EDHE) programme through USAF, and is supporting the development of the baseline research for all 26 universities in South Africa with the EDHE team. She serves on the Steering committee of the Provincial EDTEA Footwear and Leather Industrial Hub project in Pietermaritzburg and on the Stakeholder Forum of Innovate Durban. Dr Pillay believes that learning from the above activities continue to shape and grow the CSE.

**For more information, contact the CSE on 031 373 2208.**

**Waheeda Peters**

“Lecturers teaching entrepreneurship will be able to identify those students who have the potential to become entrepreneurs and refer them to the CSE incubator where we can then provide the support and mentorship needed for those students to develop their businesses. – Dr Poppet Pillay”



# DUT HOSTS THE FIRST DISABILITY RIGHTS ORIENTATION FOR FIRST – YEAR STUDENTS

**F**orty first-year students living with disabilities from the Durban and Midlands campuses attended DUT's first Disability Rights Orientation Day in February at the Ritson Campus.

The programme, which was hosted by DUT's Disability Rights Unit (DRU), was a continuation of a week-long programme that took place in January 2020. Students, together with the Student Governance team, received valuable information on the extensive support that National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NFSAS) offers to students living with disabilities. They were also informed about the various support departments located on campus, which will assist them with their transition to university life.

Thobeka Shozi from the Disability Rights Unit said that this event was an initiative that aimed for the inclusion of all students. "All students should feel included in the University, and students living with disabilities need to receive support in all areas. As a university, we need to go the extra mile for students living with disabilities to feel accommodated," said Shozi.

Different speakers at the orientation stressed the importance of students speaking up when they are faced with challenges so that their issues can be addressed quickly. Additionally, the event provided a platform for students to connect with each other for the first time on campus. This gave them an opportunity to exchange contacts and form groups where they can share their sentiments about living with disabilities.



*Pictured: Students at the DUT's first Disability Rights Unit Orientation Day. (Pre-COVID-19 picture).*

"Students living with disabilities face three big challenges in the University: access, specialised transportation and academic-friendly venues. The University has identified these challenges and has some projects in the pipeline to aid them in their university experience," said Shozi.

All students were encouraged to actively make use of all the services available to them during the orientation.

**For more information, contact the Disability Rights Unit (DRU) on 031 373 2551.**

**Carissa Marnce**

**“ Students living with disabilities face three big challenges in the University: access, specialised transportation and academic-friendly venues. The University has identified these challenges and has some projects in the pipeline to aid them in their university experience. –Thobeka Shozi**



# DR LAVERN SAMUELS IS THE NEW CHAIR OF DIRECTORS FORUM OF IEASA

**D**UT's Dr Lavern Samuels, Director: International Education and Partnerships, was elected Chair of the Directors Forum of the International Education Association of South Africa (DFIEASA) at the beginning of the year.

Dr Samuels said that he was elated upon hearing the news. "I am very humbled by the confidence my fellow directors have in me in placing me in this position. I think we live in such an exciting time for international education.

He said that the group of directors of international offices meet four times a year, but interact in the course of the year to engage in best practice around internationalisation. Dr Samuels stressed that the Directors Forum is also a support system for universities that are just starting out on internationalisation and an open forum for people to bring new ideas of how to take their universities to a new level in terms of international education; but equally, to take the South African higher education system to the next level.

The part he will play will entail shaping the programme for the engagement of DFIEASA, to engage with colleagues and to reflect this engagement on the deliberations of the forum. "My role is to also bring good practice to the fore; it is about meeting with other stakeholder routes like the Department of Home Affairs, the Immigration Office with medical aid and international agencies, and share that information and opportunities with the entire sector," he said.



*Pictured: Dr Lavern Samuels, the new Chair of the Directors Forum of the International Education Association of South Africa.*

Dr Samuels further stated that it is also a forum that channels some of the challenges that occur in higher education, and it becomes a discussion forum that allows that sort of deliberation that should be held at the highest levels in international offices.

He added that for DUT to be part of such a forum is not only vital but necessary as it will allow DUT to be at the cutting edge of development in international education.

"It gives DUT an opportunity to be an active roleplayer in the way international education is shaped in South Africa, both at a policy and strategy level, but also at an operational and an implementation level," he said. It allows for DUT to engage fully with other universities in terms of sharing good practice,

policy development and new opportunities, and it allows DUT to be a dynamic, proactive and responsive office and university.

In terms of his own goals as Chair, Dr Samuels said that he wants to enhance the communication forums available for the directors. He aims not only to communicate via WhatsApp groups but also to have an email system where information can be shared regularly.

The meetings move around the country, and the following meeting was in Durban in March 2020.

**Waheeda Peters**

**“ It gives DUT an opportunity to be an active roleplayer in the way international education is shaped in South Africa, both at a policy and strategy level, but also at an operational and an implementation level. – Dr Lavern Samuels ”**



# DUT'S FIONA PILLAY WINS R20 000 FOR NAMING THE NEW 2020–2030 STRATEGY PLAN

**M**iss Fiona Pillay, the DUT staff member who came up with the refreshing and impactful strategy name for the new 2020-2030 strategy plan for DUT, won R20 000 for her name 'Envision 2030'.

The Vice-Chancellor and Principal of DUT Professor Thandwa Mthembu made the exciting announcement at the second annual State of the University Address (SOUA), at the Fred Crookes Sports Centre in February.

"I'm super excited!" said an elated Pillay. "It's humbling when you are recognised for what you love to do. Conceptualisation has always been what I have enjoyed about the design process. I 'envision' the words, then put pen to paper (in this instance mouse to computer screen) to see how it all comes together as a concept."

Pillay explained more on what the name depicts: "V is for victory – we can achieve the goals and plans we (DUT) have set out to achieve by 2030. The converging faculty colours in the 'V' suggest us (DUT) coming together as a whole to achieve success. The word 'Envision' conjures up possibilities of what could be if we (DUT) work together. The cross hairs are the target to aim forward toward achieving our goals," she said excitedly.

Pillay further added that since 2015, she had poured over the Strategic Plan as she used it to back up her research in producing an app for the DUT student newsletter for her Honours degree.



*Pictured: Fiona Pillay with the new strategy name.*

"Since reading the updated Strat Plan 2.0 from Prof Mthembu and looking at the Strat Map 2030, which is online, I could see what these visionary leaders were aspiring to for the University," she said.

Prof Mthembu said that thanks go to Pillay for not only giving DUT's strategy a name, but providing a very creative visual design for it. "You are far ahead of many on this exciting flight to 2030," he said jubilantly.

**Waheeda Peters**

**“** *Conceptualisation has always been what I have enjoyed about the design process. I 'envision' the words, then put pen to paper (in this instance mouse to computer screen) to see how it all comes together as a concept. – Miss Fiona Pillay* **”**



# DUT'S LYNTON JULIE REACHES FOR THE STARS

**E**lectrical Engineering student Lynton Julie was recently given a wondrous opportunity to further his postgraduate studies (Bachelor of Technology degree in Electrical Power Engineering) after receiving funding from the Apostle Victor Glenn Smith Foundation.

The foundation aims to empower youth from the Wentworth community by investing in the futures of students studying at universities. Julie was one of five diligent young individuals from the community to receive support from the foundation.

“I was extremely grateful when I found out I was going to receive funding for my studies; a huge financial load has now been lifted off me,” said Julie.

The fourth-year student said that he has always had a passion for electricity and in the past has even fixed his neighbour’s house wiring and electrical appliances. Julie hopes to one day open his own company after he has obtained enough experience.

“Once I have completed my BTech, I intend on obtaining my wireman’s licence. This will allow me to sign off installations and projects,” said Julie.

The Engineering student says that his personal mantra of ‘God over everything’ has stuck with him from his primary school days. Julie



*Pictured: Lynton Julie receives his cheque from Elaine Smith from the Apostle Victor Glenn Smith Foundation. (Pre-COVID-19 picture)*

advises university students to always put in effort in order to see academic success. “Nothing is ever easy. To get what you want you need to put in the work. To get what you never had, you need to do what you have never done before,” said Julie.

**Carissa Marnce**

“ *Nothing is ever easy. To get what you want you need to put in the work. To get what you never had, you need to do what you have never done before. – Lynton Julie* ”



# MAHLE SITHOLE CROWNED MISS DURBAN AND MISS GRAND DURBAN TOP MODEL 2020

**A**mahle Sithole, who won the modelling titles of Miss Durban and Miss Grand Durban Top Model 2020 respectively in one pageant at Albany House in Durban in February, made DUT justifiably proud.

The gorgeous lass is studying for her first-year in fashion design at DUT and could not contain her excitement over her double win. "I am over the moon as I did not expect to win. I was in shock when I was announced as one of the top five contestants, and even more surprised when I was announced as the winner," she said excitedly.

She entered the competition after seeing a poster on one of her friends' WhatsApp statuses and decided to seize the opportunity.

Sithole also said that she paid an entry fee of R250 and sold 10 tickets to secure her position as a contestant. Speaking more on the pageant itself, Sithole stressed that there were 17 young ladies in the competition and it proved to be very tough. "I'm a model from Pietermaritzburg so competing with Durban models for this competition really scared me at first, but I conquered my fears and was victorious," she added.

When asked about who her role models are, Sithole said she greatly admired her mother, Oprah Winfrey, the late Princess Diana, and South Africa's Bonang Matheba. "What sets these majestic women apart is



*Pictured: DUT's Amahle Sithole is Miss Durban and Miss Grand Durban Top Model 2020.*

their essential use of their generous demeanour, and that to me is a true role model," she stressed.

Besides clinching these titles, Sithole has also won numerous others such as Miss Umgungundlovu 2018, Miss Goldie Igama 2018, Miss Teen KZN Capital City 2018, Miss KZN Heroine 2018, Miss Face of Msunduzi 2019 and Miss Eco Tourism World South Africa Ambassador 2019.

She added that being able to use her creativeness and design her own gowns would be an added bonus when she enters more competitions. "I have to wear evening gowns to pageants so I will be designing my own so that I don't have to hire them," she chuckled.

For the petite Sithole, the titles mean that she will be able to work more with young people and motivate them to rise to the challenge of building a better and brighter future as South Africans.

Sithole also won R1 000 in prize money and an automatic entry to compete at the Miss KZN Queen 2020 pageant. "If I were to win this title, I would be given the opportunity to go overseas to represent South Africa," she said.

Her advice to future, aspiring models is to always be humble. "Trust and believe in yourself; this industry is full of criticism and you should allow criticism to make you stronger and not break you," she said.

**Waheeda Peters**

“Trust and believe in yourself; this industry is full of criticism and you should allow criticism to make you stronger and not break you. – Amahle Sithole”



# DUT TO IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY FOR STUDENTS LIVING WITH DISABILITIES IN 2020

**D**uring the DUT's second annual State of the University Address, Vice-Chancellor and Principal Professor Thandwa Mthembu announced that a budget has been allocated for priority projects that will improve access for individuals with disabilities in 2020.

Students at DUT have a range of disabilities, which include those of a physical or sensory nature, as well as specific learning disabilities. These individuals often encounter difficulties with transportation and academic-friendly venues, among other issues.

Business Administrative student Sibongiseni M Gomezulu from Riverside Campus said that he thinks the biggest challenge students face is transportation.

“Sometimes we have to arrange transportation to come to our classes. It would be nice to have a seven-seater bus that could provide us with transportation,” said M Gomezulu.

In addition to this, students with disabilities have also called for improved infrastructure. Higher Certificate in Public Administration student Sibabalwe Boyce said that accommodation and classrooms are not always user-friendly for them.

She added that DUT should look at making revisions to accommodate students with disabilities because it became difficult at times for students to climb the steps.

Prof Mthembu said that the University would be allocating a budget of R303 million to spend on student housing, deferred maintenance



*Pictured: Business Administrative student Sibongiseni M Gomezulu and Higher Certificate in Public Administration student Sibabalwe Boyce.*

and priority projects like improved access for differently-abled students.

“We are determined to renovate all our University-owned residences by June 2020, with that process having started in October 2019 already. I hope our students will bear with us as we make our residences state of the art,” said Prof Mthembu.

Furthermore, Prof Mthembu said that Open House, some of the student services units and nursing education will be renovated at a cost of R34 million.

**Carissa Marnce**

“ I hope our students will bear with us as we make our residences state of the art. – Professor Thandwa Mthembu ”



# DEPARTMENT OF STUDENT RECRUITMENT STRIVES TO BRING CHANGE AT LOCAL HIGH SCHOOLS

The DUT's Department of Student Recruitment, in collaboration with uMkhomazi Circuit, hosted the uMkhomazi Circuit Matric Award Ceremony in February at the uMnini Thusong Service Centre, Umgababa to recognise and acknowledge educators who did exceptionally well in producing good NSC results for the circuit.

Umkhomazi Circuit Manager Linda Mthembu said that they are grateful to collaborate with DUT in terms of the programmes, especially the Chemistry Department as they were assisting their pupils with Chemistry and Physical Science practicals. "They conduct the practicals in a professional way and they don't even expect any money in return for their hard work," said Mthembu.

These practical lessons are offered to local feeder high schools – this is after recognition that there is a knowledge gap in these subjects for learners in high schools, prior to their enrolment in higher education.

According to Dr Sabelo Myalo from DUT's Chemistry Department, their community engagement with schools is a programme that started in 2017, where they were promoting science awareness during the National Science Week. "We had to change our objectives and align the programme with the syllabus as we were getting numerous



*Pictured: DUT staff, Umkhomazi Circuit Manager and Umkhomazi Circuit educators. (Pre-COVID-19 picture)*

requests to assist with practical lessons that are part of the school-based assessment," he said.

Mthembu further added that working with the DUT Department of Student Recruitment has also been a blessing in disguise with regard to the Matric Awards. They did a great job for this event to be a success as they were able to sponsor them with certificates and trophies.

According to Alex Mdletshe, Manager for the Department of Student Recruitment, DUT's contribution to the event the previous year led to the University being invited again in 2020. "Last year, I was invited to the same awards and I made a commitment that this year we will also contribute to this circuit for this event to be successful. Trophies and certificates were part of what we contributed as DUT, and as an institution, we will try by all means to contribute as much as we can to bring change in our society," he said.

Thulasizwe Mzobe, a Maths and Science teacher, who was awarded the most dedicated teacher and other numerous awards, said, "I feel happy for all these awards as they encourage me to do more as a teacher and I also thank DUT and others who have contributed to making such a day a success."

**Nomkhuleko Thutshini**

**“ I feel happy for all these awards as they encourage me to do more as a teacher and I also thank DUT and others who have contributed to making such a day a success. ”**  
– Thulasizwe Mzobe



# YOUNG LEADERS ATTEND THE SECOND COMMONWEALTH FUTURES WORKSHOP IN INDIA

Three DUT students were recently given the opportunity to interact with international students by participating in the second Commonwealth Futures workshop at the OP Jindal Global University, India in February.

This event forms part of the Commonwealth Futures series organised by the Association of Commonwealth Universities and the British Council, with workshops taking place in India, South Africa and the UK. The series is designed to highlight the role of young leaders in promoting social cohesion through cultures of tolerance, ethics, respect and understanding – with the outcomes directly feeding into the 2020 Commonwealth Youth Forum in Kigali, Rwanda. The workshop also provided a forum for student leaders from across the Commonwealth to explore ideas relating to ‘Gandhian principles of peace, gender and caste’.

Bongeka Sithole (Higher Certificate in Operations Management), Paballo Ntobaki (PHD in Marketing) and Gomolemo Mohapi (Advanced Diploma in ICT) were excited to talk about their global experience at the workshop, which explored the theme of Inspiring Global Citizens and allowed them to talk about applying Gandhian principals to today’s society.

“It was a great honour to be afforded the opportunity to go to India and represent our Institution and our country on such a momentous platform. The experience was amazing with so much to learn and so



*Pictured: Bongeka Sithole, Paballo Ntobaki and Gomolemo Mohapi, at the conference in India. (Pre-COVID-19 Picture)*

much to share with other students from different commonwealth countries,” said a delighted Ntobaki.

Mohapi said that the workshop was filled with four days of immersive learning, engagement and fun. “We had experts from all walks of life coming in to share their experience and expertise with us and this provided us with the rare opportunity to learn from them and to start thinking about ways in which we can eradicate the various social issues that we face as a country,” she said.

The workshop taught Sithole the importance of unity, which is one of the principles that Gandhi taught. “We got a chance to discuss global challenges, so it is, therefore, important for us to take part in transforming our everyday lives by tackling

such issues as they arise,” she said.

Mohapi further commented that it is very important for DUT students to engage in active conversations that build bridges between themselves and the outside world. “The exposure and the experience gained will play a tremendous role in their personal and professional development. Learning from people who do not have the same experience as you will enable one to spark new and positive movements that lead to positive change within our communities. Workshops like these are there to encourage and empower students to play a pivotal role in building cohesive and peaceful societies,” he said.



Ntobaki shared Mohapi's sentiments, saying that each of them took home something that they will use to effect social change back at DUT and in their communities. "The three of us are also planning a programme that we will use to share with DUT students on the feedback from the Indian workshop and to discuss ways in which we as students can combat the pressing issues our society is facing today," she said.

They also highlighted that DUT was the proud host of the Third Commonwealth Futures Workshop which took place from 11 to 14 March 2020. The workshop aimed to bring together university

students from such countries as Nigeria, Australia, India, South Africa, Canada and the United Kingdom.

They further added that each person took part in a group project that the group designed and presented before the end of the four days.

Pictured: Bongeka Sithole, Paballo Ntobaki and Gomolemo Mohapi at the conference in India.

**Waheeda Peters**

**“** *It was a great honour to be afforded the opportunity to go to India and represent our Institution and our country on such a momentous platform. The experience was amazing with so much to learn and so much to share with other students from different commonwealth countries. – Paballo Ntobaki* **”**



# DUT'S SAMA JOBE IS A DREAM CHASER

**T**hird-year Journalism student Sama Jobe, whose hard work and dedication resulted in his nomination for Best Media Personality at Durban's 031 Awards ceremony in July, describes himself as a jack of all trades in the entertainment industry who decided to pursue a National Diploma in Journalism in order to follow his dream of becoming a newsreader.

"Growing up, I wanted to be a newsreader on radio, and at that time, I did not realise that news anchors were journalists. I love informing people about things that are happening around the world, so I did some research and found that I should study journalism," said Jobe.

The third-year student has a busy schedule working as a radio presenter at Vibe 94.7 FM when he is not at campus. Jobe is also a spokesperson and shareholder for the Live Your Dreams SA Youth Awards and has experience working as a storyboard actor for SABC's Ukhozi FM. In addition to this, he has gained experience from working on local television series such as Uzalo on SABC 1 and Imbewu on eTV.

"My hobby is my work; I am always attending auditions and I hope that one day I will make a breakthrough," said Jobe.



*Pictured: Sama Jobe behind the mic.*

The 031 Awards celebrate the achievements of local individuals in different categories across the entertainment industry. The awards ceremony is part of a national chain of awards shows that take place in Johannesburg, Pretoria, eMpangeni and Durban. All nominated individuals stand a chance of winning a fully sponsored trip to another awards ceremony in a different city, radio tours and marketing contracts, to name but a few.

"I really appreciate all the support I get from my family, friends, classmates, colleagues and especially my supporters from Facebook," he said.

Jobe encourages university students to never forget where they have come from so

that they will always know where they are headed to. "I know being a student is stressful but please keep your focus and always remember that your dreams might come through after you have graduated. To avoid depression, talk about anything that is bothering you and ask for help when it is necessary," he stressed.

The public can continue to support Jobe in his journey by sending an SMS: 031 Sama Jobe to 35029.

**Carissa Marnce**



*My hobby is my work; I am always attending auditions and I hope that one day I will make a breakthrough. – Sama Jobe*



# DUT'S LUNGELU SHEZI IS MR GRAND DURBAN 2020

Lungelo Ngcobo-Shezi, the dapper DUT fourth-year Financial Accounting student, was ecstatic when he clinched the title of Mr Grand Durban 2020 at Albany House in Durban earlier this year.

"I am so excited about my title, especially of the responsibility that comes with being crowned Mr Grand Durban 2020. I believe that this is a golden opportunity for me to develop myself as a young person. No amount of words can ever describe how grateful I am to the organisers and the judges," he enthused.

For Shezi, it had always been his childhood dream to model on a global stage. He admits he still has a long way to go in terms of his modelling career, as his long-term dream is to be crowned Mr World in the near future. "I should be preparing myself for that day; who knows how close it can be," chuckled Shezi.

Having amazing role models like Mr South Africa 2019 Nkululeko Mbatha, whose determination to see male pageants being recognised, is quite humbling. "My first role model is my grandfather Bishop Raymond Shezi. He is a visionary and a man of integrity, who I



*Pictured: DUT's Lungelo Ngcobo Shezi is Mr Grand Durban Top Model 2020.*

aspire to be like. In him I see the true essence of leadership; his love for the church and the community is motivating," he said proudly.

Shezi stressed that the title he now has means new duties for him. Its scope it will challenge him to reach out to young minds out there and play a role towards shaping a brighter future for all young people, who in today's society are faced with youth unemployment, social injustices and gender-based violence, to name but a few.

"As Mr Grand Durban, I will be working closely with Miss Grand Durban and DUT's Amahle Sithole on community development projects. I hope we will soon be able to share the initiatives we will be participating with the public in as part of our reign," he said.

His advice to students wishing to follow in his modelling footsteps is that proper preparation prevents poor performance. "Challenges do come your way, but believe in yourself and in your craft," he said confidently.

**Waheeda Peters**

“My first role model is my grandfather Bishop Raymond Shezi. He is a visionary and a man of integrity, who I aspire to be like. In him I see the true essence of leadership; his love for the church and the community is motivating. – Lungelo Ngcobo-Shezi”



# DUT HOSTS THIRD COMMONWEALTH FUTURES WORKSHOP

**D**UT hosted the third Commonwealth Futures Workshop, a four-day event that took place in March 2020 at the Hotel School Conference Centre on the Ritson Campus.

A joint initiative of the Association of Commonwealth Universities and the British Council, the workshop saw DUT hosting 60 students from 13 countries, including Nigeria, Australia, India, Canada and the United Kingdom.

Students from across the Commonwealth were given an opportunity to share their individual experiences while they obtained valuable skills to assist them in driving peaceful and effective change in their communities and institutions. All themes were of global importance, with the aim of creating cohesive societies.

The workshop also celebrated the 150th anniversary of the birth of Mahatma Gandhi, who lived in India, South Africa and the United Kingdom.

Dr Faye Taylor, Head of Strategic Partnerships at the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU), said that universities have the capacity to change the world. She pointed out that 60% of Commonwealth citizens are under the age of 29 and, therefore are the leaders of the future world. She also emphasised that the voices of young people have become more important than ever, citing examples of student involvement in climate change, LGBT rights, gender-based violence and access to education.

“The main objective is to hold a series of activities that will make students feel more empowered to make a change in their field and context. We want them to network and form collaborations so that they can draw from other individuals,” she said.

Unpacking sentiments on leadership pertaining to gender equality and climate change, gender activist Janine Hicks, accompanied by political analyst Lukhona Mnguni and environmental activist Desmond D’Sa,



*Pictured: Attendants during the third Commonwealth Futures Workshop. (Pre-COVID-19 picture)*

encouraged individuals to find the relevance of a large issue when trying to aid an effected community. She said that individuals should consider how an issue like climate change will affect the lives of ordinary people within a community.

