

Natural Sciences Vice-Chancellor's Award winner set to conquer the world

If it were not for the unprecedented COVID-19 restrictions in the country, Mxolisi Zondi, who hails from Mzumbe near Port Shepstone on the KwaZulu-Natal south coast, would have been one of three students to receive the loudest applause from a full house at his graduation ceremony on 27 June. Mxolisi would have ascended the stage and received his trophy, a cheque for this sterling performance as the top achiever in the Faculty of Natural Sciences. His family would have led the ululation as they would have been watching the first individual among them to attend a university. This was not to be – but his family was very happy when he told them he had received a Vice-Chancellor's Award as the top student in his faculty. They are going to celebrate his achievement, he said.

In 2018 Mxolisi put everyone at the University on notice. He was one of the students that won the Academic Excellence Award from the Teaching and Learning Development Centre (TLDC). He was only 21 years of age at the time, but some members of the Department of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) had noticed the youngster.

Mxolisi, who is now a teaching assistant at MUT, said the reason for his success was the support he received from his family. "Their support inspired me to work hard. Also working with people that I share similar goals with helped me to achieve this good result." He added that the 2018 Academic Excellence



Mxolisi Zondi

Award from the TLDC also motivated him to continue doing better in his studies.

Mxolisi's stay at MUT was not easy. He described it as "a hard journey with lots of ups and downs" but said that "our ICT lecturers supported us through this journey. Being a part of the MUT family has been an honour and privilege that I will always remember and cherish. Coming from a rural area in KwaZulu-Natal, I always find a very welcoming and vibrant atmosphere at MUT," said Mxolisi.

Mxolisi advises school learners who would like to enrol with MUT to "attend all lectures, and don't forget why you came to MUT. Work hard as much as you can on your studies; it's not going to be easy but believe in yourself". He still wants to continue his studies up to PhD level, and will get a job and help his family while studying.

Engineering award recipient makes her mark in a male-dominated industry

The Vice-Chancellor's Award recipient in the Faculty of Engineering, Zamamvubu Samukelisiwe Ndlovu, quietly worked her way to the top of her faculty with the aim of making a mark on the so-called 'men's world'. When she enrolled for the Diploma in Construction Management and Quantity Surveying, Samukelisiwe knew that she would have to double her effort once she had obtained her qualification. She is doing just that now: she is employed, and also has her own business.

Samukelisiwe lives in Nelspruit, Mpumalanga Province, with her family. At just 23 years of age, Samukelisiwe



Zamamvubu Samukelisiwe Ndlovu