

CONDUIT

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INSIDE
THIS
ISSUE

Mtulu is Eager
to Tackle
Projects at
DUT



Page 2

Two DUT
Academic Staff
chosen for
2019 Black
Academics
Advancement
Programme



Page 4

Kankisingi
Honours his
Dad by
Becoming the
First Doctor in
his Family



Page 7

DUT INTRODUCES THE FIRST COIL CLUB AND COIL CLINIC



Pictured: Left to right - David Thomas (Library), Maud Blose (Journalism), Sanja Bauk (Maritime Studies), Fathima Dewan (Child and Youth Care), Lesley Cooke (IEP Office), Nomfundo Mbatha (Information and Corporate Management), Cleo Prince (Chiropractic) and Penny Orton (Nursing/COIL Coordinator).

WAHEEDA PETERS

The CONDUIT speaks to COIL coordinator Dr Penny Orton more about the first COIL Club and COIL Clinic which has been introduced at the Durban University of Technology (DUT).

She added that Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) as part of the DUT strategic driver to internationalise the curriculum is managed through DUT's International Education and Partnerships Office.

She stressed that DUT was the first University in Africa to be part of the SUNY Global Network of international universities.

"My role has been one of coordinating the project for DUT and we have for the last two years been growing the interest which led, in 2018, to the COIL forum and a COIL clinic which is a drop in 'clinic' once a week for any lecturer who would like more information, help to find a partner, assistance with their project or just a chat about COIL," she said.

Dr Orton said DUT has tried to move the clinic around a bit so that it is more accessible to staff with mixed success. The initiative has led to the holding of workshops, training programmes and the latest addition, being the COIL Journal Club.

"This is where we hope to engage the lecturers in some academic discourse on the pedagogy of virtual engagement or exchange. We are also part of the SUNY Research Forum for COIL research – it is in its infancy," she said.

COIL is an initiative of the State University of New York (SUNY) and one model of virtual engagement or exchange. It was started about 13 years ago by Dr Jon Rubin who had an opportunity for mobility from the US into Eastern Europe and the rich cultural exchange this afforded him, and made him realise that very few could physically travel to another country, but through virtual exchange all could have an international experience. COIL has three outcomes besides the discipline content which might be part of the project or not. All COIL projects endeavour to build cultural competence in students, technological skills and the issue of working in an international team or group. These are often thought of as soft skills but those that employers are often critical of the universities as far as graduate attributes go.

A COIL project is developed between two or more lecturers across two or more countries, need not be disciplinary matches and so offers opportunities for innovative teaching across disciplines. The lecturers meet

virtually, over a few weeks, using any platform they chose, Skype, Zoom, Face Book, WhatsApp, etc and can plan their project over project in some detail. The projects are ideally four to six weeks long and can be delivered on any virtual platform they chose – from LMS to other apps like Padlet, Google and so on.

At DUT, Dr Orton said that there are a number of lecturers involved in COIL projects with some very successful innovative projects – Maud Blose in Journalism, Mamothibe Thamae in Education in Pietermaritzburg, Sanja Bauk in Maritime Studies, Fathima Dewan Child & Youth Care, Dudu Sokhela in Nursing, and Dr Anisa Vahed-senior lecturer/dental technologist in the Department of Dental Sciences, Faculty of Health Sciences, to name but a few.



EDITOR'S CORNER

Greetings to all our readers, what a pleasure it is to welcome you to the first edition of the CONDUIT for 2019. It is remarkably amazing to be able to share this space with you once again especially since we have some new members to our DUT family.

Although we might not have featured all our new colleagues in this edition, but we are happy that they are now part of our big dynamic family. The University has faced a lot of challenges, some that have been visibly played out even for the public to see, however, I am glad that through those challenges we still soldiered on and managed to rise and claim our mark in our society. Which is fantastic because life is just about that, however, we as human beings we allowed ourselves to believe that our challenges are bigger than us, when they are actually not. We just need to know and assure ourselves that what we view as a life-threatening problem is actually a stepping stone to something greater. You discover this when you start sharing your challenges with the next person and they share theirs with you, that is when you step back and realise that other people have bigger problems than you.

Challenges make us very strong and without them I don't think we would know the value of appreciating our achievements. A life without challenges can simply be somewhat meaningless because we will have nothing to look back on nor compare the good times to. Our challenges as an institution have come in many forms, ranging from not truly embracing culture change, the change in our management, change in the curriculum, just to name a few. But, regardless of all this, our colleagues, students and alumni have not stopped to represent us well to the world out there and I can honestly say that is how we have continuously reclaimed our pride as a University.

I am truly proud of all our achievements and those who have made them possible. We congratulate our Vice-Chancellor and Principal Professor Thandwa Mthembu for his appointment to the Umgeni Water Board. Prof Mthembu is not the only member of the DUT executive who has been making strides in these prominent boards, our Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Innovation and Engagement Professor Sibusiso Moyo has also been appointed by the Director General of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) to serve on the Research Output Evaluation panel for the next three years. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor: People and Operations, Dr Isaac Machi was appointed to be part of the board of the National Tertiary Retirement Fund. Furthermore, the Director: Special Projects in the office of the Vice-Chancellor, Dr David Mohale was appointed to be a board member of the Municipal Demarcation Board. At DUT we just never stop celebrating, we also applaud Maud Blose from the Journalism Programme and Indrani Govender from Horticulture for being chosen to be part of the prestigious 2019 Black Academics Advancement Programme.

The above-mentioned achievements are not the only ones, there are so many good things happening around our institution. Our students and staff are seizing the world and making strides in all sectors. Therefore, investing our energy on challenges is not only a waste of our precious time but it is also a recipe for disaster, when we have so much to celebrate. I am certain that as the year progresses, we will hear of more appointments, success stories and accolades accomplished by our colleagues in the different sectors, committees and activities that they are part of because trust me when I say, where a DUT member is part of something, that thing is bound to turn into gold.