Hicks further encouraged students to get individuals with decision-making power to become interested in order to make an impact on policy debates. Finally, she advised students to draw on the support of a team, as well as to constantly involve the effected communities during the process.

Other subjects addressed were the importance of empowering communities with knowledge to involve them in the fight for justice as well as cultivating a culture of collaboration among scholars.

The workshop concluded with a special tour of the Gandhi Settlement in Phoenix and a walkabout led by Ela Gandhi, the granddaughter of Mahatma Gandhi.

**Carissa Marnce**



# SECOND COHORT OF DUT TEACHERS FINISH THEIR TRAINING ON PROJECT-BASED LEARNING

The second cohort comprising 18 DUT academics, which forms part of the strategic initiatives that DUT has embarked on to ensure that its teaching staff apply creative and innovative methods that will have a direct impact on teaching, learning and research, took place in March using an intensive training style on project-based learning (PBL).

The training was conducted by Prof Christoph Maurer from the Munich University of Applied Sciences, Germany, who is currently based at DUT as the Chair for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, an interim initiative driven through the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Innovation and Engagement.

Prof Maurer has developed a 'Train the Trainer for Project-based Learning' format over the past years, which strongly emphasises the activation and personal involvement of the trainees in interdisciplinary teams of three.

"The idea behind the training is to enable the participants to teach their courses in the PBL format by treating them during the training partially as students and partially on eye-level as colleagues," said Prof Maurer.

After a general introduction and team building sessions, the six teams defined their individual project for the week. During the five days of the training, the teams went through a systematic standard process consisting of four steps: Discover – Define – Develop – Deliver. They were introduced to special tools and methods for each step. The teams were able to apply the methods and tools directly on their projects and were finally able to find the ideal solution for their problems.

"The training took place off campus for the duration of the programme," said Prof Maurer. "The teams were fully active from mornings to evenings. There were many team activities that included



*Pictured: DUT academics at the PBL event. (Pre-COVID-19 picture)*

practicing different creativity methods, homework tasks that needed to be presented the next day, etc. The five days were filled with many personal experiences, with new impressions on how teaching can happen in a completely different setting, with humour and creativity while teaming up with colleagues from different faculties," he said.

"The participants are now prepared to apply PBL in their courses. As part of the feedback, a number of them expressed excitement over the training and the inter-disciplinary networking," added Prof Maurer.

When asked to comment, the DVC for Research, Innovation and Engagement Prof Sibusiso Moyo said: "We are glad that we have managed to kickstart this programme with 18 participants. We realise we can do more to reach at least 50% of our academics from 2020 to 2021. However, we will need to focus on getting at least two internal staff trained on the methodology to co-train, an aspect that Prof Maurer is working on," she said.

**Professor Christoph Maurer**



# DR JOE MOLETE AIMS TO INSPIRE ‘GREATNESS’ AT DUT

**D**r Joe Molete, the new Director of the Midlands Campuses as of January responsible for the leadership and growth of the two DUT Midlands (Indumiso and Riverside) campuses, envisions huge plans to grow these campuses into an entrepreneurial university that runs its own processes, with little dependency on the main campus.

“With more than 6 000 students and the current growth plans, I believe that we can be independent campuses. At the heart of our strategy is what we call Stewardship and since I have a heart for developing people, I hope to initiate a number of workshops. We also plan to work in collaboration with all the stakeholders in our community, hence the Society component of our strategy. We will initiate a number of forums where we engage and initiate collaborative projects, but in the short term, our priority is to fill all the vacant posts as well as fast-track infrastructure and maintenance projects,” he stressed.

Dr Molete is ecstatic to be part of the DUT community, especially since there is a new DUT strategy 2030. “I am privileged to learn from selfless colleagues who have vast knowledge and experience about DUT. I believe together we will transform DUT to be one of the best institutions,” he said proudly.

Dr Molete holds a PhD in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology from Penn State University, United States (USA); MSc in Biology from Howard University, USA; BSc (Honours) in Biochemistry; and a BSc Life Sciences from the University of the Witwatersrand. He further holds a Master’s degree in Business Administration from the



*Pictured: Dr Joe Molete, the new Director of the Midlands campuses.*

University of Cape Town and an Advanced Management Programme from Harvard Business School. He is also a dynamic leader and strategist with more than 20 years of work experience, which includes more than 15 years’ experience in a biosciences organisation and five years’ experience in an academic environment.

Dr Molete said that his years of study were a rollercoaster of events and emotions and included many transitions. “I started in a little primary school in Soweto where I was born, to going to one village boarding school in Phiri-Kolobe, to a university in Johannesburg called Wits (University of the Witwatersrand) where I graduated with Honours in Biochemistry.”

“When I left for the USA, to study an MS in Biology at Howard University in 1994, I was filled with mixed emotions, especially as I had to quit my Master’s degree at Wits, which was only six months from completion,” he said. He further added that he had thought he was going to stay for two years in the USA but he was subsequently offered a scholarship to study for a PhD in Molecular Biology and Biochemistry at Penn State, and ended up spending five years studying for his PhD.

“My PhD was exciting because I studied gene regulation combined with bioinformatics just to understand how evolutionary conserved genes are regulated. After my PhD, I worked in the USA for five years, mostly in bio or pharma-related companies. I quickly realised that there is money in business and management. I then studied for an MBA part-time with the University of Cape Town (UCT) and I also



completed my Advanced Management Programme from Harvard Business School,” said Dr Molete.

He stressed that after working for 10 years, he realised that money does not fulfil him as he wanted to make an impact and so he decided to work at the Vaal University of Technology (VUT). After five years there, he opted for greener pastures and ended up at DUT.

With more than 15 years of experience assisting technology entrepreneurs in research and in commercialisation of inventions, and with his vast experience in such a field, Dr Molete hopes to impart his knowledge to future entrepreneurs at DUT.

“In this ever technologically-changing times, it is critical that we support students to cope with changes. If we do not innovate our curriculum, we run the risk of graduating students who are not employable. We plan to formalise entrepreneurship and innovation into the curriculum, strengthen short training courses as well as entrench project-based learning so that students can have the knowledge and tools to start companies. We will also establish technology and social incubators to help students play with technology and translate their ideas into prototypes,” he added.

Besides his input into helping to nurture students for the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), Dr Molete also spoke on his flagship programmes that he was instrumental in conceptualising prior to DUT, and how they can benefit DUT students.

“My flagship programme is titled: Finding Your Sweet Spot. I use it to ignite people to their greatness as well as support them to become better leaders and entrepreneurs. I have had a few souls interested and I will be supporting them soon. As they say, when the student is ready then the teacher will appear. The programme works for those who are really tired of the status quo and want to take their life to a new level. The participants do all the work and I just guide the process as well as pray for them. Let us see how it goes when we start,” he said.

Dr Molete explained that the job is not demanding if you are in the right job focusing on what you are good at – then you will always do your best. “The workplace will always have plenty of work; it is all about being realistic and not pressurising oneself. My family is in Gauteng and I miss them. In the meantime, I will find balance within myself and do my best with the work at hand,” he said.

## Biography

Dr Molete’s career spans three portfolios, which include: working as an inspirational speaker and a coach to support leaders so that they are happy both at work and at home. As a passionate, persuasive and dynamic speaker, with more than 15 years’ speaking experience, Dr Molete believes that an authentic leader is central to a successful enterprise. His flagship programmes include “Finding Your Sweet Spot” and “The High Impact Leader” in the 4IR.

His second portfolio includes more than 15 years’ experience assisting technology entrepreneurs in research and in commercialisation of inventions. He supported scientists and technology entrepreneurs in more than eight companies such as CSIR, BioPAD and Cape Biotech. In the USA, he worked for companies such as Baxter Healthcare, American Red Cross, International Aids Vaccine Initiatives (IAVI) and Penn State.

Dr Molete’s third portfolio includes assisting the transformation of higher education institutions so that they are ready to develop students who are ready to survive the 4IR. He led the VUT Science and Technology Park as a platform to catalyse regional economic growth and facilitated several technology incubators, initiated enterprise development programmes and mobilised various stakeholders.

**Waheeda Peters**

**“ When the student is ready then the teacher will appear. The programme works for those who are really tired of the status quo and want to take their life to a new level. The participants do all the work and I just guide the process as well as pray for them. – Dr Joe Molete ”**



# PROF DAVIDSON AND BURAIMOH'S PAPER WINS THIRD PRIZE AT CLEMSON UNIVERSITY POWER SYSTEM CONFERENCE

**D**UT's Professor and Chair at the Department of Electrical Power Engineering, Innocent Davidson, and Elutunji Buraimoh, a doctoral student at the Department of Electrical Power Engineering, who is under the supervision of Prof Davidson earned a third place award for an outstanding conference paper at the 17th Clemson University Power System Conference (PSC).

The 17th Clemson University Power System Conference (PSC) was held at the Clemson University, United States, in March. The conference brings together electric power industry experts, electric utilities, government agencies and academic researchers to exchange and present new ideas to improve power engineering. It blends educational and industrial experiences, field implementations of new techniques, new topics and ideas and cutting-edge technologies in the electric power/smart grid industry.

Prof Davidson (author) and Buraimoh (co-author) were ecstatic with their win. This is not the first time Prof Davidson has won an award – he has won numerous accolades internationally over the last two decades.

“The award is a reward and validation of the depth and quality of our engineering research activity here at DUT. It reflects the hard work and dedication that my doctoral student has put into his research, his willingness to learn and his resilience to endure the



*Pictured: Prof I.E. Davidson (left) and Elutunji Buraimoh.*

rigour of academic scholarship. The award is dedicated to him and all young researchers at DUT, said Prof Davidson excitedly.

This is the first time Buraimoh has won an award: “I feel so elated and fulfilled that research carried out in Africa by Africans in such a dynamic field like Electrical Engineering can be acknowledged by international academics and industrial experts. This further strengthens the belief that Africa can actually catch up with the rest of the world,” he said happily.

Their winning paper is titled: Modelling and Assessment of the Fault Ride-Through Capabilities of Grid Supporting Inverter-Based Microgrids. It focuses on Microgrid, which provides a veritable platform to harness renewable energy sources and effectively integrate them into the traditional electric power grid.

“The models developed and evaluated provide a sound understanding of the grid fault impact on microgrids and fault ride-through compliance. This will alleviate the problem of load-shedding and rampant blackouts,” said Prof Davidson.

Furthermore, he added that the concept of virtual impedance is introduced and emulated in control instead of a large physical link impedance, ensuring a ‘smart’ grid system.

“The innovative approach developed and presented proved to be a

more efficient and cost-effective solution than existing practices, said Prof Davidson.

In terms of what their win means to the University in relation to research, Prof Davidson stressed that it acknowledges DUT as delivering world-class engineering research solutions and innovations, thus acknowledging DUT's tremendous research excellence, global competitiveness and international relevance in the fast-changing engineering world of smart and critical infrastructure.

"The award reflects the depth of our engineering research activities, which has been strongly supported by the DUT Research Directorate under DVC-RIE Prof Sibusiso Moyo, who co-sponsored attendance at this meeting. Despite the obstacles and distractions we encounter in the pursuit of excellence, dedicated researchers at DUT continue to persevere to make their international mark," he said.

## Biographies

**Professor Innocent Davidson** is a Fellow of the Institute of Engineering and Technology, UK; Fellow of the South African Institute of Electrical Engineers; Senior Member, IEEE, USA; Chartered Engineer, UK and a registered Professional Engineer (P Eng.), Engineering Council of South Africa. His current research interests include grid integration of renewable energy using Smart Technologies and Innovation for Smart Cities.

He is the recipient of numerous awards and industry research grants. Prof Davidson is the recipient of the 'Top Faculty Researcher of the Year (Platinum Category)' Award for Excellence in Research at DUT's Annual Research and Innovation Awards held in 2019. He is the Research Leader, FEBE Centre of Excellence in SMART GRIDS – a Research Focused Area (RFA).

**Elutunji Buraimoh** conducts his research with the Smart Grids Research Centre Laboratory. He holds a Bachelor's and Master's Degree in Electrical and Electronic Engineering. His present focus involves the development of efficient strategies and schemes for the enhancement of the fault (low-voltage and high-voltage) ride-through capabilities of microgrids and distributed renewable energy systems at the secondary control level of the hierarchical structure.

**Waheeda Peters**

“ Despite the obstacles and distractions we encounter in the pursuit of excellence, dedicated researchers at DUT continue to persevere to make their international mark. – **Professor Innocent Davidson** ”



# DUT MIDLANDS ENTREPRENEURSHIP CENTRE LAUNCHES ITS GAME CHANGERS PROGRAMME FOR STUDENTS LIVING WITH DISABILITIES

The Midlands Entrepreneurship Centre and Student Desk officially launched its Game Changers Programme for students living with disabilities, themed: There is an Ability in every DisAbility at its Indumiso Campus: Innovation Hub this year.

The purpose of the programme is to expose students living with disabilities to entrepreneurship and encourage them to familiarise themselves with other programmes that can contribute to their growth.

Midlands Campus Director Dr Joseph Molete highlighted the fact that students who live with disabilities should not underestimate themselves and should be open to opportunities. “The University really cares about disabled students and we also have set aside funds to support them. We will be fast-tracking our activities to ensure that the infrastructure is fitting for their needs. The idea is to ensure that the Institution is adaptable to the needs of students living with disabilities,” said Dr Molete.

The DUT Midlands Entrepreneurship Centre and Student Desk Centre Manager Nontokozo Ngcobo said that the Centre saw a gap and inequality among students and challenges that students living with disabilities faced within the Institution, which led to the launch of the Game Changers Programme.

“It is important that we provide extra support to people with disabilities. This programme will empower, advance and expose them



*Pictured: DUT students, along with Dr Joseph Molete and Nontokozo Ngcobo, at the launch of the Game Changers Programme for students living with disabilities. (Pre-COVID-19 picture).*

to entrepreneurial opportunities. We hope to see many businesses coming to life, especially from this group. This particular programme will focus on students living with disabilities,” she said.

Andile Ntuli from the Midlands Entrepreneurship Centre, who leads the Game Changers Programme and lives with a disability, encouraged students to participate in the various programmes and to also utilise the Centre to their best advantage.

**Sindisiwe Ndlovu**



*We will be fast-tracking our activities to ensure that the infrastructure is fitting for their needs. The idea is to ensure that the Institution is adaptable to the needs of students living with disabilities. – Dr Joseph Molete*



# DUT'S URBAN FUTURES CENTRE'S FIGHT TO KEEP HOMELESS OFF THE STREETS DURING LOCKDOWN

**C**riminologist and Head of the Urban Futures Centre at DUT Prof. Monique Marks heads up the substance use directorate of the eThekweni Homeless Task Team led by Deputy Mayor Belinda Scott, which worked around the clock to contain the spread of coronavirus among the homeless in Durban during lockdown.

The Task Team, which brings together a range of non-state organisations and government officials, mobilised all of its skills, resources and knowledge to respond to the pandemic. Durban has arguably been the city best organised city in responding to homeless people during lockdown as close to 2 000 people were housed in safe spaces, fed four meals a day, and received ongoing medical attention.

According to Prof Marks, who is an expert on drug use disorders, one of the main challenges was that a large number of homeless people would be cut off from their drug supply and would go into forced withdrawal. Without a proper mechanism for managing their addiction, they would try to escape safe spaces in search of them.

Prof Marks, together with Michael Wilson from NGO Advanced Access and Delivery, has been responsible for managing a withdrawal management programme in the safe spaces during lockdown. A medical team was created and Durban psychiatrist Dr Shaquir Salduker led the medical response.

Three registered private sector nurses and four social workers from the Anti-Drug Forum in Chatsworth were also added. NGO



*Pictured: Prof Monique Marks.*

TB HIV Care has been critical in providing harm-reduction services to people who use drugs and have worked alongside the medical team. The Denis Hurly Centre has provided crucial ongoing primary healthcare services to the entire homeless population during lockdown and We Are Durban, led by Linda Morrison, have co-ordinated meals for homeless people during this period.

Prof Marks explained: “Managing drug withdrawal is complex, and even more so in extraneous situations like the COVID-19 lockdown. The medication provided is dependent on evaluating the severity of withdrawal symptoms. In addition the

homeless have been able to participate in psycho-social groups and individual sessions with counsellors and social workers. Together with the Department of Social Development, plans are underway to reintegrate those who wish to go home.”

For Prof Marks, the response to homeless people who use drugs in Durban follows evidence-based practice and is rights respecting. She commended the Municipality and police (Metro Police and SAPS) for caring for them during lockdown. Plans are underway for continual care for homeless people post lockdown.

“While this work has been time-consuming and at times exhausting, it has been a great honour to be part of such a passionate, organised and strategic team. In so doing, the UFC hopes that it has contributed to alleviating the social and health impact of COVID-19,” she said.

***Simangele Zuma and Professor Monique Marks***



# DUT FIRST NATIONALLY AMONG UNIVERSITIES OF TECHNOLOGY FOR PUBLICATION UNITS

According to the Department of Higher Education and Training's report shared with institutions, DUT produced a total of 344.93 publication units in 2018, which is a 1.8% share of the total overall sector publication units, which ranks DUT in 1st position among universities of technology in South Africa on this indicator and 13th out of the 26 public institutions.

The top institution on this indicator had 2 069.86 units, claiming a 10.8% share of the sector units. The 2018 report on the 'Evaluation of University's Research Output' is based on the 2015 Research Outputs Policy, which aims to encourage research productivity by rewarding quality research outputs at public institutions.

In terms of conference proceedings, DUT produced 18.46 units (9th position), research publication per capita (based on the headcount of permanent staff – 17th position) and is 15th in terms of the weighted per capita research output based on 605 academics, 345.43 publication units, 130 masters and 195 doctoral units with an overall of 669.93 units with a weighted research per capita ratio of 1.11, which is well above the norm for universities of technology. This is a remarkable improvement from where the institution has come from.



*Pictured: Prof Sibusiso Moyo – DVC of Research, Innovation and Engagement.*

The area in need of improvement is the percentage of staff with PhDs – 29.6% in 2018, appearing 22nd on the list. The national average of academics with PhDs was 48%. Despite this deficit, DUT was placed 6th (0.36) in terms of the ratio that looks at the proportion of doctoral graduates per doctorate, which increased from 0.23 in 2015.

DUT's research impact in terms of SciVal (scopus data analytics tool) shows that the DUT field-weighted citation impact from 2016 to date is 2.74, which means that DUT's publications have been cited 174% more than the global average of one on the whole scopus database.

DUT encourages its researchers and postgraduate students to continue making an impact and, of course, finding ways to also help with the prevention, care and support initiatives to combat COVID-19. To this end, DUT also acknowledges the work being done by staff and students in the research and innovation area with 3D printing, mask production and supporting KwaZulu-Natal through various initiatives that help the most vulnerable people within our communities to fight COVID-19.

Visit <https://www.dutalumni.com/dutcovid-19> for more information.

“ The DUT field-weighted citation impact from 2016 to date is 2.74, which means that DUT's publications have been cited 174% more than the global average of one on the whole scopus database. – Prof Sibusiso Moyo ”



# DR ANISA VAHED WILL SOON SHARPEN HER SKILLS IN THE US

**D**UT's Dental Technologist and Researcher Dr Anisa Vahed was recently named a Fulbright South African Research Scholar for the 2020-2021 academic year.

Dr Vahed, who is a senior lecturer at the Department of Dental Sciences with over 20 years' teaching experience, will spend up to six months at a United States (US) university sharpening her research skills. Speaking about her achievement, Vahed said that she completed an online application for this programme in September 2019. She feels that her project titled 'Advancing the Undergraduate Research-Teaching Nexus' is an under-investigated area within the South African context. Part of the application required endorsements from DUT and three external referees, particularly highlighting the significance of the project to the higher education field and its importance in South Africa.

"In November 2019, I was interviewed at a regional level (Round 1). Subsequently, in February 2020, I was nominated as a principal candidate to the Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board (FFSB) for consideration in Round 2 of the nomination process," said Vahed. She further explained that it was during the second round, through the US Council of Undergraduate Research (CUR), that she reached out to potential US institutions to explore the possibility of collaboration and to be hosted as a Fulbright Scholar.

"Five potential universities in the US are keen to host me. Unfortunately, due to the current COVID-19 pandemic and the impact on academic institutions worldwide, the earliest commencement of the Fulbright SARSP grant is 1 January 2021.



*Pictured: Dental Technologist and Researcher Dr Anisa Vahed, who was recently appointed as a Fulbright South African Research Scholar.*

"I am currently in discussions with my preferred US university and await a confirmation on a departure date from South Africa between 1 January and 31 March 2021, where I would then spend up to six months in the US," said Vahed. Adding to Vahed's excitement is that the Fulbright Visiting Scholar Programme covers a round-trip travel, health coverage, monthly stipend for daily living expenses, accommodation and incidental costs. The host university will also provide office space and access to campus resources.

"As a Fulbright Scholar, I have the opportunity to team up with an established undergraduate research academy to engage in a dialogical space on how to develop an undergraduate centre/unit and to increase the undergraduate research culture at DUT. Apart from the networking opportunities that can enrich my academic development, as a Y-rated researcher, I anticipate that this experience will bolster my research focus area on the undergraduate research and teaching nexus by my being able to conduct further analytical work in collaboration with my international partners at my preferred US university," said Vahed.

Vahed's other research interest is internationalising the curriculum through Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL). In recognition of her COIL projects, Vahed received the 2017 Council Awards and the 2017 and 2018 Vice-Chancellor's Award. She has delivered numerous papers, workshops and seminars nationally and internationally.

**Simangele Zuma**



# DUT PHOTOGRAPHY PROGRAMME STORYTELLERS 'RECORD' THEIR JOURNEY DURING LOCKDOWN

Students and staff from DUT's Photography Programme were requested to showcase their photographic expertise in a compulsory photography programme project brief – 21 DAYS ISOLATION – during hard lockdown.

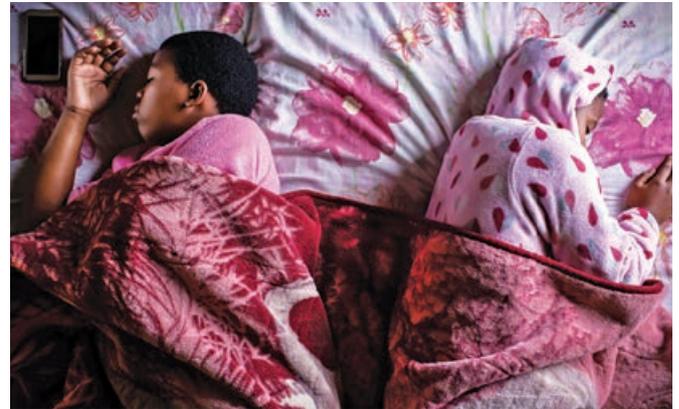
The project began on 27 March and had over 90 visual storyteller participants shoot one strong image per day that simply represented isolation in one's personal space.

One of the storytellers, second-year Photography student Wonderboy Maluleka, said "the fact that this is something that we are not used to made it interesting for me. I think it is important that we document a rare moment or situation in our lives. My main focus was around recording how people react to this pandemic, how they on a daily basis try to get used to the situation. It's also about how I react as a visual artist when I am limited in terms of creating photographs," he said.

He further added that it is important to capture the mood and emotions because this is like a documentary. "We will always go back to this and just see how everyone was about the situation. Also, the next generation will know what happened in 2020," he stressed.

