

## Student Development Officer graduates with a PhD

He has come full circle! Dr Mthokozisi Emmanuel Ntuli, Student Development Officer in the Department of Student Affairs, recently graduated with a PhD in Higher Education. This is the fulfilment of a dream whose implementation began at MUT in 1992 when Dr Ntuli enrolled for National Diploma in Personnel Management at the tender age of 18. Now he boasts of a PhD in a very specialised area: student activism, university governance and leadership development. His title was “Implications of student activism on university governance: a multi-case study in South Africa”. Dr Ntuli did his studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

“I chose this title as it was most appropriate for my area of work. For me student governance and leadership development is not just a job that one needs to do from 8am to 4pm. It is a profession that needs to be taken seriously. We all need to have a deeper understating of what it is like to be a student nowadays, and the kind of challenges that students face, given the historical account of higher education in South Africa. The dynamics of higher education have changed such that it has become essential to think more deeply about student governance and leadership development, and the place of a student at a University,” said Dr Ntuli.

Dr Ntuli is also an alumnus of the Durban University of Technology and the University of Durham, UK, where he did his Master’s degree. In 2018 he was awarded an Erasmus Mundus scholarship to study at the University of Tampere, Finland, on a doctoral students’ exchange programme. While at the University of Tampere, Dr Ntuli attended a doctoral course which was taught by professors from the US, UK, Europe, South America, Africa, Australia and China. This provided Dr Ntuli with new insight on University governance and leadership development, and on student activism, governance and leadership development. Dr Ntuli would like to empower others with the skills and knowledge that he has acquired and would like to utilise his newly-acquired insights and perspectives to help develop the institution.

“This is a very specialised area. I would like to see the number of people that enrol to study this area growing. This will have a direct positive influence upon the management of the higher education sector as the role of the students and student leadership is fast becoming more and more prominent,” said Dr Ntuli.



Dr Mthokozisi Emmanuel Ntuli

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He added that his immediate goal was to entrench a love for and understanding of student issues in the higher education sector. “I will do this by engaging with colleagues in the sector through writing papers, and sharing information in various ways,” he said. Dr Ntuli has already published papers on student leadership and governance.

Dr Ntuli has been working at the University for 24 years. He worked for seven years in Information Technology & Networks (IT&N) as a technician focusing on access control system management; three years as Bursaries, Loans and Awards Officer; three years as Senior Officer: Bursaries, Loans, Awards and Scholarships; and 11 years as Student Development Officer. His love for interacting with all student-related matters drew him towards the Department of Student Affairs, which he joined in 2009.