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Please don't hesitate to share with us your achievements and your celebrations. Although some might not be featured in the CONDUIT, we have the DUT website (<http://www.dut.ac.za>) and our three social media pages

(Facebook: DurbanUniversityofTechnology,

Twitter: @dut_tweets and

Instagram: dut_official1).

To send us these marvellous news, email us at

Communications@dut.ac.za

MTULU IS EAGER TO TACKLE PROJECTS AT DUT

WAHEEDA PETERS

"Teamwork is very important, one also needs to be flexible and have good communication and interpersonal skills because the job is service-orientated, so teamwork is vital in my line of job," said the new interim Maintenance Manager, Zukiswa Mtulu.

The Durban University of Technology (DUT) appointed the charismatic Mtulu as the interim Maintenance Manager from September 2018, who is excited to tackle and manage new projects as well as bring about change to the institution in terms of maintenance.

She stressed that she always says to her team that we (maintenance) are a support structure to the students because this is a University, and students are the clients, so in terms of work that is conducted on the campuses should be based on that ideology.

"My role is to make sure that the University's maintenance is of the high standards and to ensure and create an environment that is conducive for students and staff towards teaching and learning. I'm trying to understand the culture of the University and incorporate what needs to be done. I also want to improve the image of this department because maintenance does not have a good reputation at the various campuses, so my aim is to change that negative perception into a positive one," she chuckled.

Mtulu has more than 13 years of working with contractors and project management experience, with her background qualification being in Quantity Surveying. "The built environment has always been my playground, I'm used to working in a male-dominated environment, it doesn't bother me. I don't even think about it because for me it's work," she said.

Her advice to young females aiming to embark in such a career is to ensure that they get the job done to the best of their abilities and to never lose focus. "Gender should never be an issue if you had that in mind. You are just as capable if not better," she said.

In terms of what projects lie ahead for DUT, Mtulu said she is excited about a planned Student Centre, Hall, Refurbishment of the Steve Biko Library Complex (External Façade and Roof), Refurbishment of Mansfield Hall, Refurbishment of Blocks G1 to G3, H1 to H3 and the Hotel School Restaurant which is on the cards and construction should commence this year, 2019.



Pictured: DUT's Interim Head of Maintenance, Zukiswa Mtulu.

DUT INTRODUCES THE FIRST COIL CLUB AND COIL CLINIC

continued from ... page 1

She stressed that COIL is beneficial to students because they get an opportunity to work with international peers on a project which allows them to experience another culture, to identify that they are not so different from students in other parts of the world; that everyone experiences similar problems no matter where they are in the world, and get to work with different technologies and sometimes make lifelong friends with their international counterparts.

"We encourage them to put this project onto their CV so an employer can see that they have worked in an international collaboration using technology – often an important skill, particularly in multi-national companies. The best part is students love it! They love being part of something innovative and international," she said.

Dr Orton said DUT has many partnerships, and is part of the SUNY COIL Global Network.

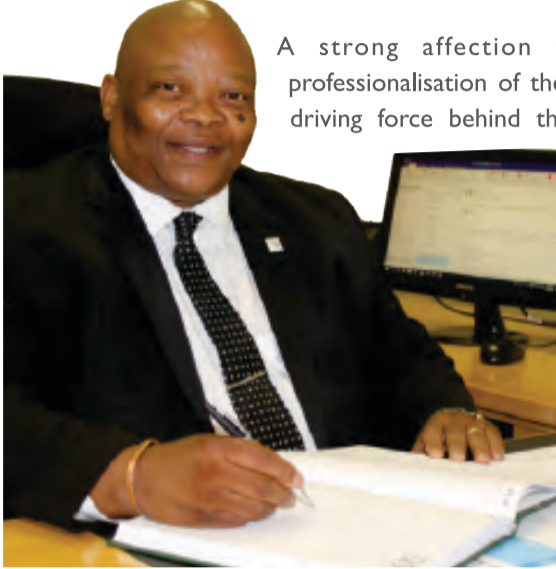
"We are also starting to move beyond SUNY and partner with many more European and UK universities. The partnership is more about finding the partner and it is not critical which country they are in. In the SUNY Global Network there are many South American and Latin American universities and DUT has some very successful projects with partners in those universities. We want to start reaching into Africa and partnering with African universities – that is our next focus," she stressed.

She encourages DUT staff who have students to join the COIL CLUB.

"You just need to have a module which you can embed a small COIL project into," she said.

For more information on COIL JOURNAL CLUB, contact: Dr Penny Orton on 031 373 2537 or email: penny@dut.ac.za.

DR NKONOANE AIMS TO CLOSE THE GAP BETWEEN MANAGEMENT AND STUDENTS



Pictured: Dr Maditsane Nkonoane.

and engagement with the SRC, I hope to bridge the gap between management and students and thereby obviate student strife which continues to be rampant in the Higher Education sector,”

he said.

“In resonance with my shared quest and pursuit for professionalisation of student affairs practice, colleagues will be exposed to relevant staff development opportunities including benchmarking with other institutions for best practice, particularly in Student Governance and Student Housing. A Student Services Charter will also be developed to ensure that there is better service delivery in tandem with the DUT's DNA strand of 'student-centredness,’”

he added.

The former educator and lecturer, commenced his duties as the Dean of Students at DUT from 01 February 2019 - a period in which the University experienced challenges with student protests and he had to hit the ground running. “Although slightly turbulent, and not necessarily unfamiliar/foreign from day one as a result of student protests, I am settling well in my new job. I have been generally well received and continue to enjoy collegial 'on-boarding' support from senior and junior colleagues beyond Student Services,” he said.