For second-year Photography student Scelo Dlamini, most of his work reflects that he comes from rural Ladysmith. "I'm an authentic storyteller. The COVID-19 epidemic has been a life-changing challenge for all of us and impacts us across all spheres of society. With modern technology, we are enabled to share images across the world with a wider platform. It is also important to capture events as they happen as images can serve as references and bring awareness," he said.

Dlamini added that he mostly captures images of isolation using a variety



*Pictured: An image captured by storyteller Nhlakanipho Nkomo during the hard lockdown period.*

of props that relate to the COVID-19 epidemic. "The biggest challenge was having to ensure proper social distancing and regularly sanitising my hands. Travelling to locations has also been an issue and hence these works are done in and around my village," he stressed.

All students had to assemble 21 images at the end of hard lockdown, which yielded promising results, and everyone's story was important.

DUT's Angela Buckland, Programme Co-ordinator: Photography, said, "Despite the enormous challenges we faced during the hard lockdown, this was a critical time for our students to respond photographically to a global pandemic and be a part of history."

**Waheeda Peters**

**“ We will always go back to this and just see how everyone was about the situation. Also, the next generation will know what happened in 2020. – Wonderboy Maluleka ”**



# COST AND MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTING STUDENTS TO RECEIVE BURSARIES WORTH OVER R1.3 MILLION

**S**eventeen disadvantaged students from the Department of Cost Management & Accounting at DUT will receive bursaries worth over R1.3 million to pay for their tuition fees.

This comes after a Good Samaritan, Mr Takalani Nethengwe from the Institute of Business Partnerships (IBP), offered to lend a helping hand to assist students who come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

According to Prof Fulufhelo Netswera, Executive Dean: Faculty of Management Sciences, the total amount to be allocated to the students is R1 305 754.

Netswera said Nethengwe is his high school and boarding school friend and that his work is to mobilise student funding from corporate funding.

“Mr Nethengwe operates a company called Institute of Business Partnership whose purpose is supporting children who come from difficult backgrounds. The fund this time around targets students who are in the profession of economics and finance. This is because the funds come from organisations whose operations are in this line of work – financial institutions. Part of the fund that has been awarded comes from Metropolitan Health and Momentum Health,” said Netswera.

He further stated that Nethengwe had always engaged him and he has helped students in his former university.



*Pictured: Good Samaritan Mr Takalani Nethengwe from the Institute of Business Partnerships (IBP) recently awarded a bursary fund worth over R1.3 million to DUT's Cost & Management Accounting students.*

“I have requested that the Executive Dean of the Faculty of Accounting & Informatics Prof Oludayo Olugbara coordinate the selection and award of the students since they come from departments in his faculty. The terms and conditions of the grant is that the students should be able to perform well in their studies. The fund is to be utilised to pay their tuition fees to the University,” said Netswera.

He said that the bursary will provide relief to students who are struggling financially, and that this may improve their grades since the stress associated with a financial burden is now off their shoulders.

Speaking on behalf of the Faculty of Accounting & Informatics, Prof Olugbara expressed his gratitude to Nethengwe and Prof Netswera for being the facilitator of this great opportunity for students.

Deputy Vice Chancellor: Research Innovation and Engagement Prof Sibusiso Moyo said that the bursary fund will go a long way to assist students to realise their dreams of completing their qualifications and take great steps towards self-actualisation.

Moyo said that Nethengwe's generosity and support will contribute significantly towards ensuring that DUT achieves its objectives of providing a distinctive education and thus producing adaptive graduates.

**Simangele Zuma**



# FASHION AND TEXTILES DEPARTMENT MAKE FACE MASKS FOR STAFF

In a bid to help fight the outbreak of COVID-19 in South Africa, especially at DUT, there have been various forms of support given by different departments such as the Department of Fashion and Textiles, which recently embarked on a voluntary project to make face masks for some departmental staff working through the lockdown period.

Acting Head of the Fashion and Textiles Department Sunthra Moodley, DUT lecturers Meena Bagwandin, Khaya Mchunu, Tando Mbanga, Simphiwe Xulu, Keegan Naidoo, Sally de Witt, BTech students Georgina Brink, Kelly Love and Agilan Thaver, all formed part of the DUT team taking part in the initiative.

Moodley said that what prompted her department to make face masks was Prof Sibusiso Moyo, Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research, Innovation and Engagement (RIE), who informed her of DUT's initiative to fight COVID-19. "I immediately knew what we had to do to make a positive contribution to the initiative. We had the resources and the equipment, so I reached out to staff who, in turn, reached out to our BTech students, and the team of 10 pledged their support to this initiative," she said.



*Pictured: The Fashion and Textiles team hard at work making face masks at the DUT campus.*

Delving more into the actual mask-making process, Moodley said that the team produced 530 face masks from 28 April 2020 to 30 April 2020. She further added that it was a double ply mask with medium weight denim twill, lined with a cotton shirting fabric. "Elastic was attached to the sides and made to be adjustable for a small, medium or large face. Branding was also attached to the bottom of the mask," she said.

On completion, the face masks were distributed to DUT staff in the library in Durban and Pietermaritzburg, Student Counselling, Research Innovation and Engagement Office, Procurement, Security and Finance.

"We would like to thank Prof Moyo for the opportunity to be part of this project. We would also like to acknowledge the Project Coordinator Mr Ebrahim Asmal for assisting with the sourcing of the fabric and coordination," she said.

Moodley also indicated that her department would like to continue with the project as soon as DUT is able to phase in staff and students.

**Waheeda Peters**

**“ I immediately knew what we had to do to make a positive contribution to the initiative. We had the resources and the equipment, so I reached out to staff who, in turn, reached out to our BTech students, and the team of 10 pledged their support to this initiative. – Sunthra Moodley ”**



# DUT MIDLANDS ENTREPRENEURSHIP CENTRE AND STUDENT DESK INITIATES ONE HOME ONE GARDEN PROJECT FOR DUT'S NEIGHBOURING COMMUNITY

**D**UT Midlands campus, through the Entrepreneurship Centre, donated over 150 seedlings to 50 homes in the community of Imbali and Edendale in Pietermaritzburg this year.

The Centre initiated the One Home One Garden Project for the DUT's Midlands neighbouring community, intending to pledge the University's support to its immediate community, especially during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic and to strengthen the relationship between the Institution and its people. The project, themed Sustainability and Food Security, is aimed at addressing the current food security issues constituted by the COVID-19 global pandemic.

The purpose of this project is to alleviate the impact of COVID-19 in the communities with child-headed homes, old-aged people, orphans, people living with disabilities and unemployed individuals surrounding the DUT Indumiso Campus. The Centre will provide continued support to these communities to ensure long-term sustainability of the vegetable gardens.

Phase one of the project began at the beginning of June. In phase one, the Centre and its stakeholders donated and assisted 50 homes in planting more than 150 seedlings in their gardens. The agricultural specialists from Rural Black Industrialist guided the 50 families as to the most effective planting methods to use and also advised them on how to maintain their garden for exceptional results and sustainability. Spinach, onion, cabbage, tomatoes, beetroot and potatoes seedlings were donated to these communities.

The project kicked off with an address by the Midlands Campus Director Dr Joseph Molete, who emphasised the importance of



*Pictured: DUT Midlands Entrepreneurship Centre stakeholders and Mr Dlamini, one of the beneficiaries.*

making an impact in the community. “As a university, we strive to make an impact in our communities. We have a big plan to reach more people in our Province; this is just the beginning,” said Dr Molete.

Commenting on the project, Centre Manager Miss Nontokozo Ngcobo said, “We want to encourage our communities to start producing what they consume, even in a small percentage. As the Vice-Chancellor and Principal Prof Thandwa Mthembu would say, we need to take leadership in our community. Let us all work together. This will be an ongoing project that will assist communities to produce healthy food for home use and commercial purposes. We will provide training on how to preserve, process and add value to



the vegetables from their garden. I would like to thank the Centre team, stakeholders and the community for their willingness and dedication towards the project,” she said.

The second phase of the project was implemented in July. It specifically

focused on old aged homes, orphanages and local schools. Those who would like to donate seedlings, garden tools and protective clothing can send an email to [midlandsentrepreneurs@dut.ac.za](mailto:midlandsentrepreneurs@dut.ac.za).

**Sindisiwe Ndlovu**



*This will be an ongoing project that will assist communities to produce healthy food for home use and commercial purposes. We will provide training on how to preserve, process and add value to the vegetables from their garden.*

**– Miss Nontokozo Ngcobo**



# SABC NEWS TEAM GRADUATE AT DUT

Six SABC news producers/presenters once again proudly obtained their qualifications at the DUT 2020 Virtual Graduation ceremony in June 2020.

Leading the team was Hoosen Ebrahim, who obtained his Master's Degree in Journalism. The other five journalists – Slindokuhle Kumalo, Tashlan Naidoo, Simphiwe Makhanya, Tareh Harreeparshad and Cassandra Zungu – achieved their BTech in Journalism.

Ebrahim, who is a producer/presenter at SABC Radio News Durban, said that he sees this achievement as what will ultimately steer him into the lecturing environment. "Journalism is my passion; I would like to give back and share my experience with young, upcoming students at whichever institution I am granted the opportunity to lecture at in the near future," he said.

These journalists have had to work during the COVID-19 lockdown to ensure that they give a voice to the voiceless in society. "You have got to look at your end goal in what you are persevering in. No matter what you undertake in life, challenges will always be there. It is how you manage those challenges that defines you as an individual," stressed Ebrahim.

He encouraged students undertaking their Master's degree to plan accordingly. "It may take several months to analyse and really understand your own research, but perseverance and prayer can get you anywhere you desire to be," stated Ebrahim.

Dynamic and charismatic Slindokuhle Khumalo, currently a current affairs producer on Ukhozi FM, said that balancing work and school was the most challenging and claimed that there were times when her classes clashed with her work, which meant that she had to play catch up.

Also, last year was election year, which was a hectic period for her.



*Pictured: Slindokuhle Kumalo, Tashlan Naidoo, Simphiwe Makhanya, Tareh Harreeparshad and Cassandra Zungu.*

During that period, she missed a lot of school work and catching up meant sleepless nights.

"I'm very excited, especially because I took quite a huge study gap (perhaps even longer than I had anticipated) but my hard work and determination paid off. I think going back to school at my age (37 years) and trying to balance being a mother of two (her youngest was two years old at the time), a wife and also working was a reminder of how capable we as human beings are if we set our minds to achieving a certain goal," said Kumalo.

She further stated that there were moments where she almost gave up but the support she received from her family, friends, colleagues and lecturers gave her courage to push just a little harder.



She stated that Journalism is a calling; it doesn't pay much but it's the most rewarding job, as one gets to change people's lives on a daily basis.

Current Affairs Producer/Presenter on Lotus FM Tashlan Naidoo said that his journey at DUT had been fruitful. "My time at DUT was fun. I loved meeting new people from so many different walks of life. I spent a lot of time hanging out with them, doing our assignments. City campus was, however, a great environment to not get too carried away, even though in my first year, I spent more time in Papa Joe's than campus," said Naidoo.

He said that the Journalism lecturers were the best; really helpful, thoughtful and encouraging. "I'll always have the utmost respect for everything they've taught and done for me and my career. "DUT has produced some of the country's finest journalists out there and I one day hope to continue that great legacy," said Naidoo.

He said that Journalism has always been his first choice as he has always been passionate about telling people's stories and helping the community wherever he could.

KwaZulu-Natal-based TV reporter Simphiwe Makhanya said that his second qualification with DUT comes 10 years after completing his National Diploma in Journalism in 2010. He joined the SABC as an intern in the same year and has been with the organisation ever since.

Makhanya said that he was grateful to DUT for giving him an opportunity to make his dream of becoming a journalist come true.

He further thanked the SABC for giving him his second home. He said that he has learned a lot over the years since he has worked in various units within the newsroom and that he was looking forward to this year's graduation ceremony since he missed his first graduation.

The highlight of his career was in December 2017 when he got a chance to report live outside the White House in Washington DC, United States (US). He was reporting on AIDS-related stories, looking at how the US is working with the South African government in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Taresh Harreeparshad, who is currently the Producer/Presenter of Newsbreak Talk on Lotus FM, said that graduating at DUT once again has been a rewarding experience since his first graduation was in 2007 when he obtained his National Diploma in Journalism.

"Studying Journalism at DUT didn't just teach me Journalism, it made me a journalist. It showed me how to actually do the story, how to report on it and how to physically and actively practise journalism. It helped me in my career. After graduating with my Diploma, I started working at the SABC for Newsbreak Talk on Lotus FM. I also work for SABC Television News. I owe my theoretical and technical experience and my work as a journalist to DUT," said Harreeparshad.

When he heard that DUT had reworked their BTech Journalism syllabus, it made him excited about going back to university as it sounded completely different from what he studied so many years ago.

"I went back to do my BTech last year. It sucked the life out of me in a positive way as it was academically intense and so demanding and it made me a much better academic. It made me more in tune with Journalism and made me want to study further," said Harreeparshad.

He said that he was grateful to DUT for organising the Virtual Graduation ceremony even though COVID-19 ruined his plans of taking selfies with friends at the actual graduation.

Ukhozi FM's current affairs Producer/Presenter Cassandra Zungu said that she was proud of herself and her colleagues on their achievement despite their busy work schedule.

**Simangele Zuma and Waheeda Peters**

**“ Studying Journalism at DUT didn't just teach me Journalism, it made me a journalist. It showed me how to actually do the story, how to report on it and how to physically and actively practise journalism. –Taresh Harreeparshad ”**



# PONNUSAMY'S ACHIEVEMENT IS THE BEGINNING OF MORE TO COME

**T**wenty-three-year-old Nadine Ponnusamy won the Dean's Merit Award in her Bachelor of the Built Environment in Urban and Regional Planning Degree at the DUT Virtual Graduation ceremony in June.

"Obtaining the award has been a goal of mine from first year and means the world to me. I was happy to know I had achieved my goal after all the late nights I spent studying. Making my parents proud is a huge achievement on its own. It's the beginning of many more to come," she said elatedly.

"Being a young woman in the Field of Engineering and the Built Environment and receiving this award goes to show that with hard work and perseverance, anything is possible no matter your age, gender or race. I hope to inspire many young people who have similar aspirations," she said.

Poonusamy said that she faced countless difficulties during her three years of studying. "I had many transportation issues and financially it



*Pictured: Nadine Ponnusamy*

was very difficult for my family to pay for my fees. Although I had met the requirements to be funded by NSFAS, I was rejected every year I applied," she said.

She advises students who want to study in the same field that it is interesting and has given her great insight, which she needs when advancing into the working world. "This course has made me an extremely versatile person and has taught me much more than I expected. The knowledge that this course has imparted to me will be useful in my everyday life," she said.

Ponnusamy is currently working as a part-time tutor with first- and second-year students at DUT. Her aim is to be a project manager, an environmental planner or a GIS specialist.

**Waheeda Peters**

**“** *Being a young woman in the Field of Engineering and the Built Environment and receiving this award goes to show that with hard work and perseverance, anything is possible no matter your age, gender or race. I hope to inspire many young people who have similar aspirations. – Nadine Ponnusamy* **”**



# DUT VIRTUAL GRADUATION CEREMONY A SUCCESS

**H**istory was made at DUT during the first Virtual Graduation in June to replace the April and May graduations that could not take place due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the ceremony, 7 832 students were honoured in absentia. Various teams at the University had to work around the clock to make sure that the class of 2019 was honoured for its achievements but also that COVID-19 regulations were accommodated.

The Virtual Graduation was broadcast on SA FM and 5FM about an hour later to ensure that it reached as many students as possible. Graduates also saw their names printed in the various newspapers: Isolezwe, Daily News, Ilanga, Msunduzi Eyethu and Public Eye (Pietermaritzburg).

Opening the ceremony was the Senior Director of Corporate Affairs Alan Khan, who delivered his welcoming address and introduced DUT's Chancellor Ms Nonkululeko Nyembezi to confer the diplomas and degrees.

Khan thanked the graduates for their hard work and dedication before wishing them nothing but success in the future. Nyembezi also sent out her heartiest congratulations to the class of 2019.

"Today, you have achieved what has been so far the driving ambition



in your life. It is a monumental achievement and you have earned the right to feel good about it. It is your time, so stop and take a moment to savour it. Give yourself a pat on the back and share the special moment with your family and friends who have supported you along the way," said Nyembezi.

DUT's Vice-Chancellor and Principal Professor Thandwa Mthembu also delivered his congratulatory message. "The world will be looking towards you, armed with your knowledge, skills,

innovation and entrepreneurial flair, to build on the achievements of those who opened the way before you, so that you continue the journey to make South Africa a better place."

"You will have to actively play your part to improve our country's economic performance, to enhance our political environment, to nurture our social cohesion and to prevent the degeneration of our society that is being exacerbated by violence, crime and corruption. We place a lot of faith in you. We are confident that you will not disappoint us," said Mthembu.

The famous DUT Alumni Portia Fakude sang to celebrate with the graduates, who all have a story to tell about their academic journey. Some of the graduates had the chance to close off the ceremony on a high note by singing along to the national anthem.

**Simangele Zuma**

**“ The world will be looking towards you, armed with your knowledge, skills, innovation and entrepreneurial flair, to build on the achievements of those who opened the way before you, so that you continue the journey to make South Africa a better place. – Professor Thandwa Mthembu ”**



# DUT TEAM 'THE ORACLES' EXCEL AT HACKATHON CHALLENGE

A team from DUT, The Oracles, were recently awarded a R25 000 prize after winning the Online Learning at Historically Disadvantaged Institutions (HDI)-2020 Hackathon Challenge.

The Oracles were one of the teams from the six universities of technology in South Africa: DUT, CUT, VUT, MUT, TUT and CPU, who were invited by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) – Africa's Initiative in partnership with Admond Capital Seed and Growth Engine (ACSeedE) – to participate in a 48-hour online hackathon to come up with solutions to the challenges of online learning from the end of May to the beginning of June.

The Oracles, consisting of Vusimuzi Bhengu, Chris Minoko, Sivuyise Mmbo, Fanie Ndlovu and Reddy Bambi, were recognised for their efforts in coming up with a remarkable solution when streaming online content.

The team had 48 hours to choose a stream, write a concept document and pitch deck. In response, they said they chose the online content stream because they felt it was where they stood a better chance of winning due to their studies and experience. They went a step further by building a working prototype to ensure that they had an advantage over the other teams.

Challenges were divided into the following five streams:

- Connectivity infrastructure
- Software platforms (e.g. Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Google Meet, WhatsApp, Slack, etc.)
- Online content (local and international)
- Service payment models
- Online awareness

Two of the team's members are part of the internationally recognised Microsoft Student Partner programme: one has won



*Pictured: DUT Team The Oracles consisting of Vusimuzi Bhengu, Chris Minoko, Sivuyise Mmbo, Fanie Ndlovu and Reddy Bambi, who won R25 000 after excelling at the Online Learning at HDI-2020 Hackathon Challenge.*

several innovation awards in the country, including the recently held GovTech Awards, and another was among the 130 *cum laude* graduates in the Information Technology department.

The Project Director for the coordination of MIT-Africa South African Universities Programme at DUT Dr Julia Mohapi said that the spread of the corona-virus caused most higher education institutions to resort to online learning.

"They had to provide significant input to impactful solutions at an ecosystems level that engages with all the relevant value chains", said Dr Mohapi.

She also revealed that programme has recruited four interns from DUT into their administration portfolio, who were the main administrators of the Hackathon Challenge: Nokuzola Mdluli, Kaslin Govender, Bubonke Matandela and Bheka Mbonambi.



Speaking on behalf of the organisers of the challenge, Mr Siphwe Duma congratulated The Oracles for organising a web-based platform for students to access course-specific learning resources that are sourced from across the web and from a community of verified contributors. He thanked all the teams that played a part in making the Hackathon Challenge a huge success.

DUT student Bheka Mbonambi, who was part of the team coordinating this event, said that he was grateful for the opportunity given him. He heard about this programme from one of his classmates at the beginning of the year and signing up for it was his greatest

decision. They were planning to host yet another challenge and had already invited 10 institutions to take part in it. Mbonambi said that this event would provide a platform for universities to continue with their academic year efficiently despite the disruptions caused by the outbreak of corona-virus.

The team stated that they were grateful to the University for equipping them with the skills that allowed them to be competitive nationally and even globally.

**Simangele Zuma**

*Two of the team's members are part of the internationally recognised Microsoft Student Partner programme: one has won several innovation awards in the country, including the recently held GovTech Awards, and another was among the 130 cum laude graduates in the Information Technology department.*



# DR SHONHIWA IS APPOINTED THE VOICE AND FACE OF SOCIAL COHESION

**D**UT's Dr Kuda Shonhiwa was appointed this year as the Advocate for Social Cohesion at the Ministry of Sports, Arts and Culture until 2024.

"I was ecstatic when I received the good news and at the same time humbled to realise that my contributions are being noticed," gushed Dr Shonhiwa. "We all have a human need to be appreciated and for me, this recognition boosts my potential professional advancement."

"I have always believed that hope is that stubborn thing inside us that insists, despite all the evidence to the contrary, that something better awaits us so long as we have the courage to keep reaching, keep working and keep fighting," he said excitedly.

Dr Shonhiwa holds a PhD in the field of Public Administration from DUT. Prior to his doctoral studies, he obtained an MA from the University of Zimbabwe, and another Master's degree in Peace and Governance from Africa University and a BA degree from the University of Zimbabwe. He has worked with the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in peace building and conflict resolution programmes in the African region for over 10 years. In addition, he has lecturing experience in tertiary institutions that spans over a decade and has presented scholarly papers in national and international platforms.

Dr Shonhiwa is currently the Executive Director for Peace Oasis International (POI), working in partnership with DUT. One of the key programmes that are currently running is the 'Stop the Hunger Programme', a feeding project that provides assistance with food packs and other basics for DUT's disadvantaged students since its inception in 2017.

Speaking more on his new role, he said that his main objective was to promote involvement, participation, and contribution of the people to



*Pictured: Dr Kuda Shonhiwa*

decision-making. "In addition, promoting behaviour and conduct that is aligned to constitutional values, principles and ideals will be paramount. It would be my responsibility to attend and review meetings to gauge the status of social cohesion in provinces and communities. It is also important as my role to participate in all national activities of significance, including national days and their commemoration," he said.

Dr A.C. Serote from the Ministry of Sports, Arts and Culture, who notified Dr Shonhiwa on his appointment, said that the next five years will be

key in terms of ensuring that the electoral mandate is put into practical effect programmatically, and the Social Cohesion Advocates programme is, therefore extremely important and timely as one of the instruments to effect social change.

"Given your standing in society and your experience, the Department will support you as a Social Cohesion Advocate in any work you may elect to undertake that furthers the objective of a fully integrated and inclusive society," he said.

Also applauding him on his appointment was Professor Sibusiso Moyo, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC): Research, Innovation and Engagement at DUT. "Congratulations for being appointed as Advocate for Social Cohesion and the work you are doing with DUT as our key engagement drivers," she said.

Dr Shonhiwa further said that he will always treasure the opportunity and privilege he has had to serve in the DUT-POI partnership and is looking forward to more engagements nationally and internationally as DUT flag soars high.

**Waheeda Peters**



# DUT'S DR THAKUR HELPS VOTING EXPERT TO COMPLETE HIS PHD

**D**UT's Dr Surenda (Colin) Thakur is justifiably proud of voting expert Dr John Maphephe, who completed his doctoral thesis under his supervision.

