

Reconnect **Revitalise** Reinvest **Rediscover**

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VC award recipient puts women at the helm of engineering faculty

Siphiwo Ngcobo: Diploma in Construction Management

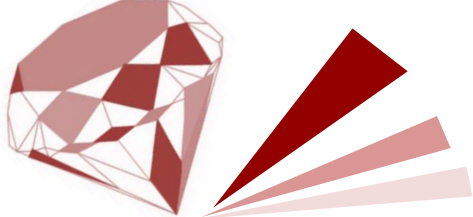


As the saying goes second time is a charm, this is true for Siphiwo Ngcobo who bagged the Vice-Chancellor's award at the MUT 2022 Faculty of Engineering graduation ceremony. Ngcobo's journey has not been smooth sailing. It was an intentional dance-off to the beat of her own music which was about her making it against all odds. "Hold it together and be resilient, it is possible to achieve, take it from a girl who did not know what she wanted at first," Ngcobo said.

In a quest to find herself, Ngcobo first registered at DUT in 2015, after being motivated by her uncle who is a civil engineer. Little did she know that civil engineering was not for her, all she needed was proper career guidance for her to make a career choice that speaks to her own passion.

Ngcobo studied for two years then took a gap year in 2017. During that time, she worked at Nando's as a waitress while figuring out what she wanted to study. Ngcobo has since made sure to collect distinctions from all her courses for her construction management diploma, earning a spot at the top of her faculty and receiving the Vice-Chancellor's award. This was no small game as she came up tops against 958 graduates who were capped as part of the engineering class of 2022.

Ngcobo is currently employed as a Senior Site Supervisor at Sector 5 Group, where she did her Inservice training for six months in 2020. Hard work and dedication coupled with an excellent academic record gave her employer the confidence to offer her a contract from 2021 to date.



Unlike any ordinary students studying at Institutions of higher learning, Ngcobo has maximised her level of satisfaction of her life as a student by structuring her time meaningfully, improving her guitar skills, attending her music gigs, and tutoring junior students. Her fondest memory is seeing the students she tutored and mentored excelling beyond their limits. Ngcobo duly expresses her gratitude to her brother for teaching her music production by inviting her to observe him while at work, this taught her the trick she has imparted while teaching junior students and friends that “we all need to find love in all that we do, then we will excel. I had to study chapters by myself ahead of lectures to get an understanding of my course material before the actual lessons which made my interaction with lecturers easy unlike going to class totally clueless,” she said.

Welcoming another woman highflier as she bags the VC’s Award: Arisha Sivalal

One of the many impressive observations on this year’s graduations is the fact that the dominating number of graduates are women, and they grabbed two of the three top awards at the graduation ceremonies held on 8 to 13 August 2022. We are proud to add to our alumni family another Vice-Chancellor’s awards recipient. Arisha Sivalal, is a young technologist who worked against all odds to catch up to her studies after she was hospitalised and had to undergo an operation that had her off campus for a while.

Sivalal says she has always been passionate about helping people and her career decision was not a mystery. “Technologists play a vital role in the health sector by assisting doctors with patient diagnosis, monitoring, and treatment. I believe that this resonates with my passion to serve and save lives. I would like to further my studies and get into medical research,” she said. Sivalal’s career has already kicked off at Neuberg Global Laboratories where she is doing an internship. She will write the Medical Technology board exams in 2023.



Recipients of the prestigious Vice-Chancellor’s Award are selected on the basis that they’ve obtained the highest average in their faculty. “I was overwhelmed with joy when I got the news that I was the top achieving graduate in the Natural Sciences faculty. I always strive to perform well in my studies but being the best student in the faculty exceeded my expectations. Receiving the Vice Chancellor’s award is one of my highest achievements to date.





It is a proud moment for my family and I to get this award. I am proud of where I am, my dreams are coming to life and I feel that things will only get better from here onwards,” Sivilal said. In a podcast taken shortly after receiving her award, she applauded MUT for offering career-focused programmes and encouraged first-year students to enjoy time at MUT but never forget to work hard to earn their success.

Double wins as Bantho siblings graduate Cum Laude



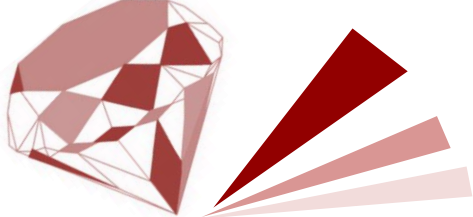
One of the most frustrating life hacks, *no pun intended*, is holding on to a dream but not having a clue how to nurture the dream into reality. The siblings Chandika Bantho and Trishal Bantho highlighted that no one could have prepared them for studying during the pandemic however doing it together made all the difference.