He also shared a personal welcome note that he received from the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Professor Thandwa Mthembu in welcoming him to DUT. “Welcome to DUT; a University that will surely expose you to many things you may not have experienced at the scale you will experience them. Ironically it's those things that made me think I took the right decision to come to DUT; to the benefit of my personal and professional growth. I would have been poorer retiring from the sector without the DUT experience,” Prof Mthembu said.

The vastly experienced Dr Nkonoane started his career as a History and English teacher at Lephola Secondary School. He later joined the then Vista University as a lecturer in the Faculty of Education. He went on to serve as an Academic Development Practitioner in the Department of Student Affairs at the Welkom Campus of Vista University. With the incorporation of the Welkom Campus of Vista University in 2004, Dr Nkonoane was then appointed as Manager: Student Services, at the Welkom Campus of the newly created Central University of Technology, Free State (CUT). He later served the same University as the Deputy Campus Director prior to joining DUT as Dean of Students.

He is an active member of the National Association of Student Development (NASDEV), South African Association of Senior Student Affairs Professionals (SAASSAP), and South African Federation for Student Affairs and Services (SAFSAS) Dr Nkonoane also served as a representative of non-academic staff at CUT's Institutional Forum, Senate, and Council, and was thus exposed to the rigours of university governance as prescribed by South African Higher Education legislative framework.

Dr Nkonoane holds a B Ed(Honours) and M Ed degrees through the erstwhile Vista University, as well as the Certificate in Higher Education Leadership and Management (HELM) through Wits University, and further obtained his PhD in 2014 at CUT, with the thesis entitled, “Capacity Building Among Student Affairs Practitioners in Higher Education Institutions in South Africa with regard to Student Governance”.

Dr Nkonoane, affectionately known as Dix is an ardent supporter of Kaizer Chiefs Football Club and enjoys listening to a broad range of music genres which includes choral music, gospel, jazz and fusion.

NDUDUZO NDLOVU

A strong affection with student development and professionalisation of the student affairs practice is a constant driving force behind the Durban University of Technology's (DUT's) newly appointed Dean of Students, Dr Maditsane Nkonoane.

Dr Nkonoane briefly shared his vision for driving Student Services at DUT.

“My main priority will be to ensure that Student Services is fit for purpose in terms of supporting the University's vision, mission, and core values. Through continued constructive dialogue

MHLONGO AIMS TO IMPROVE DUT PROTECTION SERVICES



Pictured: Melusi Mhlongo

NDUDUZO NDLOVU

Putting in place an efficient operational structure and creating a better understanding about the broader role of Protection Services amongst internal stakeholders, are some of the key priorities for the newly appointed Head of Department: Protection Services at the Durban University of Technology (DUT).

“I think it is important for DUT staff and students to understand the role of Protection Services because in some instances, cases that are reported to our department are not necessarily within the scope of our service. So I think it is important to create awareness about the broader responsibilities of Protection Services within DUT;”

Mhlongo said.

“In this regard, I have made a proposal that we should have an officer that will act as a link between Protection Services and the Communications Department, in order to facilitate timeous communication of activities within our department that should be shared with the broader University community. I have already groomed someone within the department who is the link between our department and the Legal department,”

he added.

Mhlongo's appointment as Head of Department: Protection Services was with effect from 01 February 2019, he is also responsible for Transport in Midlands campuses. He boasts over 22 years within the protection and security industry, and he has been part of DUT's Protection Services since 2010, serving in various capacities, including several stints as the acting Head of Department.

His career began as a Security Guard for Secureco and he then trained as a Protection/Bodyguard and was given the opportunity to be a bodyguard for various MEC's such as the former KZN premiers, Dr Zweli Mkhize and Sbu Ndebele. He has also worked as team leader for the Provincial Protection Services Unit within NPA. Prior to joining DUT, he has worked for Security International as an Operations Manager for DUT Campuses. He has a Higher Certificate in Introduction to Corporate Forensic Investigating from Damelin, a GradeA Security licence and also a Private Security Industry Regulatory Authority Statutory (PSIRA) GradeA licence.

Mhlongo told the Conduit that he is looking forward to serving DUT in this capacity with distinction and dedication, and he believes that he has acquired sufficient experience and expertise within the security industry.

“I have worked within the security industry all my life serving in various aspects of the industry, and I know how to deal with most of the challenges in this industry;”

he said.

With DUT being a multi-campus institution with campuses in two cities (Durban and Pietermaritzburg), Mhlongo said there is synergy across all seven campuses to ensure that they are all well equipped with sufficient security personnel and security systems.

“I alternate between the Durban campus and Midlands campus weekly to ensure that everything is running smoothly, and I also work with a dedicated team that I trust;”

he said.

There has been an outcry about crime taking place on the outskirts of DUT campuses. He said there is a multi-stakeholder intervention and cooperation between DUT Protection Services, Taxi Associations and South African Police Services, which seeks to halt incidences of crime that are taking outside DUT campuses.

“The Berea Police Station has agreed to work with us by deploying their officers to patrol around our campuses, and the Taxi Association has assigned marshals. We also have our own security guards stationed outside our campuses around Botanic Gardens Road and Steve Biko Road;”

he said.

Mhlongo added that they are looking at introducing new technologically advanced features within their security systems.

“We have just completed a security assessment of all campuses and residences of DUT through an external service provider. This assessment has come up with proposals of technologically interventions that can improve our security systems. These interventions will be part of the specifications for the new security tender;”

explained Mhlongo.

TWO DUT ACADEMIC STAFF CHOSEN FOR 2019 BLACK ACADEMICS ADVANCEMENT PROGRAMME

WAHEEDA PETERS

Indrani (Hazel) Govender and Maud Blose are chosen to be part of the prestigious 2019 Black Academics Advancement Programme.