Dr Maphephe, who is also the Secretary-General of the Association of Churches of the Evangelical Movement in Lesotho, and a reverend in The Full Gospel Church of God there, conducted his research on 'The Use of Internet-Based Technologies in Elections Management Processes in South Africa towards the Design of Framework: A Case Example of the Gauteng Province.'

Dr Thakur, who is also a digital activist from the Faculty of Management Sciences at DUT, said that Maphephe's thesis makes an important contribution to the subject of digitalisation of the electoral process in an increasingly connected world. He said that Maphephe developed a generic framework to guide the effectiveness of Internet-based technologies towards safeguarding election management. Maphephe apparently chose Gauteng because it is the economic heartland and the most popular province in South Africa.

"The main findings of the study pointed to a significant correlation between the use of internet-based technologies and election integrity in Gauteng. Based on the results, the study developed and investigated four predictive models to estimate the integrity of election outcomes through technology integration," explained Dr Thakur.



*Pictured: Dr John Maphephe, who recently completed his doctoral thesis.*

Dr Maphephe's thesis submits that the foreseeable internet-based technology future may well support automated, digitised election procedures and processes in four key areas of an electoral process, namely registration, voter identification, procedures and real-time results.

Dr Maphephe is no stranger to the world of elections. He has been working in the information and communication technology (ICT) sector for more than two decades, specialising in its use to secure the safeguarding of democratic elections.

Dr Thakur said that with his assistance, Dr Maphephe consulted for the United Nations, the African Union and several other countries, and they have worked on multiple international electoral voting projects together.

"This work is important because we live in a digital world and are starting to experience digital democracy. Dr Maphephe showed resilience, particularly as he lived in the beautiful rural city of Ladybrand, Free State, which made communication very difficult. Prof Rishi Balkaran (co-supervisor) and I are delighted and wish Dr Rev Maphephe well," said Dr Thakur.

Maphephe said that he would like to thank his co-supervisors Prof Balkaran and Dr Thakur for their continual support and said that his PhD will provide him with the platform to continue his work.

**Simangele Zuma**

**“Maphephe developed a generic framework to guide the effectiveness of Internet-based technologies towards safeguarding election management.  
– Dr Surenda (Colin) Thakur**



# CHIROPRACTIC STUDENTS ARE LIFELONG LEARNERS THROUGH COIL PROJECT

**D**UT's Dr Cleo Prince is passionate about teaching and learning, clinical supervision, research and now Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL).

COIL was founded in 2006 by the State University of New York Professor Jon Rubin as a model for fostering cross-cultural student competence through the development of multicultural learning environments that link university or college classes in different countries online.

Dr Prince has been involved in lecturing at DUT since 2016 when she was employed as a part-time lecturer. In 2018, she was appointed as a permanent lecturer within the Department of Chiropractic and has enjoyed fulfilling this role for the past two years. Within the department, she is involved in the ambits of teaching and learning, clinical supervision, research and now COIL.

"I have always been interested in unique modes of content delivery and when the concept of COIL was introduced to me, I was hooked! I attended a few COIL workshops with Dr Penny Orton and Lesley Cooke from IEP under the guidance of Dr Lavern Samuels. At the beginning of this year, I was identified as a candidate to take part in the iKudu COIL project, which is a project in a consortium of 10 universities," she said.

The aim of the iKudu project is to create a platform to establish virtual exchanges and provide training to academics participating in them. "One can set up a project outside of iKudu; iKudu was a particular opportunity that was available, but there are other opportunities with COIL with many different universities around the globe," she added.

Dr Prince has established a partnership with Caroline Wensink from the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences involving Sport and Event Marketing students under the guidance of Eva Haug, a



*Pictured: DUT Chiropractic students involved in the COIL Project. (Pre-COVID 19 picture).*

COIL coordinator and colleague of Caroline from the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences.

She stressed that in discussions about what type of project DUT would like to undertake, it was found that a lot of South African and Dutch students did not know a lot about cultural aspects within their own diverse countries. "This presented a unique opportunity for students to get to know aspects of cultures within their own country and in a different country (South African students were able to learn about Dutch culture and different cultures within South Africa)," she said.

Dr Prince felt that this would be appropriate for chiropractic students as they needed to be culturally knowledgeable and sensitive when managing patients in practice. She indicated that there are 22 chiropractic students from DUT and 25 Sport Marketing students from UAS in Amsterdam involved in this COIL project.



Speaking about the importance of COIL projects at universities, Dr Prince said that globally, participating in a COIL project is one of the key actions that may help students to become global graduates and may provide students with the opportunity to interact, engage and collaborate with peers they would have not otherwise had the chance to work with.

“Share understanding of one another’s societies, ways of living, and perspectives to develop valuable intercultural skills and mutual understanding. Experience, interact and gain insight into cultural differences in human relationships, behaviour and communication that are relevant to your discipline; enhance your ability to effectively manage and appropriately respond to diverse opinions, beliefs and values that might be different to your own. Develop digital skills that are key to life as we are in the Fourth Industrial Revolution, especially those that will enable you to participate in teamwork involving networks of geographically-dispersed professionals,” she stressed.

Dr Prince said that being in the midst of COVID-19 did not deter them from continuing their project. Initially, she had Zoom meetings with her COIL coaches to help with the conceptualisation of the project. “The coaches gave us such great ideas for ice breakers among the students and how to carry out the project. The coaching has really been valuable as the coaches are very approachable and check in with our progress from time to time, which helps to keep one on track,” she said.

On WhatsApp, they divided the students into teams to monitor the collaboration and interaction taking place for each of the tasks. “I think this project has done well to be implemented at this time as the students are appreciating the interaction they are having with classmates and their Dutch peers,” she said.

Dr Prince said that this is her first COIL project and that she was really nervous to undertake it. “I was concerned about how the students may react to be involved in a project like this and access to data among the students was also a real concern. We proposed that the project be facilitated and completed on WhatsApp as it is a light data platform,” she said.

She stressed that the students rose to the occasion and have enjoyed participating and interacting with their Dutch peers over WhatsApp, most of them going over and above the requirement for the tasks that were being undertaken. “It really warms my heart to see how the students have been engaging in the project,” she said.

Dr Prince added that such COIL project has great beneficial value to both staff and students at DUT and that collaborations can be set up with COIL partner universities, which may present research opportunities for the staff and postgraduate students.

“COIL is a form of project-based learning and lends itself to a student-centred approach to teaching and learning, and students are encouraged to be independent, lifelong learners. In a South African context, and especially at DUT, we are looking to decolonise and internationalise our curricula and I feel that COIL projects are a mechanism that can be done to achieve this,” she added.

In terms of her future goals for her project, Dr Prince hopes to continue this annually with a new cohort of students each year, adapting the project to suit the needs and personalities of the students. “Long term, I would like to be involved in an exchange programme with a COIL university where DUT students can spend a semester at a partner university and vice versa,” she stressed.

**Waheeda Peters**

**“ Share understanding of one another’s societies, ways of living, and perspectives to develop valuable intercultural skills and mutual understanding. Experience, interact and gain insight into cultural differences in human relationships, behaviour and communication that are relevant to your discipline; enhance your ability to effectively manage and appropriately respond to diverse opinions, beliefs and values that might be different to your own. – Dr Cleo Prince ”**



# GLENWOOD SUPERSPAR SUPPORTS DUT TO ENSURE THAT NO STUDENT GOES HUNGRY

**G**lenwood SuperSpar has shown unwavering commitment to supporting the Food Security Programme at DUT on a monthly basis with non-perishable food items since October last year, which aims to ensure that no student goes hungry.

DUT's Department of Student Counselling and Health's Acting Senior Psychologist Miss Candice Leith said that the Food Security Programme, renamed the Phakimpilo Programme (Serve Life) this year, which the department runs, was initiated through the Dean of Students as far back as 2011.

Expressing the department's gratitude, Leith said she would like to say a big thank you to Glenwood SuperSpar for their generosity.

She stated that the items donated really help disadvantaged students at DUT and assist the department to provide an interim measure until it can assist the identified students further.

"Many cases of hungry students were identified and referred but there was no facility at the Institution to assist them, and it seemed to be a widespread problem. As of this year, the DUT Student Counselling and Health Department houses the Food Security Programme and funds are dependent on staff member contributions, funds raised from the Advancement and Alumni Relations Office and food donations," said Leith.

Explaining how the food is distributed, Leith said that they first identify the student in need, who has to undergo a screening process where they have to provide a letter of motivation as to why they qualify for this programme or food donation.

"We require a copy of their ID, a copy of their student card, proof of student registration, proof that they are not NSFAS funded or receiving any bursary. This can include a bank statement, payslip reflecting income at home, death certificate, pension documents,



*Pictured: Mr Tsepiso Thusi, psychologist in charge of the Food Security Programme and Miss Candice Leith, Acting Senior Psychologist from the Department of Student Counselling and Health with some of the food items donated by Glenwood SuperSpar.*

and grant documents. We then keep records of non-perishables items donated for auditing purposes. Following this, we provide counselling to explore options to assist further with the food concern," said Leith.

Glenwood SuperSpar's Public Relations Officer Mrs Stefanie Steffen said that their relationship with DUT goes back a long way, as they have been donating to DUT for many years.

She said that the earliest record of sponsorship was the DUT Golf Day in 2004. "Since then, we have been involved with donations to DUT, to the different DUT student residences as well as the Enactus Department. The more recent and monthly sponsorship, however, started in October 2019, when Mrs Nishie Govender came into



the store to meet me. She then told me about the Food Security Programme. My husband and I discussed it and we wanted our business to get involved in the programme,” said Mrs Steffen.

She explained that every month, she contacts the Fundraising and Stewardship Officer in the Department of Advancement and Alumni Relations at DUT Ms Pretty Nokulunga Zulu, asking for a list of non-perishable items needed to feed the students. “She will send it through to me, we pick the items and send them off with the DUT driver on the same day. We donate mainly non-perishable items, such as canned foods, mealie meal, sugar, rice, sugar beans and sanitary pads,” said Steffen.

Steffen said that they review their sponsorship yearly and depending

on the funds available, they will then decide if they will be able to continue donating towards the DUT feeding programme. Steffen expressed how proud they were of being associated with the programme, providing food for the future leaders of the country.

Those who wish to be a part of this programme can contact the Advancement and Alumni Relations Office or the Department of Student Counselling and Health on 031 373 2266 or email; [candice@dut.ac.za](mailto:candice@dut.ac.za).

**Simangele Zuma**

“ *Many cases of hungry students were identified and referred but there was no facility at the Institution to assist them, and it seemed to be a widespread problem. As of this year, the DUT Student Counselling and Health Department houses the Food Security Programme and funds are dependent on staff member contributions, funds raised from the Advancement and Alumni Relations Office and food donations.* ”  
– Miss Candice Leith

# DUT'S NAICKER AIMS TO 'COIL' CROSS DISCIPLINE PARTNERSHIPS IN AFRICA AND OTHER DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Inspiring DUT academic Ashika Naicker (a senior lecturer in the Department of Food and Nutrition, Faculty of Applied Sciences) is passionate about promoting excellence, especially in Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL).

She became involved in COIL in 2018 when she was given the opportunity to participate in the State University of New York (SUNY) collaborative online training course through DUT's International Office. COIL was founded in 2006 by the State University of New York Prof Jon Rubin as a model for fostering cross-cultural student competence through the development of multicultural learning environments that link University or college classes in different countries online.

Naicker and her colleague Evonne Singh were part of in-depth training where they both secured COIL partnerships and successfully 'COILed' in 2019.

"I am currently part of the first cohort of the iKUDU project (an EU-funded capacity building in higher education project) to COIL and from this spills over my experience to future COILERS in our DUT community," she said proudly.

For Naicker, COIL fosters meaningful exchanges between academics and students with peers in geographically distant locations and from different lingua-cultural backgrounds. She said that internationalisation at home, as in the case of COIL, is regarded as the most cost-effective method of internationalisation targeting all students.

"COIL provides additional learning experiences where students interact, collaborate and take ownership of their own learning



*Pictured: DUT and Dutch COIL students interact online.*

extending opportunities for cross-cultural and transnational learning, bringing freshness into modules," she said.

Naicker also recently shared her COIL presentation online with the DUT community, titled: A Comparison of Coil Experiences: Embracing Inclusivity, which is a comparative overview of the structure and methodology used in the design and execution of two COIL experiences; the same discipline with on-campus support and the other cross-discipline during the new normal.

Speaking more on the COIL projects and how they were conceptualised, Naicker said that the 2019 COIL course was the same discipline course with on-campus support. "BTech Food and Nutrition Consumer Science and The Hague University of Applied Science, BSc Nutrition and Dietetics students engaged in the COIL course titled: Nutritional Habits, Food Patterns and National Recommendations. The 2020 COIL course was a cross-discipline course during the new normal.



“BTech Food and Nutrition Consumer Sciences and The Amsterdam University of Applied Science, Bachelor in Commerce (Marketing) students engaged in the COIL course titled Dietary Recommendations for Young Professionals; Healthy Eating and the Impact on the Environment. DUT students shared their expertise on national food guidelines and food trends while the Amsterdam students shared their marketing expertise in creating a tool to disseminate this information to young South African and Dutch professionals. What was new to both sets of students was the use of the electronic mind map to systematically document the data and the food carbon footprint calculator,” she said.

Naicker said that in 2019, she had 53 DUT students and 28 Dutch students and in 2020, she had 14 DUT students to 36 Dutch students.

The project was originally planned with on-campus support, starting in mid-May 2020 and scheduled for five weeks. Given the COVID-19 pandemic, her and her COIL partner decided to extend week one into two weeks and start with the use of low-tech modes of communication until DUT students received data.

“We communicated over WhatsApp and I uploaded a narrated PowerPoint on Moodle to introduce the COIL project to our students. Before the start of the course, I did a survey to determine device access and connectivity among my students to ensure that we didn’t leave any student behind. Once students received data in June, we did weekly Zoom calls to guide them through the steps of the project and the deliverables. We both had six groups of students to mentor over this period,” she said.

Naicker further stressed that it was a much-needed human engagement during a time of isolation for both her and the students. “We found it refreshing to be in class every Wednesday even in the online space,” she said.

She said that her goals for the future, in terms of the project, is to further enhance the course design and move towards COIL cross-discipline partnerships in Africa and other developing countries.

**Waheeda Peters**

**“ COIL provides additional learning experiences where students interact, collaborate and take ownership of their own learning extending opportunities for cross-cultural and transnational learning, bringing freshness into modules. –Ashika Naicker ”**



# DUT IT STUDENT JOINS MICROSOFT SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

Getting out of his comfort zone and networking has helped DUT Information Technology (IT) student Gomolemo Mohapi to score big, as he now has an opportunity to join the Microsoft Seattle, Washington team.

Mohapi (22), who is currently completing his Advanced Diploma in IT at DUT, was recently hired as a Programme Manager for Microsoft. Mohapi said that he feels blessed as he never thought that his first job would be with such a renowned company.

He started working remotely with Microsoft and is looking forward to later joining his team at the headquarters in Seattle, Washington after lockdown, which works well since he will be able to complete his studies before moving overseas.

“I am very happy to be working with Microsoft. It has always been a dream of mine but I didn’t think it would happen so soon. My family and friends are very happy as they know how important this is for me. I just finished my diploma and I thought it would be a while before I joined Microsoft. It’s a blessing. I have a good support structure,” said Mohapi.

“It started in 2016 during my first year at DUT, where I saw a poster seeking Microsoft Student Partners (MSPs) around my campus and I applied. One of the staff members in the IT department, Mr Sameer Sabjee, facilitated this process. I had to create an application and write a letter of motivation,” said Mohapi.

He said that as an MSP, he used to work with Microsoft engineers and professionals who taught him the latest technologies. He used that knowledge to conduct workshops and virtual sessions on and off campus to disseminate the technologies to other students.



*Pictured: Gomolemo Mohapi, who was recently hired as a Programme Manager by Microsoft (Seattle, Washington).*

Not getting paid did not bother him as he said he was passionate about Microsoft technologies and teaching them to other students. What actually got him this job was networking.

“While I was a MSP, I would strive to attend conferences, seminars and workshops where I would meet people. Last year when I went to Johannesburg for this conference, I was able to meet this lady, Dona Sarkar, who gave me the opportunity to work at Microsoft. She was interested in the work I was doing for the community in Durban. People should not be afraid of getting out of their comfort zone, speaking to people, talking about the work they are doing. You never know – one day you could be speaking to your future employer,” said Mohapi.

He said that ever since meeting with Ms Sarkar last year, they have been talking about various initiatives that could help people learn to live with these technologies.

“Earlier this year, she wanted someone who could help to upskill students on a global level. She contacted me, based on all the work that I have been doing. I got the job and began working remotely,” said Mohapi.

During his first year at DUT, Mohapi got a chance to study in the United States for about a year, which was a great experience that he looks forward to again. He thanked his lecturers, the IT Department and everyone who enabled him to pursue his dream.

**Simangele Zuma**

“ I am very happy to be working with Microsoft. It has always been a dream of mine but I didn’t think it would happen so soon. – Gomolemo Mohapi ”



# FEENIX AND DUT PARTNERSHIP HELPS STUDENTS WITH FUNDING AND DEVICES DURING LOCKDOWN AND BEYOND

**D**UT's Advancement and Alumni Relations Office partnership with Feenix has proven to be fruitful, not only with 16 DUT students being assisted by R406 538.99 in donations from June 2017 to March 2020, but by the #CapTheGap COVID-19 Relief Fund Campaign providing laptops, data and food vouchers to 87 DUT final-year and postgraduate students to the total value of R560 000.

Feenix is a public benefit organisation governed by a Trust that was launched in June 2017 as a response to the #FeesMustFall movement that spread across campuses in South Africa during 2015 and 2016. This movement highlighted the extremely high cost of tertiary education and the impact that financial stress has on a student's success rates. The #CapTheGap campaign was launched in response to COVID-19 and the lockdown.

By providing a tool for students to formalise their fundraising efforts and a channel for funders to find students they wish to support, Feenix has been able to facilitate the raising of R39.52 million towards debt-free education. Generous donations from the Feenix community have impacted 1 181 students from public universities throughout South Africa.

Explaining more on the role of Feenix and the campaign, Cara-Jean Petersen, the Student Engagement Manager for Feenix whose core function is "building and strengthening the relationship between Feenix, students and the university", said that all stakeholders must combine efforts to assist students in graduating debt-free.

Feenix has already secured R3.1 million towards their #CapTheGap Response Fund, impacting 296 lives thus far. #CapTheGap was launched in the beginning of June 2020, and it aims to raise a total of



*Pictured: One of the lucky DUT Campaign student recipients is Bhekizenzo Simelane.*

R6.6 million to equip final-year and postgraduate university students with laptops and data to make online learning more accessible.

Petersen said that Feenix's relationship with DUT began in 2017 as they had reached out to the Financial Aid Office who continue to assist them with debt verification and donation payouts to student university accounts. She indicated that as the credibility of Feenix grew throughout 2017 and 2018, the Director of Advancement and Alumni Relations, Zwakele Ngubane, reached out to the organisation in 2019 and they began to work closely together to ensure that communities supported 'missing middle' DUT students in their efforts to access education and graduate debt-free.



“In 2019, Mthetheleli Gwaza, the Assistant Prospect Research and Database Officer of Advancement and Alumni Relations, was nominated as our Feenix Champion staff member whom we continue to work exceptionally closely with. Through the years, our relationship with DUT has flourished and we are extremely excited for what the future holds and the additional lives that will be impacted by our partnership,” she added.

“We look forward to strengthening our partnership with the various departments within DUT and ensuring that all ‘missing middle’ students who desire to graduate debt-free are able to access the resources needed to thrive and succeed in life, including the wonderful tool of crowdfunding through the Feenix platform,” she said.

Petersen also said that in the future, Feenix hopes to be able to provide additional wrap around services to students, such as mentorship and they believe that their continued partnership with DUT stakeholders will assist them in making this possible when the time is right.

Gwaza said that students were using the platform to individually fundraise for their fees even earlier than the partnership. “The significance of the partnership is that it helps us reach our fundraising goals and provides alternative ways of funding should we have students who need assistance because they could not be granted the alumni bursary or postgraduate support.”

One of the lucky DUT student recipients was Bhekizenzo Simelane, a postgraduate student at DUT, enrolled for his Master’s Degree in Language Practice. When asked how he felt about being a #CapTheGap beneficiary, he said that it feels like a dream come true!

“Now I have no worries about online learning and Microsoft meetings with my supervisor. All worries have gone, thank you so very much. By providing me with a laptop and data, Feenix campaign has already helped me. It will be easy for me to do my research and to fulfil my dream of becoming the first doctoral scholar in my family,” he said proudly.

Simelane further added that he wants to be an inspiration to future generations of his family and to all young boys and girls who come from poor families so that they can see that it is possible to achieve their dreams despite all the circumstances they may face. “My biggest dream is to have a successful NPO that will assist young people from rural areas to achieve their dreams and my goal is to stay humble and be a helping hand where I can to make a better life for our future generations. All credit goes to you (Feenix) – if it were not for your kindness my life would be difficult,” he said.

To donate to the #CapTheGap Campaign, go to [www.capthegapfund.org](http://www.capthegapfund.org). If you wish to donate to the DUT Covid-19 Solidarity Fund, visit DUT’s donation page on <https://www.dutalumni.com/dutcovid-19>.

**Waheeda Peters**

“ We look forward to strengthening our partnership with the various departments within DUT and ensuring that all ‘missing middle’ students who desire to graduate debt-free are able to access the resources needed to thrive and succeed in life, including the wonderful tool of crowdfunding through the Feenix platform.  
– Cara-Jean Petersen ”



# DUT STUDENT EXCITED TO RECEIVE MOSES KOTANE INNOVATION AWARD

**D**UT's third-year Accounting student and entrepreneur Nkanyiso Dlamini, whose business Ruth Concept Interior Design was incubated under the DUT Midlands Entrepreneurship Centre and Student Desk (Centre), was ecstatic to receive the news of his achievement at the 2020 Moses Kotane Innovation Awards.

The awards, aimed at recognising and celebrating South African individuals, organisations in KwaZulu-Natal with highly innovative products and services that address specific social and/or economic challenges, were held virtually in June on Facebook and YouTube. Dlamini's company was nominated under the Outstanding Innovation in Manufacturing category along with 10 others and won third place.

Ruth Concept Interior Design products are made of recycled materials, which is an innovative way of dealing with global warming while creating employment and leaving our environment clean and healthy.

Dlamini entered the competition in November 2019 after seeing



*Pictured: Nkanyiso Dlamini.*

it on Facebook and hearing about it from the Centre. He saw them as an opportunity to showcase his innovative products and went on to say that it was a cheerful experience and he felt honoured and humbled to have been part of it.

Dlamini explained that this award meant a lot for his company as it shows that his business is growing and improving. Moreover, it will open great doors for the company and he encouraged young entrepreneurs to grab every opportunity with both hands. "Don't wait until you have all the answers; whatever that you want to do, do it now. One of the things I preach a lot about is getting started early," he said.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Innovation and Engagement (RIE) Professor Sibusiso Moyo congratulated Dlamini. "It is encouraging to know that students are still being innovative despite everything that is happening worldwide. It is good news for the University to know that it produces students who can adapt to current situations, including COVID-19" she said.