The brother and sister pair did not only complete their IT: Software Development diplomas in record time, they both completed their qualifications cum laude. It could have been competition or sibling rivalry that made the Banthos work extra hard but the pair attribute their excellence to sharing the same dream and helping each other towards making the dream a reality.

The young IT graduates shared that even though they struggled and felt overwhelmed by the information technology subject at Apollo secondary school in Chatsworth where they completed their matric. It was the dedication of their teachers that fuelled their love for IT. Lucky for them, they also met amazing lecturers at MUT with whom they are still in contact even after graduation.

“We have been friends throughout our lives, even at MUT we had each other’s backs. We thoroughly enjoyed doing group projects and wanted to win so badly there were times when we only slept for an hour because winning was more important than sleeping at that time.

We are grateful to our family for the support and MUT for giving us a chance to excel,” said Chandika and Trishal. They are both currently working for 2CANA Solutions as Trainee Software Developers.



Twin alumni bag Advanced Diplomas and find opportunities together



Double victory for Chonco twins as they celebrate bagging their Advanced Diplomas in Accounting together on 12 August at the recent MUT graduation. Londiwe and Thokozile's achievements did not come as a surprise to them. Their competitiveness and hard work were also seen in grades 11 and 12 where they were top achievers and got selected to participate in the school's debate team. "There is nothing as awesome as having a God-given best friend. As twins, we are so used to getting about and navigating life together.

For the first time in our lives, we are forced to be apart as I am currently doing an internship at the National Prosecuting Authority in Pietermaritzburg, while my sister is pursuing her internship at South African Pulp and Paper Industries Limited (SAPPI) in Mandeni. Hard as it is to be away from each other, we are extremely grateful that we both got such amazing opportunities to gain hands-on experience within our field of study," said Thokozile.

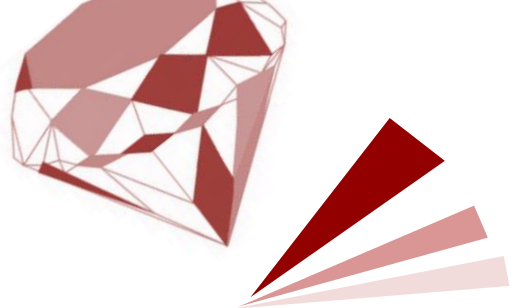
The twins agree that they both cannot wait to get an opportunity where they can grow their careers together. "Being at MUT felt like home more than anything, the lecturers pushed us to be better students, we ended up tutoring Financial Accounting 3, and have thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated the opportunity we had to tutor and encourage junior students to work hard as we did when we were still doing our junior years at MUT," Londiwe concluded.

Young alumni leader paves the way to greater heights

We are glad to welcome a young alumnus who is poised to achieve his goals towards excellence by creating scalable template for aiding communities and encouraging entrepreneurship through a non-profit organisation he founded with fellow MUT students whom he met in their second year of study at the institution. It is scarce to find young people who desire to bring solutions to their communities without looking for compensation. Lindokuhle Zulu has bright prospects that placed him in the regional final of the EDHE Entrepreneurship Intervarsity competition taking place on 13-14 September 2022.

Zulu's leadership qualities did not only qualify him to wear his graduation gown, he also wears a few caps as the leader and President of Unity and Interaction Foundation (NPC), Deputy Chairperson of Chess, and Treasurer of the Sports Union at MUT.

The Acting Vice-Chancellor of MUT, Professor Marcus Ramogale acknowledged Zulu at his graduation on Friday, 13 August for his achievement as a top honouree achiever and



being awarded a certificate recently at the Durban ICC for being one of the Ten Outstanding Young Persons (TOYP) for 2022. The certificate was issued by Junior Chamber International (JCI) South Africa and recognizes Zulu for his humanitarian and voluntary leadership.

Zulu together with his team, Sihle Madondo, Mngqobi Dube, Senzeni Mshozi and Nkosingiphile Mazibuko through their NPC host talent exposure events and career exhibitions for grades 9 and 12 learners. The team also assist business start-ups with all business-related support. He is currently studying for his Advanced Diploma in Marketing and has mentioned that he is immensely grateful for the opportunity to be mentored by another successful entrepreneur, Mr Simphiwe Goniwe who is also a MUT Alumnus and managing director of Isiqalo Institute in Academics. Goniwe is paying it forward by mentoring upcoming leaders and contributing to the sustainability of his *alma mater*.



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alumni@mut.ac.za



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