The programme came into being when the National Research Foundation (NRF) embarked on a strategic partnership with the FirstRand Foundation (FRF) and introduced the Black Academics Advancement Programme to promote the development of Black South African academics, to become nationally and internationally recognised researchers. This enables academics in the PhD and Post-PhD tracks to take a sabbatical for one (1) to three (3) years. The two successful applicants had applied for the Black Academics Advancement Programme NRF-FRF Sabbatical Grant 2019, and after rigorous screening, were successfully chosen.

Congratulating the two staff members, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Innovation and Engagement, Professor Sibiso Moyo thanked them both for applying. "This is what the NRF CEO was referring to. We need to encourage more DUT applicants for this programme," she said.

Govender, a lecturer in the Department of Horticulture, has an MSc in Environmental Science, and is currently doing her PhD in Ecology.

For Govender, being part of this programme is a privilege. She said it is extremely challenging to cope with a full lecturing workload, other demands of her position at DUT and family responsibilities, while trying to make progress with research. "Ultimately work is a priority and research gets attention when time allows. This programme will provide an opportunity that would allow me to achieve my goals and complete my PhD research in the time I plan to. In addition, it will enable me to complete publications that have been works in progress for the past few years, and follow up on collaboration," she said excitedly.

Her PhD topic is: Ecological Risk Assessment to Model River Resources in the UMngeni River Catchment, using the Bayesian Network Relative Risk Model. She has some years of industry experience in the water sector and finds aquatic science, water policy and governance very interesting. "I see my research as making a meaningful contribution to a sector faced with many current challenges. Environmental modelling is important to guide decision making. This has led me to pursue research in this discipline," she added.



Pictured: Maud Blose and Indrani (Hazel) Govender.

She also thanked the staff at the Research Directorate for their unwavering support in ensuring that her application was completed correctly and on time. She also encourages more staff to take advantage of opportunities presented at DUT to support their progress.

The second successful DUT staff member, Maud Blose, is a lecturer in the Journalism Programme. "I'm speechless on being chosen to be on the NRF-FRF's Black Academic Advancement Programme. This is an amazing opportunity that will help fast-track my PhD research project. Through this funding, I'm now going to be able to go on sabbatical leave until I graduate with my doctoral degree. I'll forever be grateful for the academic supervision I have under Professor Deirdre 'Dee' Pratt and Professor Jean-Phillipe Wade. They both continue to see something in me that I sometimes forget to see myself," she said.

She stressed that such programmes are vital for DUT staff and students alike because DUT is an institution that prides itself on academic excellence, and one of the strategic focus areas of the institution is building research and innovation for development. "Opportunities such as the Black Academic Advancement Programme are some of the ways to materialise this focus area. The implementation of the four strategic focus areas requires that the entire DUT community not rest on its laurels but cease opportunities and strive for excellence at all times. It's important that staff and students alike realise that opportunities are available for all to play a key role in the development of this world through innovative research outcomes," she added.

Her PhD topic is: Exploring gender identities of females from townships in Durban as represented and negotiated through stereotypes by South African soap operas: *Generations: The Legacy and Isidingo: The Need*.

As excited and blessed as she feels to be afforded with this opportunity, she will dearly miss her students when she's on sabbatical. "I often refer to them as my babies and seeing them excel in all areas of their lives, especially out in the industry, is priceless. This is why lecturing to me is not a job but a hobby that I engage in everyday and I always tell people that there's nothing better than being paid for doing something that I love. Through this funding, the sabbatical leave will help me be a better academic, an asset to the institution and continue being a role model to many," she said.

PROF MTHEMBU APPOINTED TO THE BOARD OF UMGENI WATER

NDUDUZO NDLOVU



The Durban University of Technology (DUT) Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Professor Thandwa Mthembu said his appointment to serve as the Board Member of Umgeni Water is a great opportunity for deepening DUT's partnerships with government, its agencies and enterprises.

Prof Mthembu was appointed to the board of the second-largest water board in the country (Umgeni Water), alongside 11 other new members of the board. The new board will serve a term of four years.

"Quad-Helix of partnerships are about universities entering into partnerships with government (and its agencies and enterprises), business/industry and the broader society. This appointment demonstrates just that" said Prof Mthembu.

"DUT already has a partnership with Umgeni Water, a state owned entity. A number of our teaching-learning and research-innovation programmes actually serve the interests of Umgeni Water and various other entities. Thus, being the Board is just one way of strengthening this partnership and it allows us to demonstrate the impact we are making in the water sector, especially through our Institute for Water and Wastewater Technology," he added.

Prof Mthembu said he hopes to use his extensive experience in executive management to contribute towards sound management of the institution. "I hope to contribute to, amongst others, good corporate governance, strategic management, organisational sustainability, and efficiency and effectiveness of service to Umgeni Water's stakeholders," he said.

He added that it is important for leaders in academia to contribute towards the development of various structures of our society including government entities. "For optimal impact, academics should be out there where they want to make a mark. We also need specialists in government and industry to engage with academia all for the benefit of our broader society," he added.

Pictured: Prof Thandwa Mthembu.

PMB CAMPUSES OFFER 'STATE OF THE ART' FACILITIES

WAHEEDA PETERS

The Durban University of Technology (DUT) now has new high-tech buildings, eco-friendly library and modern classroom facilities at both their Midlands campuses, which were a culmination of a major, refurbish process, which had occurred over the past five years, costing to the tune of below two Million Rand.



Pictured: The new building at DUT's Indumiso campus.

The project was built in phases: The lecture venues were completed in June 2017. The library was then relocated to a temporary venue, whilst the new library and computer labs were constructed. The computer lab was completed in December 2017 and the library was completed in February 2018.

All three buildings were built simultaneously and were completed in December 2017 (Civil Engineering Block) and February 2018 (Library and lecture venues).

The new buildings unveiled at Riverside Campus consists of four, new raked 200 seater lecture venues with a lift and ablution facilities, extending the old library, creating three levels of library space. A mezzanine level was also added to the old hall to create computer labs, study space, social space and group rooms.