**Sindisiwe Ndlovu**

**“ It is encouraging to know that students are still being innovative despite everything that is happening worldwide. It is good news for the University to know that it produces students who can adapt to current situations, including COVID-19. – Professor Sibusiso Moyo**



# DUT MECHANICAL ENGINEERING STUDENT EMPOWERS OTHER YOUTH TO STUDY

Lizwilenkosi Zuma (20) from Zakheleni Informal Settlement in Umlazi is a DUT third-year Mechanical Engineering student and member of Isigqi Sobuntu Organization (ISO), a non-profit organisation determined to fight poverty through education, who is making education fashionable and accessible to youth in informal settlements.

Zuma said that he joined the organisation in 2017 while he was in matric at Umlazi Secondary School. “I live in a shack, so one of the challenges I faced when I was in matric was that I didn’t have a place to study. I had to go to school to attend night classes, which was far from where I lived,” lamented Zuma.

“I then met a group led by the current chairman of ISO, Siyanda Sikobi. Siyanda was already at university then. He suggested that we ask permission to study in the local crèche in the evenings. It was a great idea as we didn’t have to risk walking to school in the evenings,” said Zuma.

After some time, they decided to use the crèche on Sundays for youth talks titled *Asikhulume* to discuss problems they faced in their community. ISO registered in 2018 to recruit other youth in the area.

“We faced difficulties studying in the crèche as we would be disturbed by the noise. The other young people in the area were into drugs. The organisation’s vision was to make education fashionable to our peers and the community. We realised that many people were not aware of what education could do for them,” said Zuma.

Explaining how being a member of ISO helped him, Zuma said that it is his dream to help the disadvantaged youth to study, the same way he received help. He did not have money to register at DUT in 2008 but he was able to do so through the help of Prof Sibusiso Moyo, the Deputy-Vice Chancellor: Research, Innovation and Engagement. His



*Pictured: Youth of Zakheleni Informal Settlement gathered to discuss ways to improve their lives. (Pre-COVID-19 picture).*

*Right: DUT’s Mechanical Engineering student, Lizwilenkosi Zuma encourages youth to fight poverty through education.*



brother was retrenched while he was in matric, which made him unable to register at DUT.

“I went to ask for help from a guy from Casme, who ran weekend classes at Naleni Secondary during my matric year. He introduced me to Prof Moyo and after hearing my story, she funded my registration,” said Zuma.

ISO has a Movie Day every last Sunday of the month where they invite the local young boys and girls to watch a movie for free. “We



want to catch them from a young age. We want to give them a chance to interact with us so they can look up to us.

“Even though ISO’s main focus is education, we also want to introduce sports and planting vegetables to empower our community. The only thing stopping us is lack of funding,” said Zuma.

“During lockdown, we came up with an idea to feed the community. It was led by our Chairman, Siyanda – he managed to get sponsors. This programme recently came to a stop due to lack of funding. This hit the community hard as they got used to getting a meal from us once a day,” said Zuma.

**Simangele Zuma**

“ *The organisation’s vision was to make education fashionable to our peers and the community. We realised that many people were not aware of what education could do for them. – Lizwilenkosi Zuma* ”



# DUT STUDENTS SHARE TRAVEL EXPERIENCES DURING COVID-19 LOCKDOWN

**F**our DUT students on an Exchange Programme at the University of Rey Juan Carlos in Madrid, Spain from January to May had their experience cut short due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Students Nickel Zulu, Zothani Ngongoma, Nozibusiso Khumalo and Nhlakanipho Khumalo were part of the Erasmus+ KA107 Programme and were repatriated back to South Africa on 23 April, a month before the end of their exchange programme.

Zulu, a second-year Marketing student at DUT, was very grateful to have had the opportunity to go to Spain. His first day at the University of Rey Juan Carlos gave him the opportunity to mingle with the locals, learn a few things about the Spanish culture, food, public transportation, climate, politics and other interesting topics.

“We (DUT students) found separate rooms to rent in Vicálvaro, a suburb in the city of Madrid, where our campus was. Every little thing made me realise how lucky I was. I was free, I felt safe, I felt really good almost every day,” he said elatedly.

In the second week of March, President Sánchez announced a State of Emergency for the whole of Spain due to the COVID-19 outbreak. “Everything stopped and the whole country was under lockdown with very strict regulations.

“At first, COVID-19 led to the suspension of face-to-face classes for 15 days, then later the university (URJC) announced that there wouldn’t be any face-to-face classes for the rest of the semester and that classes and assessments would all take place online,” he said.

During this time, the four students were in communication with Carol Newman and Ana Luisa Ortega (both International Education officers at DUT and URJC respectively), Dr Moodley, Dr Govender and Dr Zondo, who all gave them emotional and mental support.



*Pictured: (Top) Nickel Zulu and Nhlakanipho Khumalo.*

*Pictured: (Bottom) Zothani Ngongoma and Nozibusiso Khumalo.*

“We were able to also get into contact with the Consulate of South Africa in Spain, which played a big role in finally getting us on one of the repatriation flights back to South Africa. Personally, when Spain went under lockdown, I realised the seriousness of the pandemic. I became a bit paranoid at times due to lack of understanding of what COVID-19 actually does, how it spreads, what I should and should not do. It was scary, as at one point, Spain was among the top three countries with the most confirmed infections, and being in the country at the time was stressful. I later came to learn that the disease is not as deadly to young and healthy people as I had previously thought, and that somehow put me at ease,” said Zulu.

To return to South Africa, the students had to apply to the Department of International Affairs and Cooperation through the



Consulate of South Africa in Spain. This required them to be taken into quarantine upon arrival and tested.

“As soon as we landed at OR Tambo International Airport, we were shuttled to our accommodation where we spent 14 days in isolation. I am still grateful to this day for making it back to my family alive and without getting infected by COVID-19,” he said.

Zulu said that given another opportunity to travel overseas, he would happily grab it with both hands as he did not get to fully experience living and studying in a foreign country.

For Nhlakanipho Khumalo, a third-year student in Business Administration, finding out that he had been chosen to go to Spain was one of the greatest and proudest moment of his life.

“We got to experience a part of the lifestyle in Madrid, went out with friends and had fun even though our stay was cut short due to COVID-19. The coronavirus just made our stay the worst in Spain because a lot of things changed. A system of online learning was introduced and all classes were cancelled for the rest of the semester. Also, the online learning became more difficult on a daily basis up until our government arranged for repatriation flights for 25 April and we left,” he said.

He added that he was glad to be back home safe and sound with no health complications. “If I am ever given an opportunity like this in the near future, without a doubt I will take it because there’s a lot I learnt from this experience and I will forever be grateful,” he said.

Second-year Marketing and Retail student Zothani Ngongoma said that she had never been overseas so was a beautiful experience when she finally got there.

She said that COVID-19 made Spain go on lockdown a lot sooner than in South Africa so as soon as the lockdown started, the academic syllabus immediately continued online via virtual classrooms. “When the trip was cut short, I had mixed emotions because I still wanted to explore Madrid but I also missed my family and home. Especially with a pandemic, I understood that the safest place to be was home.”

Ngongoma said that if given another chance to travel overseas, provided that the virus was put to rest, without a doubt, she would go back overseas. “It has taught me to think bigger and approach a lot of situations and opportunities differently.”

Nozibusiso Khumalo, a third-year Business Studies student, was delighted when she got the opportunity to travel and study abroad because it felt like an answer to her prayers.

“In all honesty, I was not in a panic about being in a pandemic in a foreign country, however, I started panicking when South Africa entered under a national lockdown and there were no flights coming in or going out. Soon after, all my roommates who were European left and went back home and I was left alone,” she said.

Khumalo added that despite it all, she would absolutely love to travel again. “I’m grateful for this opportunity I received; it grew me in all angles and I also got to experience an opportunity of a lifetime.”

**Waheeda Peters**

“ I was not in a panic about being in a pandemic in a foreign country, however, I started panicking when South Africa entered under a national lockdown and there were no flights coming in or going out. – Nozibusiso Khumalo ”



# SUCCESSFUL DVC RESEARCH FORUM HOSTED BY DUT

DUT's Research Innovation and Engagement (RIE) Office hosted the virtual 2020 national DVC Research Forum in July.

The meeting was chaired by DUT's DVC: RIE Professor Sibusiso Moyo and it hosted 34 representatives who included not only DVCs, but Deans of Research, the National Research Foundation (NRF), Universities South Africa (USAf) and the Department of Higher Education (DHET).

A stimulating and lively forum provided valuable information on developments nationally and internationally in research and higher education, as well as opportunities for inter-institutional collaborations.

Several calls for proposals for conferences, partnerships and funding were shared:

- The 7th World Conference on Research Integrity, 2021 (Dr Dorsamy Pillay, NRF)
- The Call for the Future Professors Programme (FPP) from DHET (Prof S. Moyo, DUT)
- The South Africa Sweden University Forum (SASUF) Conference & Plan for 2020 (Mr Jake Reardon, SASUF)
- The SGD Call for Proposals on Leveraging South Africa's Universities to Support South Africa's COVID-19 Response, A South African SDG Hub Policy Support Initiative. This coincided with Prof Moyo's tabling the need for all to discuss best practice under COVID-19 conditions and how each institution was managing areas around the research and innovation agenda.

The Forum was also briefed on developments with Doctoral Training Centres (Prof Ahmed Bawa, USAf); NRF: PG Funding Policy, Stakeholder Engagement and New Developments (Dr Dorsamy Pillay, NRF); Open Access 2020 by USAf Working Group (Prof S. Burton,



UP and Prof Bawa); Research Management Systems (Prof Stephanie Burton); Entrepreneurship Development in Higher Education 2020 (Dr Norah Clark, Entrepreneurship Development in Higher Education (EDHE) Programme); A Collaborative Project Towards a National Research Quality Framework (Dr Diane Parker, DHET); Research Outputs Report and Policy (Mr C. Mabizela represented by Ms Sindi Kayi, DHET); and the Nature Africa Proposal (Prof S. Sinha, University of Johannesburg).

Progress has been made on each of these important initiatives, but there is also a need for South African higher education institutions (HEIs) to embrace and adapt to the systems required for implementation.

In lieu of the site visit that was planned for the original date of the Forum in April, the agenda included an overview of research at DUT's Institute for Water and Wastewater Technology (IWWT) by Dr S. Pillai (Senior Researcher, IWWT). DUT was recognised for its



stance on entrepreneurship development in higher education and there was also an open invitation to other HEIs to collaborate with DUT.

This forum was the first independent meeting of Research DVCs in 2020, which was previously jointly held with the USAf Research Strategy Group (RSG). Gratitude was expressed to the organisers and the DVC RIE team for successfully hosting the meeting online.

The forum provided all with the much-needed opportunity to connect meaningfully under COVID-19 lockdown conditions.

Special acknowledgements go to the Technical Support Team: Ms Nosipho Dube, Mr Prinavin Govender and the Director Research and Postgraduate Support Dr Linda Linganiso.

***Dr Connie Israel***

*A stimulating and lively forum provided valuable information on developments nationally and internationally in research and higher education, as well as opportunities for inter-institutional collaborations.*



# PROF BUX WINS PRESTIGIOUS NSTF WATER RESEARCH COMMISSION AWARD IN THE ‘SCIENCE OSCARS’

Professor Faizal Bux, the award-winning Director of DUT's Institute for Water and Waste Water Technology (IWWT), won the prestigious National Science and Technology Forum (NSTF) Water Research Commission Award this year for his research on wastewater as a resource and was nominated for the Lifetime Award.

Prof Bux received the award during the NSTF-South32 Awards ceremony, the flagship project of the National Science and Technology Forum, in July during a live online broadcast.

The elated Prof Bux said that he was thrilled and honoured to be recognised by his peers for his contributions. “There was a large number of nominations but only five finalists for this category from leading institutions nationally. I won the prize in this group.

“The NSTF-South32 Awards is regarded as the Oscars of the scientific community nationally and therefore, winning this prize is a reflection of the high quality of our outputs at DUT. It certainly further entrenches the credibility of the IWWT as a leading player in the water sector. We will continue to strive towards impact-driven research,” he explained.

The award gives recognition to leadership in water research, development and knowledge generation that considers transformation and growth of the human capital pipeline for sustainable water



*Pictured: Prof Faizal Bux.*

management in South Africa over the last five to 10 years, considered either together or separately.

Prof Bux's research focuses on investigating microbial contributions to wastewater treatment processes, with an emphasis on optimisation and wastewater beneficiation.

Prof Bux was extremely proud and humbled at being nominated for the Lifetime Award among leading and globally-respected experts.

Annually, nominations are invited by the National Science and Technology Forum (NSTF) and Prof Bux was nominated by DUT's Prof Sibusiso Moyo, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC): Research, Innovation and Engagement

(RIE) and a senior executive from Rand Water, Prof H.C. Kasan.

The NSTF-South32 Awards are the largest, most comprehensive and most sought-after national awards of their kind in the country, established in 1998 as a collaborative effort with members and stakeholders to recognise outstanding contributions to science, engineering and technology (SET) and innovation by SET-related professionals, teams and organisations in South Africa.

DUT is extremely proud of Prof Bux and his team at IWWT based at the Steve Biko Campus in Durban.

**Waheeda Peters**

“The NSTF-South32 Awards is regarded as the Oscars of the scientific community nationally and therefore, winning this prize is a reflection of the high quality of our outputs at DUT. – Professor Faizal Bux”



# DUT ENACTUS NAMED FIRST RUNNER-UP IN THE 2020 ENACTUS NATIONAL CHAMPIONS

**D**UT's team was recently named the first runner-up in the 2020 Enactus National Championship after participating in the first Enactus South Africa Virtual National Competition.

DUT Enactus President Mthunzi Mapatwana said: "As the first runner-up, we are excited about how we have told our story and the impact we have had in different communities. For us, this was more than just a competition; it was a national platform to expose our creativity and showcase our project to South Africa at large. We are proud of who we are and what we have grown to become. For the past 12 years, this was just a dream to be heard and recognised as one of the most active and hardworking teams in the Enactus community," he said proudly.

Elaborating more on the competition and what it entailed, Mapatwana said that Enactus is an international organisation that brings together students, academics and business leaders who are committed to using the power of entrepreneurial action to enable progress around the world.

He added that every year, teams showcase their projects at the national competition and the winner is crowned to represent the country at the World Cup. "The aim of the national competition is to compete, celebrate and collaborate with each other to ensure sustainable change in our communities," he said.

A total of 16 Enactus University teams made it through to the Enactus South Africa National Competition this year. Under the theme, 'Lead Change', Enactus transitioned this event from a contact to a virtual competition experience.

Mapatwana said that the competition was very challenging at times. "First, because of the pandemic and the team not being able to be together to realise the vision, we had to work in the most unusual



*Pictured: The DUT Enactus team. (Pre-COVID-19 picture).*

way to come up with a pivoting strategy to keep the project running and ready for the competition. This was not the normal we had planned for; therefore, we spent most of the time finding alternative ways to work in isolation instead of scaling our projects," he stressed.

This year, the DUT Enactus teams' presentation was about their agricultural project (Agribusiness Unit), which addresses three social issues – plastic pollution, food insecurities and water scarcity. "Plastic pollution has become a global problem as plastic often makes its way to the ocean, killing marine life. We collected discarded plastic bottles to repurpose them into building sustainable greenhouses for agricultural purposes, which are used as seeds germination stations till they are seedlings and they are then transplanted to the garden for them to grow. Therefore, this addresses the issue of food scarcity.

“In our greenhouses, we have also included a drip irrigation system, thus addressing water challenges faced by our communities. And this project this year has directly impacted over 4 000 people and indirectly impacted over 20 000 people in eight different communities such as KwaMashu, Adams, Mthalehi, Mangethe, Lambothi, Cato Ridge, Kranskop, Appelsbosche, Molweni and Mtubatuba around KwaZulu-Natal,” he said.

Mapatwana also highlighted that next on the agenda are four projects, the first being Agribusiness. “We want to increase partnerships with schools and communities in KwaZulu-Natal and create other partnerships in the country; to launch our agricultural book for primary school learners and develop an app and website to teach people about home gardening. We want to expand the reach of our project to more disadvantaged communities of KwaZulu-Natal,” he said.

The second project is called Finiks. Mapatwana said that the aim is to create a sustainable market for their soap project by introducing a sales agent model. They will be looking for community members and DUT students who will sell their products. “We will sell to them at a factory price and they will then add their own mark up to the selling price. This is how they will be creating an additional income for themselves,” he said.

Also, to ensure better sanitation in public schools, the DUT Enactus team have decided to launch a new product line – their hand wash soap. “This programme is still in discussion phase, hence we are looking for more collaborations and sponsorships to achieve this vision,” he added.

The third project is called ICT. They have entered a National MTN ICT Challenge where MTN, in collaboration with Enactus South Africa, challenge university teams to come up with innovative ideas to address social challenges under the categories of Agriculture, Health and Education. “Enactus DUT entered this challenge with our gaming app that addresses issues in the educational sector. In this competition, we have made it to the top 12 universities in South Africa to be funded for the prototype of this project by MTN SA Foundation,” he said elatedly.

The fourth project is called Umlilo. Mapatwana said that it aims at recycling plastic into building materials. The Enactus Global Office have launched a competition called IRace4Oceans. “The aim of this programme is to promote the recycling of plastic in diverting it from making its way to the oceans, killing the marine life. With our Umlilo project, we entered this competition to showcase our ingenuity in recycling plastic. We are proud to announce that we made it to Top 24 universities globally. We are waiting for the results of the Top 12 finalists to begin with our prototype. With this project, the future is bright,” he said proudly.

Furthermore, DUT Enactus Chapter Programme Director Lana-Ann Brady highlighted that, “The student volunteers who make up the Enactus DUT team continue to work tirelessly to inspire thought leadership and creativity in solving social problems in an endeavour to address the Sustainable Development Goals.”

**Waheeda Peters**

**“ We are proud of who we are and what we have grown to become. For the past 12 years, this was just a dream to be heard and recognised as one of the most active and hardworking teams in the Enactus community. – President Mthunzi Mapatwana ”**



# DUT CONTINUES ITS QUEST TO MANUFACTURE 3D FACE SHIELDS AND ASSIST COMMUNITIES IN DURBAN

**D**UT continues to help in the battle against COVID-19 by designing, manufacturing and donating 3D printed face shields to communities in and around Durban.

Several students and staff from the Department of Information Technology (IT) and Mechanical Engineering are involved in the design and manufacture of 3D printed face shields. The team is led by Ebrahim Asmal, Senior Lecturer, Department of IT, and Dr Festus Mwangi, HOD: Mechanical Engineering together with other Mechanical Engineering and IT staff and students.

Asmal, who is at the helm of this project, said that to date, over 5 000 3D face shields have already been donated to many doctors, hospitals, clinics, schools, organisations, old age homes, the South African Police Services, front line staff and eThekweni Health, in and around Durban, on a regular basis.

There is a great drive from DUT to produce these 3D protective wear for those who need it the most. “We have prototyped and experimented with a number of different designs and we wanted to produce something with re-usable material that was enviro-friendly and cheap to manufacture. The final design meets the criteria. The clips for the shields are 3D printed at the Luban Workshop and it takes about three hours to print 50 clips. The front visor is cheap and re-usable. We are conscious of the impact of the materials we produce on the environment and in the interim have made use of materials that are readily available, not adding to the carbon footprint,” he said.



*Pictured: Learners from the Missio Dei Christian School are elated with their 3D face masks from DUT.*

Asmal further added that associations such as the Down Syndrome Association KZN (DSA-KZN) have received 50 face shields and have requested more. “The Fulton School for the Deaf obtained 100 face shields, the Missio Dei Christian School received 50, Crossmoor Secondary School received 100, and the Centre for the Advancement of Science and Mathematics Education (Casme) received 100,” he said.

Siva Reddy from the Missio Dei Christian School in Verulam expressed his gratitude to DUT: “We wish to place on record our sincere thanks and appreciation for your sponsorship.”

Angie Govindsami (Branch Manager DSA-KZN) said on behalf of the chairperson and members of the Down Syndrome Association

KZN: “The masks will be a great help in helping curb the spread of the virus and we appreciate the kind contribution, especially at this trying time that we are unfortunately experiencing.”

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research, Innovation and Engagement Prof Sibusiso Moyo added, “Rightfully so, DUT needs to take the lead on its ability to innovate, co-create and design solutions and products with our engagement partners and communities in order to minimise the impact and spread of the virus. We look forward to partnering with various organisations that have similar interests to collaborate on the co-production of personal protective equipment (PPE) to help fight the pandemic.”

**Waheeda Peters**



# MTHEMBU IS ALL GEARED TO COMPLETE HIS PHD AT THE UNIVERSITY OF GRONINGEN

**A** lumnus Lungani Mthembu was ecstatic to be able to follow his academic dream of pursuing his Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in the Netherlands this year.

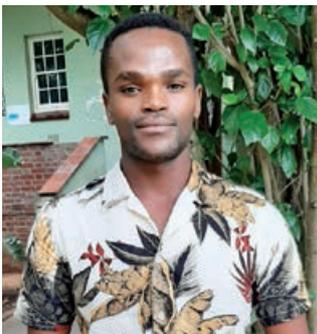
He is doing research at the University of Groningen in Groningen with a four-year doctoral scholarship from the National Research Foundation (NRF) of South Africa and the Netherlands Universities Foundation for International Cooperation (NUFFIC).

The Analytical Chemistry graduate is specialising in Nanomaterials synthesis, characterisation and application in the health industry. He is focusing on charge transport, studying conductance and switching properties of photo-active materials for application in memory devices and next generation computers. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Mthembu's had to reschedule his flight from March to September.

"I was okay with travelling since I am living in the city that has the lowest recorded cases of COVID-19. There are also protocols enforced by the University to protect researchers from infections. Cases were high between March and April, thereafter it dropped and the University opened for those doing research. Normal lectures are happening online," he said.

Mthembu said that his love for science stemmed from his interest in Natural Science classes during high school.

"I always wanted to become a scientist. In high school, I realised that I was pretty good in Natural Science so I chose the Science stream, which is where my love for Chemistry grew. That is when I decided I wanted to work in a chemical laboratory but I honestly did not know I would get this far," he said.



*Pictured: Lungani Mthembu*

In 2010, Mthembu decided to further his love of science by studying for his National Diploma in Analytical Chemistry at DUT.

However, his journey was not without obstacles, with the sad passing of his greatest inspiration, his grandfather. Despite all he had been through, Mthembu, completed his Bachelor of Technology in 2014 and graduating with his Master's degree in 2018.

"Getting my Master's degree really made me proud of myself and it made my family proud as I am the first to get to this level," he said elatedly.

Mthembu applied for a fully-funded scholarship and was very excited when he was accepted. Mthembu, who travelled for the first time this year, said that he was grateful to his supervisors Prof Mdluli and Dr Sabela, who have been instrumental in his postgraduate studies, and who motivated him to further place himself on an international stage.

"It is indeed exciting and a bit nerve-wracking. The Netherlands has a fairly low crime rate compared to South Africa. During online group meetings, my colleagues often tell me it is much safer in that city, which uplifts my spirit," he said.

His accommodation is close to the University, which he feels is safe, and it enables him to work late since it's a short walk.

Mthembu's advice to future DUT Analytical Chemistry students is to find what one loves and make a career out of it.

"If you love this field, no reason will be enough to quit. Follow your dreams and work hard to achieve them. Remember that no matter where you come from, you have the capacity to change your destiny to what you desire it to be," he said.

**Waheeda Peters**



# DUT'S THOMAS WAS SELECTED FOR THE HUAWEI SEEDS FOR THE FUTURE PROGRAMME

**M**aking DUT proud was the super talented Rydell Tyrone Thomas, who was selected to represent Information Technology (IT) and DUT in the prestigious Huawei Seeds for the Future 2020 Online Programme.

Together with the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies, Huawei South Africa put out a call for students to apply to join the Seeds for the Future 2020 Online Programme.

Seeds for the Future selects the most exceptional Information and Communications Technology (ICT) students to study the latest in technology. Normally, the students chosen would go on a two-week trip to China, however, with the COVID-19 pandemic, the selected students will participate in an interactive online course for the 2020 programme.

Thomas, a 'computer nerd', is in his second year of study towards a National Diploma in ICT:Application Development at DUT. When he heard of his selection, he felt honoured and surprised. "Being selected for the Huawei Seeds for the Future Programme is an honour. I was



*Pictured: Rydell Tyrone Thomas.*

not sure I was going to be selected as they were only going to select between 20 to 50 students. So it was a real surprise when I got the confirmation email," he said happily.

Thomas heard of it through his senior lecturer, Mr Ebrahim Asmal, who had sent out a broadcast email on the Huawei Seeds Programme. "The week before submission was due, I stumbled across the email. I scrambled the necessary documents together, answered the questions as well as wrote the essay, and submitted the night before it was due in July."

Besides being selected for this exciting programme, Thomas is also part of the Microsoft Student Partners (MSP), which is soon changing to Microsoft Learn Student Ambassadors (MSLA). It has been another driving force for him to try upskill himself as the standard for developers in the world is very high.

Also, he stressed that he is extremely passionate about learning and teaching. "It is one of the main reasons why I applied to join the Microsoft Student Programme. I am one of the youngest tutors in

**“** *These opportunities make you a better student as well as a better person as a whole. Students feel like it will be a burden with the extra work. But it's how you work that will set you to be golden. People say don't work hard, work smart, but how I perceive it is that a person should be smart in how they work hard. – Rydell Tyrone Thomas* **”**



my university department as you need to be a postgraduate to be a tutor, and I'm a second-year student," he said.

His love for technology began when he started watching videos on YouTube on how to code simple applications with Python, mostly command prompt applications, and thoroughly enjoyed it. He then realised that he wanted to pursue a career in ICT.

"In 2019, I got accepted to study application development at DUT and the floodgates opened in exposing me to the world of technology and ICT. I was able to talk to people with the same interests as me and learn new technologies. A lot of credit goes to my senior lecturer Mr Ebrahim Asmal. He is extremely passionate about what he does and that trickled down to me. He exposed me to so many sectors of that environment from computer security to the Internet of Things (IoT) and all the way to networking, which I was never exposed to in my previous years," he said excitedly.

Thomas said that it was vital for DUT students to be exposed to such programmes that are extremely vital, especially for IT students, because programmes like these expose students to other paths of the industry. "It exposes students to aspects of the IT industry that we will not be exposed to in campus. This course also normally gives out certifications; that is always a cherry on top for any CV."

Thomas feels that students should not miss out on amazing opportunities like the one he was accepted into. "These opportunities make you a better student as well as a better person as a whole. Students feel like it will be a burden with the extra work. But it's how you work that will set you to be golden. People say don't work hard, work smart, but how I perceive it is that a person should be smart in how they work hard," he said.

**Waheeda Peters**



# DUT ICT STUDENT INSPIRES WOMEN TO EXCEL IN TECHNOLOGY

**T**hird-year Information and Communications Technology (ICT) student Nombuso Msweli inspired women to excel in technology by hosting her first online webinar titled: Reframe Your Mind for a Career in Technology in August 2020.

The webinar took place after she was selected by Google to be an Ambassador for their Women Techmakers (WTM) programme and was a step closer to fulfilling her dream of empowering women to excel and change their narrative in tech spaces.

The speakers she invited were women leaders making their mark in the technology industry such as 2020 Moses Kotane Institute Hackathon winner Zoleka Dlamini, Samkelisiwe Zulu, the Operations Director at Yalda South Africa and Botswana, together with Founder of AfriZulu Tech Nosisa Dlomo.

Zulu encouraged her guests to choose a volunteer programme that would sharpen their skills in technology and help them empower other people, especially women.

Dlomo, who recently established her own tech company during lockdown, inspired other women to use the lockdown period to think of innovative ways to survive.

Dlamini encouraged women to change their views about the technology industry and stop being threatened by the fact that it is a male-dominated sector.

Msweli, a software developer from Mtubatuba in northern KwaZulu-Natal, said that the event identified what could be done to attract more women to join the industry. For her, it was to see what people are expecting from her as a WTM and how she can influence Google to offer a helping hand.



*Pictured: Nombuso Msweli.*

“I am really excited because I’ve been praying hard for an opportunity like this. A lot of women apply to be WTMs and it makes me really happy to be selected to represent Google Developer Groups (GDG) Cloud Durban and my university. I will now accomplish one of my biggest goals – to work with women and host events to inspire and uplift them in my field of study. Even though it is voluntary, I will get to attend events and get mentorship that will help me in the workplace in future,” said Msweli.

Msweli said that the embarrassment of getting to DUT during her first year and not being able to operate a computer motivated her to change her attitude about technology and strive to achieve more.

Explaining how she was exposed to the opportunity of becoming a WTM, Msweli said that she is a Project Manager at Varsity Genie, an educational organisation aiming to make education fashionable among the youth.

Their team hosted a lot of tech-based events on campus, which resulted in her being selected to participate in the 2020 Peace Summit for emerging leaders in Thailand.

“I was appointed as one of WTMs responsible for leading women-based events in the GDG Cloud Durban after I underwent the selection process, which is based on your involvement in projects that promote gender equality in the tech spaces,” said Msweli.

Her biggest goal is to launch an Innovation Youth Centre to bring technology to rural areas. She also plans to work with women-based organisations to uplift women in leadership and entrepreneurship. Back home, her family are very proud that she is making a name for herself while in Durban and did not allow city life to derail her.

**Simangele Zuma**



# FILMMAKER AND DUT ALUMNA KARIN SLATER JOINS THE OSCARS

**T**hirty years of hard work has paid off for Filmmaker and DUT alumna Karin Slater, who has been selected to become a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Science (AMPAS).

Slater is one of only two filmmakers from South Africa to join the group this year, which will select the winners of the esteemed Academy Awards, popularly known as the Oscars.

The other member is the Nigerian-born actor, director and writer Akin Omotoso, who is also a former *Generations* actor.

These awards, which honour individuals who excel in the film industry, are set to take place next year in April, after being postponed by two months due to the coronavirus.

Slater, who completed her National Diploma in Video Technology at DUT in 1990, said that it was a great honour to be selected to become a member of AMPAS.

She feels grateful and honoured to be recognised for the 30 years that she's put into the documentary film industry, which means that she will watch all the latest documentaries before they are released, which is one of the things that excite her about joining the Academy.

Slater said that they have already started sending her documentaries to watch and vote on (she has been selected to the documentary branch, which is great since documentaries are her first love).

"It is not a paying job but an honorary badge. I will be voting on films and mentoring young filmmakers. I will be more like a judge in these



*Pictured: Filmmaker Karin Slater was recently selected to join the Oscars.*

big awards. I am honoured since it is a lifetime membership. It means I am able to work as myself and be respected for that, which gives me a bit more credibility," said Slater.

It also means that she might get to work on jobs that she would not get a chance to work on before.

Slater is currently working on a 90-minute film set in the Kruger National Park, but could not say more since it is confidential. It is expected to be released next year and she is crossing fingers that her new attempt works, since it's a big project filmed in a short space of time.

Slater revealed that she was among the first intake of students accepted to study Video Technology, at DUT which was a new course back then – one of the only three women in her male-dominated class.

"I decided to try to be a camera person but there were no women in the camera department in those days. It was an interesting, long journey to get there. I started doing everything – from camera work to directing – and became a one-person team," said Slater.

Her advice to current students at DUT is to take the negative things that happen in their lives and turn them into something useful. Some of her most difficult experiences have been expressed creatively and have been her most successful films.

**Simangele Zuma**



# ENACTUS DUT IS A CHANGE-DRIVER!

**E**nactus DUT recently hosted the Women Entrepreneurs Business Pitch 2020 online competition, which was open to all women business entrepreneurs of South Africa.

The competition received 50 applications, showcasing their innovative business ideas that aimed to solve social, environmental and economic issues.

The programme was advertised on the Enactus DUT official social media platforms and participants were screened based on social, environmental and economic impact, and qualifying ideas were invited to virtually pitch to the judging panel of leading businesswomen from various industries and companies.

DUT's Programme Director Lana-Ann Brady said that the competition rationale for investing in women entrepreneurship gained support from various businesses that came on board as panellists to adjudicate as well as offer training and capacity building, skills development, market opportunities and mentorship.

Brady said that female entrepreneurship represents a vast untapped source of innovation, job creation and economic growth in South Africa. "Women entrepreneurs are more likely to cite access to finance as the barrier to developing their businesses. Enactus DUT launched the Women Entrepreneur's Business Pitch competition with R10 000 for the winner to start her business."

She stressed that the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted gender-based violence with a disturbing spike in crimes against women and children. "The biggest challenge facing abused women is their inability to leave the abusive relationship because they are financially dependent on the abuser. Enactus DUT took this opportunity on Women's Day to promote entrepreneurship for women to create financial independence for women."



*Picture: Welile Ndaba is the winner of the Women Entrepreneurs Business Pitch 2020 Competition.*

The winning pitch was presented by Welile Ndaba, a third-year student at DUT studying towards her National Diploma in Textile Technology. She presented a business that she started three months ago known as Picnic by Bliss.

It is a service business that hosts indoor and outdoor picnics using recycled materials for deco and designs. Due to the lockdown, the business gained momentum and experienced a high demand for indoor picnics.

Besides receiving R10 000, she will also obtain a website for her business, which will be hosted free of charge for the year as well as a sponsored business mentorship programme from one of the judges.

"Winning this competition has been amazing; the best thing that has ever happened to me. I realised that you should never doubt yourself. If you believe in something, hold on to it until it comes alive. I thank everyone who supported me since I started my business and those who have pushed me to apply. I also thank Enactus DUT for affording me the opportunity to pitch my business, and to Varsity Genie for the website and the mentorship support," said Ndaba.

Brady congratulated the winner, and encouraged her to be confident in her new venture. She concluded by thanking all the sponsors for taking time out to judge the competition.

"I would like to thank each of our partners for sacrificing their public holiday to listen to the many pitches and especially for pledging their post-competition support. And to my team, I applaud you. You have made me proud once again in how you seamlessly pulled the competition off despite all the logistical challenges of the lockdown," she said.

**Waheeda Peters**



# DUT'S STRATEGIC PARTNER MOSES KOTANE INSTITUTE LAUNCHES VIRTUAL ENTERPRISE INCUBATION PROGRAMME

The Moses Kotane Institute (MKI) hosted the virtual Enterprise Incubation Programme 2020/2021 launch on YouTube in August, facilitated by Advocate Thembelihle Mapipa, the Executive for Corporate Services at MKI.

In her welcoming address CEO of MKI, Thandeka Ellinson said that the Enterprise Incubation Programme is new under MKI and added that the development of COVID-19 has pushed the global community to innovate and do things differently.

Ellinson congratulated the team at MKI for the launch of this digital platform, which provides access to entrepreneurs who will not normally have access to the Incubation Programme for various reasons.

“More and more people are encouraged to participate in such programmes because it can be beneficial if designed effectively. An online programme has many amazing benefits; it allows entrepreneurs the flexibility to work around their busy schedules.

“It allows an opportunity for them to pursue their dreams while they are on the Programme. Secondly, it allows the resources that we use under the Programme that are not limited to the local surroundings. We eliminate the hustle of fitting in the Programme into the busy schedule and the transport costs, and provide convenience to those participating in the Programme,” said Ellinson.

She said that there is an opportunity for more interaction between incubates and mentors using this digital platform, which can be assessed anywhere from the comfort of one's home, at work or while in transit to other activities, which is one of the things that impressed Ellinson about the programme.



*Pictured: Deputy Vice-Chancellor: People and Operations at DUT Dr Isaac Machi.*

Ellinson further stated that it will structure, develop and refine entrepreneurial business with a mentor that guides entrepreneurs step by step.

The main speaker was the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: People and Operations at DUT, Dr Isaac Machi, who is also a Board member at MKI, and introduced as a person who is passionate about the development of young people and new businesses.

“Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises, usually referred to as SMMEs, are vital to the prosperity of the country's economy. According to South Africa's Treasury in terms of contribution to gross domestic product (GDP), an estimate of 52% to 57% has been quoted by the



Trade and Industry Ministry, putting the numbers of SMMEs in South Africa to 2,8 million and their contribution to employment at 60%. Looking ahead, the National Development Plan projects that by 2030 no less than 90% of the new jobs will be created in small and expanding firms,” said Dr Machi.

KwaZulu-Natal, being the second largest provincial economy in the country after Gauteng, contributes 16,5% to the country’s GDP. Dr Machi said that it has the potential of being a hub for SMME economic activities.

He said that everyone needs to think whether the existing higher education sector is speaking to these challenges and felt that there is a need to relook at the curriculum across the higher education sector so that it promotes the establishment of SMMEs.

“Our education system currently is heavily biased in favour of those people seeking employment. I think challenges of the country may not only be addressed through job seekers but also through people who are actually creating their own businesses. The investment on capacitating South Africans to establish their own business is very critical. Despite a noble aspiration of economic growth and job creation, major constrains persist. These include legal, regulatory

framework, access to information and advice, and access to marketing and procurement,” said Dr Machi.

The key objectives of this strategy were summarised by Dr Machi as follows:

- Raise awareness about priority sector business opportunities
- Facilitate equitable access and participation in terms of race, gender, disability, age and geographical location
- Create sustainable long-term jobs through accelerator programmes

Dr Machi said that there are seven enterprises in the current cohorts represented by 14 entrepreneurs who will be taking this mentorship programme to conduct current business plan evaluations, product market strategy and devices to implement growth and significantly scale their operations.

MKI has a good partnership with DUT and also have students from the University whom they fund through their bursary programmes, facilitated by Dr Machi.

**Simangele Zuma**

“ Looking ahead, the National Development Plan projects that by 2030 no less than 90% of the new jobs will be created in small and expanding firms. – Dr Isaac Machi ”



# DUT IS ONE OF THE FIVE TOP SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES

Achieving the goal of developing creative, innovative, entrepreneurial and adaptive graduates who can help change the world is one of the key strategic intents of DUT's vision for the next 10 years works hand in hand with being recognised by the Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2021 as one of the top five South African universities and among the finest in the world.

The global performance ranking judged research-orientated universities of more than 1 500 universities across 93 countries and regions and this year's ranking analysed more than 80 million citations across over 13 million research publications and included survey responses from 22 000 scholars globally.

Trusted worldwide by students, teachers, governments and industry experts, this year's list also provides great insight into the shifting balance of power in global higher education.

The ratings are calculated by the standardised performance indicators that measure an institution's performance across five areas: teaching, research, knowledge transfer, citations and international outlook. DUT comprises five campuses in Durban and two campuses in Pietermaritzburg, with an annual student complement of more than 30 000.



*Pictured: DUT ranking photo edited by THEWUR.*

DUT's drive is to become an entrepreneurial university, and it has also adopted programmes, infrastructure, social interactions and technologies that consistently meet the needs of its students and shapes their teaching and learning to help improve the quality of their lives and the people within their communities.

Aiming to ensure that students and academic staff alike are given numerous opportunities, DUT allows for collaboration and research on a global scale.

DUT'S Senior Director: Corporate Affairs Alan Khan said: "We are extremely proud of our colleagues and students who worked so diligently and consistently to get us into the top five of all South African universities. DUT is also the number one university of technology in the country. With our focus on implementing ENVISION 2030 and our DNA of being people-centred and engaged, innovative and entrepreneurial, we have a solid foundation to make this a decade of taking DUT to even greater levels of performance."

**Link:** <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings>

**Waheeda Peters**

**“ DUT is also the number one university of technology in the country. With our focus on implementing ENVISION 2030 and our DNA of being people-centred and engaged, innovative and entrepreneurial, we have a solid foundation to make this a decade of taking DUT to even greater levels of performance. – Alan Khan ”**



# MECHANICAL ENGINEERING ALUMNA MOJELA SHINES IN A MALE-DOMINATED INDUSTRY

**D**UT's Mechanical Engineering alumna Lelau Mojela (30) is not fazed by being the only female among five males in her department at Sumitomo Rubber South Africa, the manufacturer of the Dunlop tyre brand in Ladysmith.

Mojela, who completed her National Diploma in Mechanical Engineering at DUT in 2012, joined Sumitomo as a Process Engineer in 2017. Her department designs and manufactures tyres from scratch

“When we design, we look at the kind of tyre the market wants, whether it is in line with the competitor’s tyre. We make sure that the tyre meets the requirements of the industry. It doesn’t worry me at all being the only female in my department because it’s my manager then me and the guys. When my manager is not around, I have to fill up most of the roles. I have to keep on proving that I am capable. It’s fascinating for me because I know I have to prove that I can do it,” said Mojela.

One of the difficulties she faces is dealing with people who undermine her just because she is a woman. She said that she is used to such behaviour and has learnt to take it so well that it does not scare her. Her advice to women wanting to excel in a male-dominated field is to never feel sorry for themselves or feel that they are underachievers just because they are not able to do certain things.

“For example, I cannot underrate my value just because I cannot lift a 70kg tyre the way some of my male counterparts can, but I can



*Pictured: Process Engineer Lelau Mojela.*

excel in other areas. It is not all about the physical, but about how you apply your mind in the workplace, a willingness to learn and being dedicated to your job,” she said.

Her typical day in the factory starts at 7:30am, moving between the factory floor supervising tyre builds, office planning and working through designs. She revealed that despite juggling her busy work schedule and being a mother to a baby boy, she still finds the time to spend with her family.

No matter how tired she is, she stated that the kitchen is her place of joy as cooking remains one of her passions. Her journey at DUT was apparently not easy at first as she was an 18-year old from Polokwane in Limpopo who could not speak IsiZulu, making it difficult to find her way around Durban. When she lost her mother in her first semester, she nearly gave up on the dreams that brought her to Durban. However, she had the support of her older brother who was studying Civil Engineering at the Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT).

Mojela stated that there were too many males in the Engineering courses on campus but this was not a struggle for her since she had come from a technical high school. After struggling to obtain the in-service training, Mojela said that she was awarded an opportunity to complete it at DUT, working at the lab that deals with Master’s students. “I went to Professor Krishnan Kanny, who does a lot of research for Master’s students in Mechanical Engineering, and he gave me the job. At the end of my in-service training, I kept applying for



jobs. Dunlop offered me Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) training and wanted me to start from scratch.

“I worked for them for two years and in 2014, the company closed down. I went back home and in 2016, I went back to school to study for my BTech. In 2017, Dunlop called me back to the Ladysmith factory and told me that there was a position and that is how they took me back,” said Mojela.

Her advice to current DUT students, especially females in Mechanical Engineering, is not to be comfortable with what they have, to keep pushing and be willing to start small. She advised that they study further in order to be recognised because a diploma is just like a matric certificate in their industry.

**Simangele Zuma**

“ I cannot underrate my value just because I cannot lift a 70kg tyre the way some of my male counterparts can, but I can excel in other areas. It is not all about the physical, but about how you apply your mind in the workplace, a willingness to learn and being dedicated to your job. – Lelau Mojela ”



# DUT AND ITHALA SIGN AN MOU TO UPLIFT THE LOCAL ECONOMY

**D**UT, in collaboration with Ithala Development Finance Corporation (IDFC), hosted a virtual signing ceremony for a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in September to seal their agreement in supporting local economic recovery.

This prestigious ceremony, which was attended by over 60 guests, showcased the DUT Vice-Chancellor and Principal Prof Thandwa Mthembu and Ithala Group Chief Executive Ms Pearl Bengu signing the ground-breaking MoU.

DUT and IDFC recognised that in order to pull the economy out of its downward spiral, there must be a pooling of strategies and resources to drive decisive change, and so have joined forces to build an innovation hub to develop technology innovations in order to improve the lives of DUT students and to assist in elevating the local economy.

In her opening remarks, DUT's Deputy-Vice Chancellor: Research, Innovation and Engagement Prof Sibusiso Moyo said that the signing ceremony marks a number of months of preparation to reach this stage. "This day is very special in a sense that we formalise our intent to co-operate. For us to strive as a KZN economy or South African economy, we need to remain active. We need to ensure that our people are skilled. Digital literacy at the moment is one of the key areas where skills are needed, both to communicate and also to train."

She said that the discussion with Ithala began by trying to see what DUT can do in the entrepreneurial space in order to contribute to the economic growth of the Province.

Ms Bengu said that Ithala takes matters of boosting the local economy and contributing to the skills development of small businesses very seriously. "It is because of these reasons that the two entities sat



*Pictured: DUT Vice-Chancellor and Principal Prof Thandwa Mthembu and the Ithala Group Chief Executive Ms Pearl Bengu signed an MoU on supporting local economic recovery.*

down and decided to map out strategies that will see the business sector rise again.

"COVID-19 has had a significant negative impact on the local economy and no sector has been left unscathed. Economic recovery post-lockdown requires collaboration from public and private sectors to ensure that local business is able to resume operations as effectively as possible. This must be done without delay to ensure jobs that existed before COVID-19 are protected and new job opportunities created," said Bengu.

Prof Mthembu said that the economy is a major problem and that the National Development Plan states that the country needs to solve poverty, unemployment and inequality.



“In the midst of what we do, we should be about contributing towards improving the lives and the livelihoods of our people in the broader society. We are the University in and for our people. DUT and IDFC have had a series of engagements around collaborating on the establishment of DUT’s innovation hub as it is well known from national and global exemplars of innovation hubs. Identifying local industries and corporates that have a similar agenda as the University play a big role in ensuring that once the innovation hub is established, it does not become a silent island or a white elephant. Where there are no products and innovation activities that contribute to socio-economic development in the region and in the country,” said Prof Mthembu.

Furthermore, Prof Mthembu stated that the signing of the MoU between DUT and IDFC signifies an important landmark in the region.

DUT values the relationship with IDFC and believes it will be exemplary for future partnerships.

Prof Mthembu thanked Bengu and her team for engaging with DUT on a number of occasions on areas of collaborations and looked forward to many initiatives that they will co-design and deliver.

**Simangele Zuma**



*Economic recovery post-lockdown requires collaboration from public and private sectors to ensure that local business is able to resume operations as effectively as possible. This must be done without delay to ensure jobs that existed before COVID-19 are protected and new job opportunities created. – Ms Pearl Bengu*



# TIANJIN VOCATIONAL INSTITUTE (TVI) DONATES 50 000 MASKS TO DUT

To help fight the spread of COVID-19 at DUT, the Tianjin Vocational Institute (TVI) of China handed over 50 000 face masks to DUT's Ritson campus in September.

This donation came at the right time since 66% of the student body was expected back on campus, as per guidelines in the Government Gazette. The handover was held outside the Luban Workshop, which was set up by TVI to provide technical and vocational training for young South Africans in December last year.

DUT's Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Innovation and Engagement, Prof Sibusiso Moyo expressed her appreciation on behalf of the DUT Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Prof Thandwa Mthembu and the DUT Senior Management Team.

"The masks will help prevent the spread among staff and students and help protect our frontline staff and students treated at the student health clinics. Furthermore, students and staff from the Health Sciences Faculty will also benefit from this donation as often they have to work with patients. It is important for our people to know that the virus is still there and caution must be exercised to ensure we keep our campus running and operational," said Prof Moyo.