At the Indumiso Campus, there is a new three-level eco-friendly Library, two 250 seater raked lecture venues. A new Civil Engineering Block that consists of new offices, labs, workshops and student spaces.

The Conduit visited both the Pietermaritzburg libraries and spoke to DUT Subject Librarian, Lindiwe Gumede based at Indumiso Campus library. She added that the Indumiso Campus library now has a 24-hour Study Centre, which offers a study area to students after the library operating hours.

Gumede also added that there are more group rooms where students can work in groups, enough computer facilities for students to do online searches, provision for the Mobile tech area for gadgets like iPads and tablets for use by the students, and an expanded study space for students.

Both libraries are user-friendly to both abled and disabled students, and comply with all health and safety requirements. Both libraries are now fully operational, and operational hours for Indumiso Campus library are as follows, 07h30 to 24h00 from Monday to Thursday, 07h30 to 16h30 on Fridays, 08h00 to 16h00 on Saturday and the Study Centre will be open 24/7.

Reiterating more on the new facilities, Manager –Physical Planning at DUT, Mr Len Rosenberg, said the building works of phase two is now complete and the University is currently waiting for the Department of Education to respond to DUT regarding funding for phase three.

"So in two years' time, Indumiso will be a brand new campus compared to what it was in the 80s," he said excitedly.

DUT STUDENTS LOVE NEW, CREATIVE SPACES AT THE STEVE BIKO LIBRARY

WAHEEDA PETERS

Creating a space where the Durban University of Technology (DUT) students can engage in their learning was the reason behind the recent launch of the new library spaces at the Alan Pittendrigh Library, Steve Biko Campus.

Other libraries at Durban City Campus and City Campus, also have creative spaces for students to use which are now much easily accessible to them.

Speaking more on the new spaces and its facilities is Siza Radebe: Library Manager at DUT, who added that these spaces are always full to capacity from the time the library opens until closure.

He explained that the new library now has a 150 seater e-zone which has 90 computers that are available for use and 60 more computers will be added for student usage in time to come.

"There is an online booking systems (LibKi) that students use to book the computers for two hours. The workstation gives students access to a variety of online information resources and access to MS word, Excel and Powerpoint," he said.

He said the library now has 60 laptop stations which have power plugs to assist students to charge their laptops or laptops that are issued by the library for their academic work.

Radebe said a social seating area is a new feature which is a space with ottoman casual seats, providing a relaxed learning experience for the students.

"We have three training rooms which are used for the library information literacy programmes. They are also used as e-zones if there is no information literacy training scheduled," he said.

The new spaces also include staff offices and an archive work room for staff use. "There is a task team that has been put in place that is looking at the University archival material as well as the digitization. The library has acquired a digitising machine that will be used for these projects," he said.

Oyamo Skweqe, a second-year Graphic Design students said he goes regularly to the library because it now has more space to accommodate more students and it has made a lot of difference to his life.

For BTech Environmental Health student Skhunjulwe Nhlathswa, he added that he found the new spaces more suitable for him to study and it was more comfortable.

Second-year Nautical Studies student Siyabonga Mngomezulu said: "I find this new spaces very unique, comfortable and all my friends and I can sit and chill while studying. I now come more often to the library to study and to also relax."



Pictured: The new, creative library spaces at the Steve Biko Campus library.

ADVANCING 'FUTURE CHEMISTS' FOR INDUSTRY THROUGH REFURBISHED CHEMICAL LAB

WAHEEDA PETERS/NDUDUZO NDLOVU

In accordance to the Durban University of Technology's (DUT's) 2.0 Strategic Plan, creating infrastructure to embark on large institutional research, developing technology systems for continuous student feedback as well as enhancing analytics capacity to improve student successes; are key strategic drivers for building sustainable, student communities of living and learning.

Priding itself in academic excellence and innovative research, DUT's Department of Chemistry recently completed a project to refurbish the existing Wet Chemistry Laboratory, located at S10, Level 2 at the Steve Biko Campus.

Basically, Wet laboratories are laboratories where chemicals, drugs or other biological matter are tested, and Wet chemistry is a form of analytical chemistry that uses classical methods such as observation to analyse materials in the liquid phase. At DUT, improving and extending the existing, vital lab became a priority project which had begun in June 2014 when DUT initiated engagements with the Chemical Industries Education and Training Authority (CHIETA) about possibly funding this refurbishment project.

According to the Department of Chemistry's Professor Krishna Bisetty, he said the original capacity per lab was for 30 students, but with the partnership of CHIETA, the expansion and the combination of three labs into one, the newly, refurbished lab was now capable of servicing nearly 120 students, with lesser staff.

The Department of Chemistry at DUT, equipped with state-of-the-art instrumentation, utilises the knowledge, skills, expertise and resources of staff and postgraduate students to undertake consultancy work in chemistry for industry and other laboratories that do not have the specialised analytical instrumentation. In providing this analytical service the department delivers a vital capacity building exercise by exposing trainee chemists to work with 'realtime' samples.

The department also carry out 'Third Party' analysis as and when required by industry with supplied methodology.



Pictured: Faculty of Applied Sciences Executive Dean, Prof Suren Singh, CHIETA Acting CEO, Kedibone Moroane and CHIETA Regional Manager, Rajen Naidoo, at the opening the refurbished Wet Chemistry Laboratory.

"Part of the reason we've embarked on this lab expansion project is because the Department of Chemistry is servicing about 19 to 20 DUT programmes, and we needed more capacity,"

he said.

DUT Faculty of Applied Sciences, Executive Dean Prof Suren Singh said good infrastructure is also needed for research.

"If you want to push your researchers, you need to have a strong foundation, which means in the first, second and third years you need labs. You need a floor in which when a student walks in, he or she is encouraged to do chemistry,"

he said.