She also acknowledged the Luban Workshop Project Leader Mr Ebrahim Asmal, who is a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Information Technology at DUT, and his team for running the Luban Workshop. "The same university that donated the equipment for the Luban Workshop is the university that donated the masks."

Chief Professional Nurse Sister Soori Wardthen said: "The DUT Student Health Clinics, Department of Student Counselling and Health wish to express our sincere appreciation for support towards the DUT community as evidenced by the recent donation of the masks."



*Pictured: DUT staff excited after receiving a donation of 50 000 masks.*

Speaking on behalf of the DUT COVID-19 Response Task Team, Prof Nokuthula Sibiyi, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching and Learning at DUT, said that they would like to extend their sincere appreciation to the President of TVI, Prof Bin and his colleagues. "Some of our students cannot even afford one mask. We really appreciate the gesture. We look forward to our collaboration," stated Prof Sibiyi.

Co-Dean of the DUT Confucius Institute Mr Frank Li Wu said that 2020 has been tough for everyone no matter where you are from. He added that they are glad to see the determination demonstrated by the people to unite as one in fighting against the COVID-19 pandemic. "On behalf of the Confucius Institute, I am so proud to see the collaboration between DUT and China. We are glad to see that DUT and our Chinese partners always support each other. On behalf of CI, we are so glad to have such trusted partners. I hope to

see more of these collaborations between DUT and the Chinese partners and hopefully can achieve more in the future.”

According to Asmal, DUT has two wonderfully set up laboratories donated by TVI and the donation of masks is an extension of that programme.

“We find that this relationship has been growing at a phenomenal pace. We would like to thank Mr Wu and Prof Moyo for working on these projects with us and supporting us. Personally, I would like to thank the Confucius Institute and the President of TVI for the wonderful gesture to DUT,” said Asmal.

***Simangele Zuma***

“ We are glad to see that DUT and our Chinese partners always support each other. On behalf of CI, we are so glad to have such trusted partners. I hope to see more of these collaborations between DUT and the Chinese partners and hopefully can achieve more in the future. – Mr Frank Li Wu ”



# BOOSI ELECTED AS THE NEW DIRECTOR OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS FOR THE WCCS

**K**eirou Boosi is making DUT proud as the newly elected member of the Board of Directors and Director of External Affairs for the World Congress of Chiropractic Students (WCCS).

Boosi, a fifth-year Chiropractic student, was elected during the recent WCCS Annual General Meeting (AGM) 2020, an international forum representing the global student chiropractic population.

The 42nd AGM was scheduled to be held in Toronto, Canada, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, was moved online and held in early July. "I was very excited and happy. The elections were tough and I had some stiff competition but I am grateful for this opportunity to represent the Institution as well as the African region in this capacity," she Boosi.

Elaborating on WCCS and her role as the WCCS Director of External Affairs, she said that she would be managing the representation of the WCCS at the World Health Organisation (WHO) in collaboration with the President.

"They develop relationships with professional chiropractic organisations such as the World Federation of Chiropractic (WFC), European Chiropractors' Union (ECU) and others; coordinating potential working groups related to external events; and generating strategy profiles with the President for external events such as the World Health Assembly (WHA), the WFC Bi-Annual event and the World Healthcare Students Symposium (WHSS). They are also the point of contact between other groups and the WCCS, as well as being responsible for creating memorandums of understanding with groups in the interest of promoting the WCCS," she said.

Boosi said that she has been an active member in the WCCS for five years now and has taken on various roles such as Chapter Secretary, President of the Chapter, Convenor of the 2019 African Regional



*Pictured: Keiron Boosi.*

Event at DUT and over the last year; the role as the African Regional Coordinator, which included her overseeing the smooth running of both the University of Johannesburg (UJ) and DUT chapters as well as communication between the American, European and western pacific region.

"I believe that all these roles and the experience will serve me well in this new role and has provided me the skills I need in order to balance university work as well as this new position. The WCCS provides a political platform on which chiropractic students and new graduates are able to develop the leadership skills and a deeper understanding of the diversity within chiropractic, necessary to advance the chiropractic profession in the wider healthcare industry. The WCCS supports intra and inter-professional as well as multi-



sectoral collaborations with the goal of improving global health and well-being,” she said.

Boosi indicated that the purpose of the WCCS is to advance and unite the global chiropractic profession through inspiration, integrity and leadership. “We are looking forward to having a live AGM in Cardiff, Wales next year; however, we are cognisant of the fact that we may also have to plan ahead for another online AGM. The same can be said for the regional event. It is unfortunate that students are not able to network and have the social aspect that events like these offer; however, we are grateful that technology has provided a means for us to still benefit from the knowledge that is eminent in such an event,” she said.

She stressed that the event is expected to have both UJ and DUT students in attendance as well as alumni and practitioners. “If online, it is more than likely that the event will be opened to international students. Each year, one of the colleges in each region hosts a two or three-day-long regional event. This is an informal weekend filled with talks, workshops and networking events. It is comparable to a mini AGM and offers students who can’t attend the AGM a similar opportunity to reap the benefits of joining this organisation,” she said.

Boosi said that she is hoping to be graduating very soon and to further her qualifications by studying towards a Master’s in Paediatric Chiropractic. “This is a specialty in Chiropractic that is close to my heart as I have personally witnessed the profound effects that chiropractic can have on the future,” she said.

**Waheeda Peters**

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*I was very excited and happy. The elections were tough and I had some stiff competition but I am grateful for this opportunity to represent the Institution as well as the African region in this capacity. – Keiron Boosi*

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# SIYAPHUMELELA 2.0 PROJECT OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED TO IMPROVE DUT STUDENT SUCCESS

**D**UT held its virtual Siyaphumelela 2.0 launch in September to showcase the University's plan to support undergraduate success over the next three years, as it is the recipient of the Kresge Foundation Grant towards improving student success.

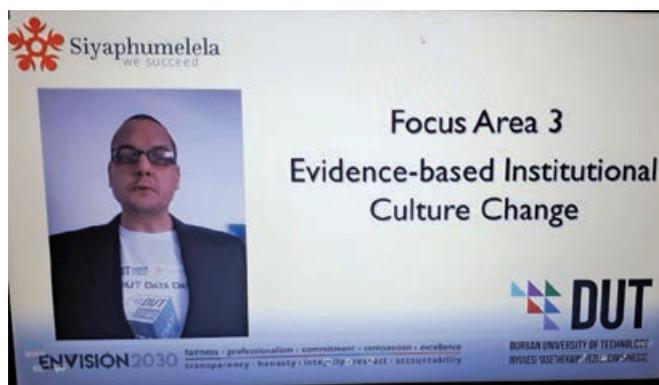
Opening the live webinar was Director Institutional Planning Nicky Muller, who indicated that she had assisted the project leader Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching and Learning at DUT Prof Nokuthula Sibiya in driving the project from 2016 to 2019.

"This event launches the second phase of this project. It is also a milestone in that it is the first live webinar to be streamed via MS Teams, thus showing the University's technological capabilities and capacities," she said proudly.

Muller added that DUT is one of the five higher education institutions and the only university of technology (UoT) to have participated in the Kresge Foundation-funded Siyaphumelela project that is focused on student success.

"We saw a 10% increase in the retention of first-time entrance undergraduate students. This moved from 78% in 2016 to 88% in 2019. We also saw a 4% improvement in the success rate of first-time entrants in undergraduate students and this moved from 83% in 2016 to 88% in 2019. We also saw an improved cohort throughput rate in a minimum time for our three-year graduate programmes that shifted from 33 % to 37% in 2019," she enthused.

"Other than success rates, we also attended to the data landscape of the University and in this instance, we are seeing the roll out of AutoScholar, which is DUT's student tracking system for identifying at-risk students. We saw the implementation of the University's data warehouse, which is built on the PowerHEDA platform. We hosted the first DUT Data Day and showcased evidence-based decision-



*Pictured: Siyaphumelela 2.0 team member Ashton Maherry.*

making projects at the University, as well as the emergence of the University's new framework," she said.

Muller said that there is still much work to be done but the launch provided an opportunity for the plans for the University to be shared with the DUT community.

Officially launching the Siyaphumelela 2.0 project was DUT's Vice-Chancellor and Principal Prof Thandwa Mthembu, who said that these foci included decreasing success gaps and focus areas along race and gender lines as well as improving performance of gateway models.

"DUT's specific aims were to improve the data landscape at the University. Our successful involvement in the past project not only garnered our sub-bonus grant of US\$100 000 but also led to a successful submission into the next phase known as Siyaphumelela 2.0, another US\$100 000 per year for the next three years," said Prof Mthembu.



“This is a project that is strategically embedded within our project ENVISION 2030. Importantly, this project seems to break down operational silos and assist us deliberately to work across all our operational silos with a mantra that students’ success is everybody’s responsibility.

“As the project sponsor, I am happy to delegate to our Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching and Learning at DUT, Prof Nokuthula Sibiya, who will lead the core team that has strategic and operational oversight of the various project components,” he said.

Prof Mthembu also named the other team members who are the Director Institutional Planning: Nicky Muller; CELT Director: Professor Thengani Ngwenya; Dean of Students: Dr Maditsane Nkonoane; Siyaphumelela Institutional Researcher DUT Institutional Planning: Dr Koo Parker; Siyaphumelela Data and Training Officer: Planning Ashton Maherry; and Director of ITSS: Mr Eldridge van der Westhuizen. He said that the continued support from the Kresge Foundation is an expression of confidence in DUT’s values and principles embellished in the Institution’s ENVISION 2030.

“Since this partnership began, we put sound systems and processes in place to ensure that resources received are used transparently and honestly for what they are meant, in an accountable manner too. The launch of Siyaphumelela 2.0 coincides with what I believe is the culture of great performance taking root at DUT,” he said.

Prof Mthembu thanked all those who made the launch possible, and especially expressed gratitude to the Kresge Foundation for

its continued support in transformational engagement, not only for DUT but the entire higher education sector.

Managing Director for The Kresge Foundation’s Education Programme Bill Moses gave an overview of the foundation, which supports post-secondary access and success for low-income, first-generation and under-represented students.

He stressed that together with DUT, he hopes to see expanded use of evidence-based outcomes and data analytics to support student success.

“We initially joined DUT to support the Siyaphumelela project because of the previous leadership of Prof Ahmed Bawa. We now see Prof Mthembu expand and build on DUT’s commitment, and over the years, we have been excited with DUT’s data collection and data analytic capacity.

“DUT has developed a strong partnership with the non-profit organisation promoting student success, achieving their dream to develop a South African model for holistic student success. DUT has identified several critical services in an intentional, innovative way. Building this comprehensive approach has helped to make DUT one of the student success leaders. DUT was elected to serve in the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) region for its long record of leadership. We will also provide technical network to all Siyaphumelela network institutions,” he said.

**Waheeda Peters**

**“ DUT has developed a strong partnership with the non-profit organisation promoting student success, achieving their dream to develop a South African model for holistic student success. DUT has identified several critical services in an intentional, innovative way. Building this comprehensive approach has helped to make DUT one of the student success leaders. – Bill Moses ”**



# DUT'S NDLOVU SPEAKS AT THE VIRTUAL ENACTUS WORLD CUP 2020

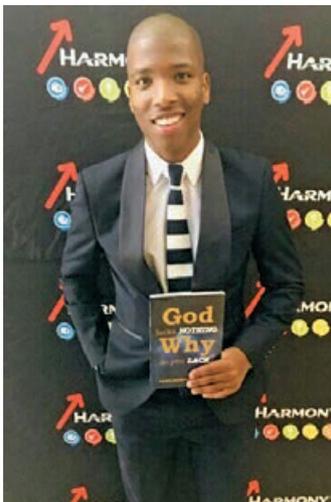
**D**UT's third-year Analytical Chemistry student Fanelesibonge Ndlovu from KwaNoshungu in Northern KwaZulu-Natal was a guest speaker at the Enactus World Cup 2020, which presented virtually instead of in Utrecht, Netherlands to 72 000 attendees worldwide in September.

Enactus is the world's largest experiential platform dedicated to developing the next generation of entrepreneurial leaders and social innovators who create a better world.

Ndlovu said that speaking on an online platform with giants from around the world was really awe-inspiring for him. "It was a humbling experience to share the platform with academics, executives and business people. I had a five to 10-year plan on how I would become an international speaker and it happened so quickly this year. I can clearly see I am going forward with my public speaking journey," he said excitedly.

Ndlovu added that his session was all about the power of LinkedIn. He spoke specifically about 'Know, Like and Trust'. He said that people can easily see one's emotions and expressions. "It is the number one work platform and an amazing one. People who are viewing your profile can even trust you because they see that you are a human being and they can relate with you on a higher level than just with a simple picture post.

"What is very interesting about LinkedIn is that you can clearly see people who have watched you, viewed your profile and your videos. Sometimes, I get a lot of people who are watching my videos who are CEOs and general managers of certain companies," he said.



*Pictured: Fanelesibonge Ndlovu.*

Furthermore, Ndlovu highlighted how to use LinkedIn, optimise your profile to build your brand or to attract recruiters. He spoke about the best practices of LinkedIn like tagging for one's post to get more reach and also how he has built his brand and following. "LinkedIn video has elevated my brand because LinkedIn video receives three times more engagement than a post or photo," he said.

"This will be a motivation for all young people who come from rural areas and difficult backgrounds. More than 60 000 people from more than 37 countries were watching this livestream, which made my dream of becoming an international speaker come true," he said excitedly.

The session also included Shawn Mealy, Senior Manager Global Accounts from LinkedIn and Jennifer Pfister, who is a One Young World Ambassador.

For Ndlovu, his greatest dream has always been of becoming an author and international speaker. In 2018, he published his book titled: *God Lacks Nothing*.

Last year, he joined the DUT team that represented Enactus South Africa in USA, San Jose, California, to compete with other international Enactus teams. "I made friends from all around the world, like friends from the Philippines, Ireland, UK, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, USA and Canada. This year, I was part of speakers who are also nextgen leaders," he said.

Explaining why such platforms such as Enactus are vital for himself and students of DUT, Ndlovu said that the platform is so crucial



because they give a person a different experience, something that cannot be obtained from their course of study. “They give you a real life and corporate experience. For instance, joining Enactus taught me to think more about my community and seek ways to develop them. It taught me about being a selfless leader and creating a better future for everyone. It made me see the possibilities of achieving my dreams in an ethical way,” said Ndlovu.

He encourages DUT students to volunteer more of their time to participate in events as this will make them meet more wonderful people and also create good relationships with people that will help in their growth in the future.

He also indicated that DUT needs to keep on supporting organisations within the community of DUT and also support those students who are doing well in different fields such as sports, entrepreneurship, academics, etc. “I would also like to thank DUT for the opportunity they presented me last year when they supported the Enactus DUT trip. It is that opportunity that led me to becoming an international speaker,” he said.

**Waheeda Peters**



“ *This will be a motivation for all young people who come from rural areas and difficult backgrounds. More than 60 000 people from more than 37 countries were watching this livestream, which made my dream of becoming an international speaker come true.* – **Fanelesibonge Ndlovu** ”



# HLONGWA USES INSTAGRAM TO EDUCATE HER FOLLOWERS ON HIV AND GBV

Aiming to improve 'lives and livelihoods' is what drives DUT's enigmatic Thandeka Hlongwa to influence and impact society by posting about HIV and gender-based violence (GBV) on Instagram.

The multi-skilled journalist, who has her National Diploma in Journalism and is currently studying towards her Bachelor of Technology Degree in Journalism, has a great passion for media and mass communication, which has steered her towards furthering her skills by enrolling into several Google courses.

Now recognised as an Google-certified influencer, she affiliates and collaborates with brands that approach her because of her 15 400 followers. She has become immensely impactful because of the engagement of her posts, which suggests that the content is not only being sold to the consumer, but is also resonating with them. Hlongwa indicated that social media is the best tool since being a media student herself, she cannot deny the obvious migration of the consumer from traditional news to social media.

"It's been the best way to engage my audience on an array of topics best suited for them using a tool that's easily accessible to them and



Pictured: Thandeka Hlongwa

branding myself in a relatable way. Because GBV and HIV are not new topics, the manner in which I curate content surrounding these topics is new and relevant," she said.

"I have now done what the brand has tasked me to do, which is to get the message across, working with MTVShuga and @bwisehealth, the official Department of Health's website with tons of information often gone unread. I managed to pre-package and rebrand it, which was something special.

"After realising the impact of my posts and the potential they have to do better, I started pitching to companies and brands that had timeless stories to tell. After applying for an influencer campaign and backing up my claims with real-time figures, I was shortlisted to be part of a campaign that was promoting MTVShuga #AloneTogether. This is a web series shot by thespians at home but compiled as single episodes in a season," she said.

Hlongwa said that MTVShuga often discusses prevalent issues faced by the youth and the theme during COVID-19 lockdown was the rise of GBV and the stigma faced by COVID-19 and HIV-positive

**“It's been the best way to engage my audience on an array of topics best suited for them using a tool that's easily accessible to them and branding myself in a relatable way. Because GBV and HIV are not new topics, the manner in which I curate content surrounding these topics is new and relevant. –Thandeka Hlongwa”**

people. For Hlongwa, Instagram has become a vital social media tool for her, as it is a very visually competitive field, so content curation is another process in itself to ensure her audience is drawn to her page, find something they like and stay there. Her goal is to post three times a week with stories going up to 1 000 followers, seeing as they are short, 30-second videos.

As a DUT student, she believes students need to be educated more. “I am a student and I know exactly when my eyes glaze over and I lose interest in something intended for me. The prime example is HIV testing and counselling on campus, which is something I rarely engage with and when I did, I would be the second or third person on the register, proving that although students were provided for, their attention was elsewhere,” she said.

Her future goal is to be at the forefront of the interlinking of digital media and broadcasting. Her advice to her followers is that if something is not working for you, find innovative and modern ways to tell stories. “If it means hopping onto a trend or two, do it. Bide your time, be your own editor if needs be, but find a way to integrate and shift to suit the evolving media space,” she said.

**Waheeda Peters**



# PROF MTHEMBU SPEAKS ON THE ESSENCE OF STEWARDSHIP AT DUT

DUT's Vice-Chancellor and Principal Prof Thandwa Mthembu delivered a video message to the DUT community in October on the essence of stewardship, saying that it sits right at the core of the Institution's DNA and everything that the University seeks to achieve by 2030.

"While one strand of our DNA is about being people-centred and engaged and the other is about being innovative and entrepreneurial, both of these suggest behavioural traits we can only exhibit intrinsically. It is about what exists at the intrinsic level, deeper in our hearts and souls, and in our minds," he said.

DUT's general aim is to pursue the ennoblement of its people first as a precondition for improving the lives and livelihoods of its broader society. "We recognise that our University does not exist for itself; it exists in order to serve our people, our broader society. We recognise that it is only when we facilitate the empowerment and development of our people and the broader society that everyone could ultimately lead a truly free, humane, fulfilled and self-actualised life," he said.

As he had indicated during the State of the University Address in February, stewardship is about DUT's collective desire, capabilities and capacities for people to advance and guard its mission, vision and objectives jealously.

"Stewardship is about institutionalisation of a Different, Upended and Transformed (DUT) leadership culture throughout the University. While there is formal hierarchy that places people in different positions of authority and accountability, stewardship recognises that leadership is inherent in everyone, irrespective of the rank we occupy in the University and in society. Leadership is ultimately about a sense of responsibility and accountability; about the ability to



*Pictured: Prof Thandwa Mthembu delivering his video message on the essence of stewardship.*

distinguish between what is wrong and right, what is acceptable and unacceptable," he stressed.

Prof Mthembu outlined more than a strategic perspective, stewardship has three strategic objectives, namely, lived values, institutional culture and creativity.

"The lived values strategic objective is about nurturing a people-centred culture that embodies our values and principles. We seek to engender a sense of belonging and ownership through meaningful, value- and principle-based engagement among ourselves.

"Institutional culture is about fostering the DUT Way premised on accountability and shared responsibility. Creativity is the last of the



three strategic objectives under stewardship. Part of being Different, Upended and Transformed the DUT way is about our unapologetic resolve to free the mind, to imagine unceasingly and thus inspire innovation and entrepreneurship among our people locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. Creativity recognises that the mere presence of the right people is not enough if they do not tap into their individual and collective brain power to imagine and produce novel ideas that propel our people and society at large forward,” said Prof Mthembu.

In conclusion, he wished to challenge each person to re-examine their values and principles, individual thoughts, actions and behaviour that contribute to DUT’s collective culture and how these help to build and sustain the Institution as a Different, Upended and Transformed DUT.

“It is my hope that all DUT’s people – from Council to students who are in their first year – can and will live the University’s values and principles, demonstrate the institutional culture and be creative, innovative and entrepreneurial so that we can remain true stewards of our University, its people and the broader society,” he said.

**Waheeda Peters**

“ *It is my hope that all DUT’s people – from Council to students who are in their first year – can and will live the University’s values and principles, demonstrate the institutional culture and be creative, innovative and entrepreneurial so that we can remain true stewards of our University, its people and the broader society.* ”  
– Prof Thandwa Mthembu



# MKUZO AIMS TO PROVIDE RURAL COMMUNITIES IN THE EASTERN CAPE AND KZN WITH TECHNOLOGY

**D**UT's Management Sciences PhD student Luleka Mkuzo and founder of Urglobal Mentoring Network has ensured that selected schools in the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal have access to technology and computer training.

Her mobile computer training solution utilises school infrastructure to teach computer skills to students, teachers, community leaders and members in rural communities in the Alfred-Nzo and OR Tambo districts.

"I come from a rural area called Kubha in the Alfred Nzo District of the Eastern Cape. I was not born into privilege but I had opportunities that gave me exposure to how those with wealth and status live. Seeing both sides made me want to do something to level the playing field. This is the reason why our programmes are specifically targeted towards rural communities. Our aim is inclusion, regardless of location and we believe that access to technology is the start," she said.

Urglobal Schools in the Alfred-Nzo District are: Lumphilisweni J.S.S, Kubha S.P.S, Esijadu S.P.S, KwaMbenya S.P.S, Mfundambini S.P.S, Arise J.S.S and KwaMndela J.S.S. A Urglobal School in the OR Tambo District is KwaBushula J.S.S. Urglobal communities in the Eastern Cape such as Kwa-tshuze, Mphetshwa, Envis, Kubha, Lumphilisweni, Bushulas, as well as the KwaZulu-Natal community in Nsimbini-Mbumbulu were also recipients of the technological help.

"Urglobal is one of the 2019 SAB Foundation Social Innovation Awards finalists that were given seed funding. We have received 21 laptops, a drone, virtual reality headsets, Google assistant and Arduino Uno advanced kits. Apart from the seed funding, SAB Foundation has also provided a further R150 000 towards marketing, business mentorship and a business coach. We normally have rotation sessions on a monthly basis with a mentor and coach," she said.



*Pictured: Pupils at one of the schools that received laptops.*

Mkuzo said that the kit gives exposure to coding skills, which exposes both students and community members to what it means to code technology equipment such as robots. This means that they can understand from the end-user and developer perspective, creating a holistic picture for them of the type of skills they have no access to.

Mkuzo stressed that DUT also plays a part by helping with facilitator training. "We are in discussions to see how we can take it further and increase community impact with DUT being a university of technology," she said.

She explained that her and her team spend 30 hours a year per learner for beginners, 15 hours for intermediate and 15 hours for advanced and then they monitor them after they leave the programme. "We normally take a maximum of 35 learners per class at a time and a maximum of three groups per day," she said.



She said that she and her team are working on piloting a separate programme focused on a digital after-school learner enrichment programme with the use of tablets. “The pilot group are students and teachers who have been part of Urglobal’s Technology Training Programme,” she said.

Mkuzo stressed that her main goal is to create a national footprint in rural communities. “Our mobility methodology ensures access and inclusion for rural communities and schools in the digital era. We are able to reach students and communities no matter their location,” she said.

She is also happy to convey that she had the opportunity to present the programme to the Eastern Cape Department of Education with the MEC Mr Fundile Gade and his team, who are having discussions with the School of Government: School, Public, High School and Curriculum Chief Directorate, to see how the programme can be included.

**Waheeda Peters**



*Urglobal is one of the 2019 SAB Foundation Social Innovation Awards finalists that were given seed funding. We have received 21 laptops, a drone, virtual reality headsets, Google assistant and Arduino Uno advanced kits. Apart from the seed funding, SAB Foundation has also provided a further R150 000 towards marketing, business mentorship and a business coach. – Luleka Mkuzo*



# INTERIOR DESIGN'S MICHELLE REYNOLDS DOES HER BIT TO ASSIST DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

**D**UT Interior Design lecturer Michelle Reynolds and her husband Jimmy joined a global community through 3D printing, prototyping and manufacturing to make visor masks to donate to healthcare workers before factories began production and imports reached the country.

“We managed to supply 250 workers with this defence. The visor masks were collected from our home daily, and we received many encouraging photographs, letters and messages from doctors, which kept our morale high and committed us to supplying as many first responders as we could,” said Reynolds.

DUT's Department of Visual Communication Design, with the permission of the Faculty of Arts' Executive Dean Dr René Smith, donated sheets of overhead projector film for the visor fronts.

When the filament to make the visor frames ran out, Reynolds' colleague from Jewellery Design and Manufacture Nick Rose donated all his personal filament to ensure that production never stopped.

Reynolds and her husband also set up a workshop from their garage where they assisted doctors from King George Hospital in prototyping an intubation box on their computerised numerical control (CNC) machine.

The purpose of the box was to keep doctors and other patients safe while intubating patients infected with COVID-19.



*Pictured: DUT Interior Design's Michelle Reynolds.*

More recently, they have been involved in a clean-up campaign of vacant land in their neighbourhood and have transformed it into a community bike park, which the community has named the Beachway Bike Park.

“The park has brought our children and community together – riding bicycles, building dirt ramps, gardening, and really talking. It's been incredible,” concluded Reynolds.

**You can follow Beachway Bike Park's process on Instagram: [@beachwaybikepark](https://www.instagram.com/beachwaybikepark)**

**Andile Dube**

“ *The visor masks were collected from our home daily, and we received many encouraging photographs, letters and messages from doctors, which kept our morale high and committed us to supplying as many first responders as we could. – Michelle Reynolds* ”



# GOVENDER IS CHOSEN TO RUN THE FIRST DEVELOPER STUDENT CLUB AT DUT

**D**UT third-year Information and Communications Technology (ICT) student Kaslin Govender recently was selected by Google to be the Developer Student Club Leader and run the first Developer Student Club (DSC) at DUT.

The ecstatic Govender will be joining an amazing community of student leaders who will be representing hundreds of colleges and universities across the globe.

He was selected because he is a leader who believes that technology can do extraordinary things for the world and he had taken on the responsibility to help students grow as developers and empower these students to impact their communities with technology. It is said that through this experience, Govender will not only be leaving a legacy of impact but also growing as an individual and contributing in a meaningful way to the greater developer ecosystem.

Upon receiving the news, Govender was overjoyed because he was aware that he was joining a global community of like-minded tech fundis who also want to advance society using Technology. “Furthermore, out of the hundreds of thousands of applications around the world, there was only a few hundred places available, therefore the victory was even sweeter.”

Explaining more on the DSC, he said that it is a Google Developers Programme for university students designed to help other students and the immediate geographical community build their skills in artificial intelligence (AI), Cloud, mobile and web development.

It is open to any student regardless of their qualification, year of study or faculty, and is intended to be a space for students to learn and collaborate as they solve current real-world problems.

“One of my key responsibility as the DSC President is to recruit a core team from campus to assist me in the planning and execution



*Pictured: Kaslin Govender is selected by Google to be the Developer Student Club Leader to run the first Developer Student Club (DSC) at DUT.*

of events. Other responsibilities will be to create a strong technical community at DUT; conduct regular workshops or meet-ups related to AI, mobile and web development and Cloud computing; increase awareness about Google products and technologies among peers and the community; collaborate with local businesses to showcase new technologies; showcase solutions developed by my club members in local and international events; empower more students to become trainers and support them in conducting local sessions and events; ensure the success of the club; and be responsible to train future DSC leaders,” he replied.

He indicated that it was vital for students to be part of such a club and of his core team, as they will gain experience in working with technologies from Google and other pioneers in the tech industry.



“They will also have the joy of working with like-minded, forward-thinking individuals from both local and international teams. Ninety percent of DSC leaders from the 2018-2019 term said that they found a job, internship or started their own venture due to their experience with developer student clubs, I am confident that joining a club like this will be a huge boost for their professional career. The fact that they will be working with me will just be the cherry on the cake,” he chuckled.

Govender said that his core team will comprise himself, a hardware developer, a mobile and web developer, an artificial intelligence/machine learning developer, a cloud developer, a graphics designer and a marketing officer.

He explained that the recruitment process for the team entails having a two-phase recruitment process that will be open to all DUT students irrespective of their field or level of study.

“The first phase will require students to submit their applications via an online form. Once we have selected candidates, we will then proceed to an in-person interview on campus,” he said.

In terms of ICT, Govender believes it is a good field to study because it is taking over every industry, but one should not just choose to study ICT because society says that it is a desirable field to be in or because of monetary motivation, one needs a passion for using technology to make a positive impact on the world.

“I always tell high school kids who want to study coding at a tertiary level that if you can sit at your computer and write codes for five hours straight without even glancing at the time, then coding is for you. Otherwise, steer clear,” he said.

For the immediate future, Govender wishes to focus on running a successful club, growing the Massachusetts Institute of Technology

(MIT) Innovation Team in South Africa and growing his business. “In my five-year plan, I wish to grow my business to a point where I can connect more people together using technology. I also wish to work on more projects using technology to improve the lives of people, animals and the planet.”

In terms of future plans for the club, his aim is to create groundbreaking technologies to alleviate problems in South Africa, bridging the digital divide that exists by educating people about technology and by giving them a hands-on approach so that it is not foreign to them when these technologies become mainstream.

Govender boasts other accolades, like hosting a successful Data Science Summer School for MIT in January. He and his classmates Bubonke Matandela, Zola Mdluli and Bheka Mbonambi were chosen to pilot the DUT-MIT Innovation Team, where they created a collaborative space for public universities in South Africa to come together.

Earlier this year, they successfully hosted a hackathon for previously disadvantaged universities in South Africa to tackle the problems associated with online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. They have many more events and hackathons lined up for the near future.

“Students who wish to apply for my core team should keep an eye on DUT’s official communication platforms, the official DSC account for DUT and my personal social media platforms as I will be posting the dates for the first phase of the recruitment process on (@official.dsc.dut or @kazzee\_g),” he said.

In terms of his studies, Govender said that he plans to study for his Advanced Diploma and then hopefully Master’s in the near future.

**Waheeda Peters**

“Ninety percent of DSC leaders from the 2018-2019 term said that they found a job, internship or started their own venture due to their experience with developer student clubs, I am confident that joining a club like this will be a huge boost for their professional career. – Kaslin Govender



# ENACTUS DUT CELEBRATES 11 YEARS OF CHANGING LIVES

Enactus DUT commemorated its 11th anniversary over three days in October of online celebrations themed: 11 Years of Changing Lives.

This group consists of students, academics and business leaders who make meaningful improvements to the lives of the people in their communities.

On the first day of the celebration, opening remarks were made by Nomvelo Ngcobo, who introduced the host of the first discussion Ntobeko Thiba. Enactus DUT began their celebrations with a webinar on Community Transformation and Entrepreneurship.

The main speaker was Grace Sibanda (24), founder of Women of Heaven Foundation (WOHF), a non-profit organisation focusing on assisting orphans and people in need through skills, entrepreneurship and education.

Speaking about her journey of being an entrepreneur and legal scholar, Sibanda said that it has been quite interesting.

She said that she had established the organisation last year after seeing a gap with regard to widows and some of the child-headed households.

“We thought it would be great for us to step in and offer different programmes that would better the community. I am still studying but I do offer consultations with regard to contract law and advise on ways to start up your own business,” said Sibanda.

She stated that people need to understand that if they are self-employed, they are not yet entrepreneurs. She explained that self-employed people only create jobs for themselves and not the community around them.



*Picture: The panellists who formed part of the Day 2 celebration of Enactus DUT's 11th anniversary.*

Furthermore, Sibanda stated that people need to get into a place where the businesses or programmes that they run are benefitting more people than just one person in order to achieve the goals that come with entrepreneurship.

“The issue with our poverty-stricken areas in South Africa is the fact that people start businesses only for their own wealth. It is not a business that will be run so well that it provides an income but actually puts bread on the table for a whole lot of families,” she said.

“I am very big on legal compliance. I believe that if a business is legally compliant, it actually opens up opportunities not normally accessible to a lot of people. We saw this during the start of the COVID-19 lockdown when they said that if you want to apply for business relief,



these are the requirements. Lots of people did not benefit because they did not meet the requirements,” said Sibanda.

The Day 2 session was a discussion on Creating Another 11 Years of Transforming Lives Through Social Entrepreneurship, hosted by Enactus DUT’s Marketing and Communications Director Sondelani Mwandla.

The panellists consisted of: DUT’s Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Innovation and Engagement, Prof Sibusiso Moyo; Enactus South Africa CEO Letitia de Wet; Enactus DUT Faculty Advisor Lana-Ann Brady; Enactus DUT President Mthunzi Maphathwana; DUT Midlands Campus Director Dr Joe Molete; the Director of Advancement and Alumni Relations at DUT Zwakele Ngubane, and others.

Prof Moyo congratulated the group for the 11th year of Enactus, saying that it was worth being celebrated. “Enactus is one organisation that gives us hope, especially for us in leadership. During lockdown, they continued working with the communities to transform lives. That is really inspiring because it gives us hope and showed us that we shouldn’t be so scared to go out and do things.”

She said that when she started as the DVC: RIE, she was looking for something that DUT could do to transform lives around entrepreneurship and found Enactus, which was based on one faculty at that time but had worked hard to expand and involve more students.

Enactus SA CEO De Wet said that they strive to be the leading student organisation teaching entrepreneurship and success skills through practical hands on experiential learning formats at universities in the country.

She said that they recently ventured into TVET colleges where they felt there was a huge gap. “We need to acknowledge the significant contribution by the DUT Executive Management since 2009. Prof Moyo, the way that you have embraced Enactus and the fact that you continue to support this programme is of real value, especially because we always encourage our students to not only look at the needs of the community but also the University.”

“We have so much interesting research going on at all of the institutions and we want them to utilise that so that research can be practically implemented on the campuses as well as serve the communities,” said de Wet.

DeWet commended the DUT Enactus team for bringing the national cup to the Institution in 2018, which was a huge achievement, saying that it was the first time that a university of technology won the Enactus National Competition.

The various speakers took turns to congratulate the team and shared ideas on how it can achieve more in the years to come.

The closing celebration was hosted by Busisiwe Magudulela who held a discussion with three entrepreneurs: Andiswa Dlamini, Phumelele Khumalo and Sabelo Madiba, who shared their tips on Surviving the New Normal.

The lucky student who won the food voucher competition that formed part of the celebrations was Nontethelelo Bijela.

**Simangele Zuma**

“ *Enactus is one organisation that gives us hope, especially for us in leadership. During lockdown, they continued working with the communities to transform lives. That is really inspiring because it gives us hope and showed us that we shouldn’t be so scared to go out and do things.* – **Prof Sibusiso Moyo** ”



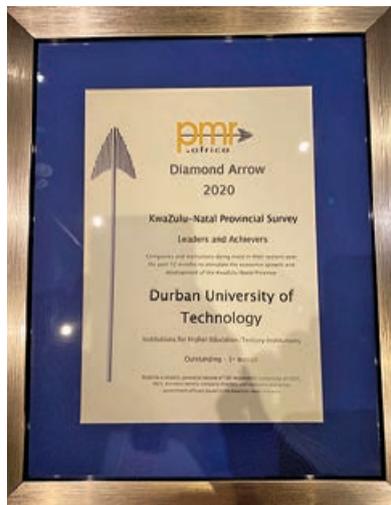
# DUT SCOOPS DIAMOND ARROW AWARD AT THE PROFESSIONAL MARKET RESEARCH AWARDS 2020

**D**UT was awarded the Diamond Arrow Award for Leaders and Outstanding First Overall Achievers in KwaZulu-Natal at the Professional Market Research (PMR Africa) Awards 2020 in the category of the Institution of Higher Education/Tertiary at the Elangeni Maharani Hotel in Durban in October.

DUT received gold in the same category in 2019, however, in 2020, CEOs, MDs, business owners, company directors, managers and senior government officials rated DUT as the Diamond Arrow Award recipient in stimulating the economic growth and development of the Province.

The 18th annual survey, which was conducted in April, is a reflection of the University's status over the past 12 months. The PMR Africa Awards are held annually and acknowledge contributions and initiatives, strategies, efforts and hard work done by companies in their sector. PMR Africa looks at the company's vision, integrity, values, competence and 'empathy' that contributes towards ethical and sustainable business practices.

Acknowledging this achievement, DUT's Senior Director of Corporate Affairs Alan Khan said that DUT was honoured to receive the prestigious award. "We are excited to be acknowledged in the category of Leaders and Achievers and being first overall for Institutions for Higher Education."



*Pictured: DUT is bestowed the Diamond Arrow Award for Leaders and Outstanding First Overall Achievers in KwaZulu-Natal.*

Furthermore, Khan highlighted that the award followed the recent Times Higher Education World University Rankings that placed DUT in the top five of all South African Universities. "We are extremely grateful to PMR Africa for acknowledging DUT's role to stimulate economic growth and development in KwaZulu-Natal. Our DNA at DUT is people-centred and engaged, innovative and entrepreneurial, which are vital ingredients of our ENVISION 2030 strategy," he said.

PMR Africa conducts its research telephonically and it is not pre-coded, meaning that it is up to the respondents to nominate and rate the candidates in the various categories on certain criteria. The whole research and survey process is independently funded by PMR Africa so that the integrity and independence of the research is preserved.

In his closing remarks, PMR Africa CEO Johan Hattingh congratulated all the winners and further encouraged them to continue striving for excellence while identifying potential, excellence of all personnel and members of staff for their commitment, dedication and hard work for contributing to the achievements of the company or institution.

**Noxolo Memela**



# DR LINGANISO NOMINATED AS AN ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER OF AFRICAN INNOVATION WEEK

**D**irector of Research and Postgraduate Support at DUT Dr Linda Liganiso has been nominated as an Advisory Board Member of the African Innovation Week (AIW) for the next five years starting from this year.

AIW is a global movement aiming to enervise innovation and entrepreneurship that brings tangible and inclusive development in the African continent.

Dr Liganiso, a scientist, author and inventor is ecstatic after the AIW Board Chairperson informed her of the outcomes of the nomination in November.

Speaking about her nomination, Dr Liganiso said that it is such a great honour and a responsibility for her as a woman in science and innovation and as Research Director at DUT.

“It is fascinating to find out that someone out there is recognising my inputs in the innovation ecosystem, not only in South Africa but in the African continent. Me being part of this continental drive



*Pictured: DUT's Research Director Dr Linda Liganiso.*

will surely put DUT on the map and help strengthen strategic partnerships for research and innovation. I will also gain an in-depth understanding of the continental innovation trends and how the African continent tackles innovation issues,” said Dr Liganiso.

She added that being a member of the AIW Advisory Board will, in turn, help her to accordingly direct research and innovation at DUT.

Furthermore, Dr Liganiso said that the nomination will provide a platform for her to provide ‘wise counsel’ on issues raised by management while providing unbiased insights and ideas from a third point-of-view (not involved in the operation of the business) and

impose challenges to the management that could improve the African Innovation Week. She plans to also ensure that the implementation of activities aligns with their vision/strategy for the betterment of the African continent.

Dr Liganiso believes that this opportunity has presented itself through her innovative approach to research within the academic

“ *Me being part of this continental drive will surely put DUT on the map and help strengthen strategic partnerships for research and innovation. I will also gain an in-depth understanding of the continental innovation trends and how the African continent tackles innovation issues. – Dr Liganiso* ”



space as well as her contribution towards patent generation in the country, where there are very few women.

Previously, she was part of similar platforms in South Africa such as the South African Science Forum, Innovation Bridge, Leaders in Innovation Fellowship, African Women in Innovation and Entrepreneurship Forum (AWIEF), Global CleanTech Innovation Programme (GCIP), South African Innovation Bridge, to name a few.

Focusing on what she aims to achieve from AIW, Dr Linganiso explained: “As an innovation-driven researcher who would like to contribute to the AIW vision, generally, I am keen to understand how the innovation ecosystem works in the African continent and create or add value as per the AIW strategy, national and international priorities. I’m keen to have a significant contribution to building the future Leaders of the African continent as the AIW logo states, Building the future Leaders of Africa,” elaborated Dr Linganiso.

She highlighted that the vision of AIW is to create a global platform that gathers innovative African start-ups to come together and share their experiences with Norwegian and international entrepreneurs, connect with potential investors, executive bodies and game-changers to pave the way for sustainable, mutual and inclusive development.

Lastly, Dr Linganiso said that what impressed her about AIW is its code of conduct, which clearly states that it does not tolerate discrimination or abuse due to origin, skin colour, gender, sexual orientation, religion or ethnicity. She noted that they expect everyone to treat one another respectfully and with gentleness, which aligns with the Stewardship Perspective of DUT’s ENVISION 2030.

***Simangele Zuma***



# DUT GCI LAUNCHES FOOD SECURITY PROJECT

**D**UT's Green Campus Initiative (GCI) launched their Food Security Project by starting a garden at a deserted spot at the Steve Biko Residence in November.

The aim of the project is to use the garden to plant vegetables in a bid to ensure that no student at the residence goes hungry.

GCI Chairperson Mandisa Kheswa, a final-year Information and Communications Technology (ICT) student, said that they plan to plant onion, spinach, carrot and cabbage seeds as the next step. They were assisted by Doctor Khumalo, who is the Residence Advisor at the Steve Biko Residence.

“We cleared the space we allocated for our garden and fertilised the soil. We also brainstormed how we will grow vegetables. We established this garden after noticing that a lot of students don't have enough food at res to last them for a month. There will be a time where we will allow students to take vegetables from the garden,” said Kheswa.

Kheswa said that GCI, a student-based organisation promoting greening and sustainability formed in 2013, allows any student to join no matter what their course or year of study.

“During COVID-19 lockdown, we had to come up with ways to conduct our projects in a manner that will not compromise the students' safety,” said Kheswa.

Despite being an ICT student, Kheswa said that her love for nature and planting vegetables started back home at Mahlongwa on the



*Pictured: Members of the DUT GCI fertilising the soil for their garden project.*

South Coast. She was attracted to GCI the first time she heard about it and believes that every student should at least volunteer at one organisation to make a change in people's lives.

“What inspires me is to know that this project will touch the future. Even after I have left DUT, students will benefit from this garden. I believe that every student should have a garden. I also like the initiative from Checkers of giving shoppers a pot plant. We have used them to decorate the residence yard,” said Kheswa.

Those interested in environmental sustainability and who want to be a part of this great initiative are invited to join GCI.

**Simangele Zuma**

“What inspires me is to know that this project will touch the future. Even after I have left DUT, students will benefit from this garden. – Mandisa Kheswa”



# DUT TO TRAIN 300 GIRLS ON CODING AND ROBOTICS

**D**UT will open its doors to 300 young girls from deeply rural schools across KwaZulu-Natal to help them acquire coding and robotic skills, and thus help them to thrive as future science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) entrepreneurs and executives.

This was revealed at the launch of the Code Like A Girl 2020 Programme held at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre (ICC) in November. The programme is a joint initiative between DUT, Vodacom, the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and the Centre for the Advancement of Science and Mathematics Education (CASME).

Outlining the objectives of the partnership, DUT's Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Innovation and Engagement, Prof Sibusiso Moyo said that for DUT, coding is key because girls make up more than 50% of the population.

"If they are not trained, they will not be active players in our economy because they will not have access to higher education in the right areas. I would like to acknowledge the Department of Education, CASME and Vodacom especially for driving this programme and for approaching DUT," said Prof Moyo.

She also acknowledged DUT's Senior ICT lecturer Ebrahim Asmal and his team for ensuring that the launch was a success.

Furthermore, Prof Moyo said that the network connectivity challenge in the Province needs to be addressed to ensure that everyone can access the same type of education, exposure and skills, despite where they come from. She was excited to receiving the 300 students from 12 districts in KwaZulu-Natal.

KZN MEC for Education Kwazi Mshengu said: "We are going to start during the December holidays. We had hoped that we would start



*Pictured left: DUT's Deputy Vice-Chancellor Prof Sibusiso Moyo.*



*Pictured right: Code Like A Girl 2019 alumni Zothile Ncube.*

with about 900 but due to COVID-19 regulations, we have reduced it. In the ensuing years, we are going to expand this programme as we are giving them an opportunity to be exposed, and at the end of the programme they would have the basic skills around coding and robotics," said Mshengu.

He said that the Department of Education are happy that they will begin piloting the subject of coding and robotics in 2021, with the hope that by 2022 it will be offered as a subject in the public schools.

Vodacom KZN Managing Executive Chris Lazarus acknowledged DUT and said that he is pleased to work with an institution that is localised within KwaZulu-Natal and has the passion of the Province at heart.

He introduced last year's Code Like A Girl 2019 alumna Zothile Ncube, who is a Grade 10 learner at Hlahlindlela High School at KwaNgcolosi near Hillcrest. "We are going to going to make them



relevant not only in South Africa, but globally too. We have an opportunity for the first time as long as we have connectivity, to say we no longer need to follow America in terms of having access to the same amount of content,” said Lazarus.

Ncube thanked Vodacom for giving her school an opportunity to learn coding, which has helped her to change her outlook on information and communications technology (ICT) careers. Coding has helped her to learn how to create a website, a task she feels every youth should know, especially since technology is now being used to do a lot of things. She said that Vodacom sponsored them with laptops, cell phones and Wi-Fi routers, which are helping them do schoolwork.

Representing the Centre for the Advancement of Science and Mathematics Education (CASME), Henre Benson said that in STEM, girls are underrepresented and this is a wonderful opportunity to close that gap.

He commended teachers for reaching out to their learners through all kinds of different platforms during the difficult COVID-19 lockdown, using technology to continue the learning journey.

“Technology is fundamental to how we are going to close these gaps. Code Like A Girl is a significant part of that story. We really need to have society see science as providing solutions. This is an opportunity for us to expand this initiative even beyond our wildest expectations,” said Benson.

**Simangele Zuma**

**“ We have an opportunity for the first time as long as we have connectivity, to say we no longer need to follow America in terms of having access to the same amount of content. – Chris Lazarus ”**





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