Prof Singh also stressed that research was one of the key agendas that was focused on by the Chemistry department, and having three C-rated scientists, producing and publishing more than 60 research papers in international journals, was a strong indicator of how robust DUT scientists are in terms of research.

HIGHLIGHTS OF DUTGRAD2019

The Durban University of Technology (DUT) hosted its graduation ceremonies for the Midlands campuses from Monday, 29 April 2019 to Tuesday, 30 April 2019 at the FJ Sithole Hall, Indumiso Campus in Pietermaritzburg.

The Durban graduation ceremonies commenced on Monday, 6 May 2019 and concluded on Tuesday, 14 May 2019.

The 2019 Autumn graduation numbers once again showed that more females than males graduated from DUT. A total number of 3802 female students graduated this Autumn whilst 2981 males received their qualifications.

Graduates, parents and guardians were dressed to impressed. Here is a few highlights of graduates who proved their mettle with not only their academics but also proving they are DUT's ambassadors to future DUT students.

MOONSAMY MAKES HISTORY AS HER MASTER'S THESIS IS CONVERTED INTO A PHD



Pictured: Ghaneshree Moonsamy

NDUDUZO NDLOVU

Ghaneshree Moonsamy achieved an extraordinary accomplishment when her thesis for a Master's degree in Biotechnology at the Durban University of Technology (DUT), was converted into a PhD thesis because of its superior quality. "Due to the content and quality of my Masters, my supervisors suggested that we attempt to apply for a degree conversion from a master's to a doctoral degree. I was successful in this application and was the first student to ever do this at DUT," said the confident Moonsamy who was conferred with her PhD in Biotechnology at the Fred Crookes Sports Centre, Steve Biko Campus in Durban.

Despite taking some time to complete his thesis, Moonsamy said she is proud of her remarkable achievement. "It's still surreal, I am unsure how I feel about it, because it has been such a monumental journey. So many extreme highs and terrible lows. I am so glad to have made it to the finish line," she said excitedly.

The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), Senior Researcher said her study was based on the development of a production process for a probiotic microorganism, used in abalone aquaculture. "Abalone, or 'perlemoen' is a seafood delicacy that is cultivated

primarily in land-based aquaculture systems. The South African abalone industry in particular, is under severe pressure due to illegal harvesting and poaching of this seafood delicacy. In addition to the illegal harvesting, the growth of the abalone is extremely slow, and as a result, supply seldom meets global demand. Probiotics can be used in abalone production as a mechanism to boost growth rate and limit disease proliferation," she said. "This study focused on the development of a bioprocess technology for the production of *Vibrio midae*, a probiotic of value in abalone aquaculture. In this study, a cultivation process, medium composition and product formulation were tailor-made to produce this probiotic in a high efficiency production process. The demonstration of this technology at full manufacturing scale resulted in a patented technology, and has highlighted the attractiveness and commercial feasibility of this production process," she added.

The Verulam – born Moonsamy said her journey was not always easy particularly on the personal front, but nonetheless she persevered. "I would have preferred if I had completed my doctoral degree in a shorter time period, however, I realised that everything happens at the right time, in God's time, and not in my time," she said.

She also expressed gratitude to her parents, supervisors and colleagues. "From a young age my parents have been constantly instilling the value of education, determination, hard work and perseverance. This success is a culmination of these factors in my life. My supervisors and team at CSIR have also been instrumental," said Moonsamy.

For Moonsamy the sky is certainly the limit, as she is currently pursuing another qualification, a Master's degree in Management in Innovation Studies at the University of Witwatersrand. "My future plan is to use the skills set that I have acquired, and the ones that I am yet to acquire to make a positive impact and useful contribution to society. I feel strongly about the potential of our country, and truly believe that science and technology can bring about the change that is required. I am passionate about education, training and all things STEMI related, and wish to execute my mission statement of "people, passion, purpose" to the best of my ability," she added.

OBTAINING A PHD IS A SENSE OF ELATION FOR DR RAMRATHAN

WAHEEDA PETERS

"Completion was like discovery of new land, quite frankly felt like sailing the rough seas for three longest years of my life, hence reaching the pinnacle with positivity claims a sense of elation,"

said the jubilant

Sathishah (Nishi) Ramrathan, Student Recruitment Officer, at the Durban University of Technology (DUT).

The charismatic Ramrathan graduated with her Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in The Faculty of Management Science, at the Fred Crookes Sports Centre on 11 May 2019.

Her thesis explored the Inequality in Institutional Marketing Access to higher education by marginalized communities.

Speaking more on her topic, Dr Ramrathan said student recruitment is her job, where she does institutional marketing in rural and deep rural areas. Her experience in these areas have inspired her to explore and deeply understand community's challenges and needs in accessing Higher education.



"Through a social justice perspective, this understanding is a gateway for community engagement for appropriate and necessary interventions and developments. Noting the inequalities of access in such communities, the social justice aspect would be better informed through the equality stance that is needed to uplift these communities for access to higher learning,"

she said.

Through her findings the study proposes a marketing strategy that is located within a social justice, equity and equality framework that aligns institutional marketing with the needs of the communities located in deep rural and impoverished contexts.

"The study, therefore, makes recommendations to higher education institutions about marketing strategies that would be relevant to a diverse target market for higher education. In addition, the study makes recommendations to address inequalities in institutional marketing that could lead to views about substantive equality needed for higher education transformation within the current South African context,"

she said.

Dr Ramrathan explained that when one embarks upon a PhD, which is a pinnacle decision, then that becomes a priority. "You embody a particular persona, which literally takes a break from who you are. And the return to who you are after the PhD is what brings appreciation of what it means to be a doctoral student and indeed a scholar," she added. Her future goal entails building on her current scholarship to inform policy and process on student recruitment.

ASHOKCOOMAR'S PHD STUDY COMES UP WITH SOLUTIONS TO SAVE CRITICALLY ILL PREMATURE BABIES

NDUDUZO NDLOVU



Pictured: Pradeep Ashokcoomar's family after receiving his qualification on his behalf.

The late Pradeep Ashokcoomar is conferred with his PhD (posthumous) in Emergency Medical Care.

It was mixed emotions of happiness and sadness for family, friends and colleagues of the late Pradeep Ashokcoomar, when he was conferred with his PhD (posthumous) in Emergency Medical Care within the Faculty of Health Sciences on 14 May 2019, at the Fred Crookes Sports Centre, Steve Biko Campus in Durban.

The title of his thesis was: 'Inter – Healthcare Facility Transfer of Critically Ill Neonates: The Development of a Programme for Emergency Medical Care in South African context'. Ashokcoomar passed away in January 2019.

His brother Ryan Dukhi described him as a tough, committed and intelligent person whose zest for life was second to none. "He was a vibrant and happy person, despite adversities. However, he had a serious side when it came to emergency medical care and helping people in general," he said.

Dukhi said even though Ashokcoomar is no longer around to witness his great moment (graduation), but his family is very proud of his achievement. "Pradeep was a dedicated and hard working person. Although he is not here to celebrate his amazing achievement, the honour bestowed on him makes his family even prouder of him than we already are," he said.

Ashokcoomar's PhD thesis Supervisor, Professor Raisuyah Bhagwan described him as someone who was very passionate about people and saving lives. "His work as a paramedic made him more aware of the crucial role paramedics played in saving lives. During his journey as an advanced life paramedic he became more aware that critically ill premature babies or neonates were dying due to multiple factors that could have been avoided during their transfer from one hospital to another for specialised care," she said. "This prompted a study that would interrogate all aspects of the transfer process, the infrastructure, and the difficulties of ground and air transport in a developing country and the preparedness of paramedics to deal with neonatal clinical emergencies. He was inspired by his love for these babies who he had to transfer under strenuous circumstances... he was inspired by his colleagues and the difficulties they faced during air and road transport to transfer and save critically ill neonates. More importantly was his sensitivity towards the fact that new mothers were overlooked during the transfer," she added.

Among some of the key findings from Ashokcoomar's six – year study, he discovered that neonatal transfer system in South Africa is in a very poor state. It lacks specialised transport vehicles and specialised equipment to save fragile babies, the transfer process is beset with a range of communication difficulties which also jeopardises the way the transfer of critically ill neonates is co – ordinated. Most importantly the study highlights that paramedics lack educational preparedness and training to deal with various neonatal clinical emergencies.

Prof Bhagwan added that by interviewing neonatologists, paramedics and emergency care academics, Pradeep was able to identify what was needed at multiple levels in order to effect a safer transfer. "Most importantly the study heard through the voices of the mothers of these neonates the trauma endured when their babies are transferred to another hospital. Often they are unprepared for this, are recovering from having just given birth and have to endure watching their fragile neonate being transferred for specialised care. Mothers said that even when they accompanied their babies their health issues were overlooked in the ambulance, as the focus was on keeping the critically ill neonate alive," she said.

She said the study has immense value for neonatal transfers in a developing country like South Africa. Adding that the focus of the study was to develop a multi-faceted programme that would guide the implementation of a new neonatal transfer system in South Africa. "It identified the infrastructure required to effect safer transfers, the requisite equipment needed but more importantly the unique skills required by paramedics to deal with various neonatal clinical emergencies. The study recommended the need for a separate module which specifically identifies the knowledge and skills required by paramedics to deal with neonatal clinical emergencies," Prof Bhagwan said.

She said this is the hardest moment of her academic career because she knows the adversities that Ashokcoomar had to endure in order to achieve his PhD. "I had to shift my role from supervisor to that of 'friend', I had to bear witness to his tremendous pain and suffering, whilst having to comfort him and give him the strength to complete the changes needed for him to pass. I was in a desperate bid for time, hoping that he would make graduation as he always shared with me how he was looking forward to this moment (graduation). I am comforted by the legacy he has left behind through his work as it will go a long way to overhauling the transfer neonatal system in SA," she added.



Pictured: Dr Gustave Mungeni Kankisingi.

KANKISINGI HONOURS HIS DAD BY BECOMING THE FIRST DOCTOR IN HIS FAMILY

WAHEEDA PETERS

For Gustave Mungeni Kankisingi graduating with his PhD in Management Sciences (Business Administration) on Friday, 10 May 2019, means more than anything since he had immigrated to South Africa from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) 15 years ago. He graduated at the Fred Crookes Sports Centre, Steve Biko Campus

For him, the field he chose was his dream study from a young age, because of inspiration from his family and his curiosity to understand the dynamics of the business world.

"My motivation was to also achieve my dream qualification, I was driven by a strong desire to be a Doctor and the first in my family to achieve this. I was driven to honour my father. I think there is more I can offer the community with this qualification,"

he stressed.

He is currently working as a contract lecturer at DUT under the department of Entrepreneurial Studies and Management from 2015, where he lectures different business subjects from Diploma to BTech level, and is also a reviewer of research proposals. Dr Kankisingi, who is driven by his academic studies, dedicated his PhD research investigating the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation, organisational orientation, and innovation performance of manufacturing small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in KwaZulu – Natal.

"It addressed the importance of innovation to grow SMEs. It looks into the structural aspects of SMEs to achieve innovation performance. I chose this topic because innovation performance is critical in the competitiveness of any business. A number of manufacturing firms in the province experience competitive strains and innovation is a possible solution,"

he said.

He also added that he believes this research is important especially for emerging economies such as South Africa and Africa in general. He said in 2016 he had presented his work at an international conference organised by the Society for Global Business and Economic Development in New Jersey, USA. He received an award for the most original doctoral proposal of the conference which was in competition with universities in North America and Europe. "I was the only African student from an African University to attend and win. From that conference, the HoD of the department of international business at Manchester University in the UK suggested that if I complete my PhD, he will welcome me as a visiting researcher. I think it is one opportunity for me as it is in progress," he said excitedly.

Dr Kankisingi also aims to develop himself as a researcher.

"I aim to stay in the academic environment as a lecturer and researcher. I also plan to also get more involved in consultancy work,"

he said.

He also added that his best advice to students who want to be part of the academic world is to always aim big.

"To be a generation that will serve South Africa, Africa and global community. Sufficient knowledge is required through research especially for the 4th industrial revolution. Cultivate a culture of hard work and stop limiting yourself. Students should know learning is continuous, it is beyond getting marks or passing a module," said Dr Kankisingi.

RECOGNISING AND RESPONDING TO PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE @ WORK



HAVE YOU BEEN A VICTIM OF



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Psychological abuse, often called emotional abuse, is a form of abuse characterized by a person subjecting or exposing another person to behavior that may result in psychological trauma, including anxiety, chronic depression, or post-traumatic stress disorder.

Psychological abuse in the workplace? You are 100 % correct. More and more people are experiencing some type of emotional abuse during the span of their working life. It happens at home, so why would it not happen at work? The people who are abusive at home can be the same persons who are abusive at work. Conversely, those abusive at work can be doing on those at home after having gotten their aggression and frustrations out of their system at work, a Dr. Jeckyl and Mr. Hyde syndrome? At work, emotional abuse can be just as obvious or subtle as it is at home. It can come in stripes, solids, or polka dots, but it is the same animal AND it is JUST as destructive.

Workplace abuse is no laughing matter. The potential for this type of workplace dysfunction is on the rise in today's competitive, high demanding business world.

The good news is that higher awareness coupled with a sincere commitment on the part of leaders, can stop even the most insidious forms of workplace abuse in its tracks. While the consequences of ignoring workplace abuse can be traumatic, the rewards of addressing it properly are immeasurable.

DO NOT ALLOW EMOTIONAL ABUSE TO START HACKING AWAY AT YOUR SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF-WORTH

ARE YOU ALREADY A TARGET OR COULD YOU BECOME ONE?

If you find yourself with even so much as one "yes," you need to step up the alertness. The more "yes" answers suggest that you may even be targeted already.

- Is your work environment highly competitive?
- Do you experience hostile and unethical communication?
- Do you hear suggestive comments about your body and appearance?
- Are you touched in a sexual manner?
- Are you fearful of constant attack on your dignity integrity and competence?
- Are you isolated and excluded?
- Are you attacked or belittled about your belief system?
- Are you a victim of sexist or racist jokes?
- Do you receive harassing texts, emails, and messages that threaten, intimidate and terrify you?
- Are there problems at work in the areas of job descriptions and organizational structure?
- Are you a threat to the career ambitions of others?
- Are you being constantly monitored?
- Are you yelled at and humiliated?
- Does your colleague or manager ignore or put down your opinions or accomplishments?
- Does your appearance pose a threat to others?
- Is your manager a person without integrity?
- Do you feel that your manager dislikes you or others that you do not get along with, are close to the manager?
- Do you stand up for the rights of other staff members?
- Do you have difficulty relating to colleagues on an interpersonal level?
- Do you have problems asserting yourself, being either too passive or too aggressive?
- Do you trust your boss, peers and subordinates unconditionally?

IMPACT

- It certainly refocuses an employee's energy from productivity to self-protection
- It results in staff turnover and burnout
- Intensifies the use of sick leave.
- Increases medical aid claims and absenteeism due to occupational stress
- Results and or leads to out of court settlements, legal fees and litigation
- Communication and team dynamics are compromised
- Increases risk of University losing credibility and suffer loss of its good reputation

Physical effects

- Losing sleep or sleeping too much
- Eating too much or loss of weight
- Symptoms like stomach pains or increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Self harm

Psychological effects

- Shock, resentment, anger, frustration, feeling helpless and vulnerable
- Decreased job satisfaction
- Post-traumatic stress disorder
- Loss of focus, confidence, morale and productivity
- Chronic depression
- Family tension and stress

STEPS YOU CAN TAKE

Whether you are a target or an observer, workplace abuse has toxic effects. Remember that there are steps that you can take to address and that there is most definitely support for you. Experts are available to help you to process your feelings and learn new ways to cope and prevent further abuse. Acknowledge that there is a problem.

- Validate your experience, remember that you are not to blame and it is not your fault.
- Keep a record of the toxic behaviour to support your claim.
- Focus on healing and support as your health and well-being is a priority.
- Stay connected. Build support with family and friends outside the work environment.
- Do not allow the abuser to isolate you.
- Draw attention to your strengths and your value as a person.
- Strategise and take time to understand the University's policies.
- Know your rights.
- Remember that you also have available to you the normal grievance procedures. Once the case has been reported, DUT is obliged to investigate the case and if necessary disciplinary action will be taken against the harasser or abuser. Any matters that cannot be resolved at employer level can be referred to the CCMA for conciliation.
- Consult with internal resources that you are comfortable with to determine the best course of action in moving forward.
- Take action depending on your level of comfort, workspace and relationship with colleagues and show strength by bringing abuse to light and take steps to care for yourself.



EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAMME

HOW DO I CONTACT THE EWP ?

For confidential counselling, guidance, referrals and follow ups contact:

Samantha Rajcoomar 031 373 2873
Rajcooms@dut.ac.za

Nobantu Naomee Buthelezi 031 373 2025
EWP@dut.ac.za

Physical location: 1st Floor Trosno Building, Steve Biko Campus
EWP Services will be available at Indumiso, Riverside and City Campuses on a monthly basis, however urgent requests and referrals will be attended to immediately.