To our valued readers and Alumni

Thank you for picking up a copy of DUT CONNECT or for accessing our digital edition online. It is always a proud moment to be in your company.

Our editorial team has produced another interesting, insightful and inspiring edition of DUT CONNECT. Some of the highlights include a feature on Thobekile Ndlovu, who won the KZN Master Builders Association's Best Woman in Construction Award in 2015. Thobekile is a graduate from our impressive Interior Design programme at DUT. We are also thrilled to promote the talents of Mbijana Sibisi. Although he graduated in Dental Technology, Mbijana is sharing his talents with the world as a singer, songwriter and poet. Find out more about The Voice SA contestant who is making DUT very proud.

DUT has always been happy to learn of alumni who are achieving great things in their chosen profession. Two such former DUT graduates are Salma Patel and Nomfanelo Dlomo. They have both made their mark in the world of broadcasting. Salma is the Executive Producer of Lotus FM Newsbreak at the SABC and Nomfanelo is making waves on air at Gagasi FM. I am sure that you will share our joy as we celebrate their success in this edition of DUT CONNECT.

If you have been following the recent media reports regarding the challenges facing higher education in South Africa, you would know that DUT, like the other 25 universities in the country, has not yet announced the fee structure for 2017. While the Presidential Commission is still consulting with stakeholders nationwide, the Department of Higher Education and Training is also applying its mind to the advice that they will be giving all University Councils ahead of the announcement of the fee structure for 2017.

Earlier this year, our former Vice-Chancellor and Principal Professor Ahmed Bawa left DUT to take up the position of CEO at Universities South Africa. Former Council member and respected academic and higher education expert Dr John Volmink was appointed as the interim Vice-Chancellor and Principal. After a five-month stay, Dr Volmink will be leaving DUT at the end of September, as the new Vice-Chancellor and Principal has now been appointed by the DUT Council. Professor Thandwa Mthembu starts his new life at DUT in October and all of us at DUT CONNECT want to wish the new Vice-Chancellor the best of luck as he assumes the leadership of our amazing University. We also want to thank Dr Volmink for holding the fort and for being such a key part of the transition. The entire DUT community is grateful to Dr Volmink for his contribution and his leadership. We will feature Prof Mthembu in the next edition of DUT CONNECT.

Talking of leadership, one of our very own has been elected as the new Chairperson of the DUT Council. Convocation President Mr Wiseman Madinane is proof that our alumni can make an outstanding contribution to the progress, stability and future of our University. We know that Wiseman will continue to fly our alumni flag very high in the years ahead.

DUT is continuing with its appeal to funders, staff and alumni to support our fundraising efforts. All donations that we receive will go towards our programmes that are designed to support and assist our students. Please log on to http://foundation.dut.ac.za to help us help our students. Together, we can make a difference!

Finally, let me take this opportunity to wish our students and staff a safe and successful second semester. Also, if you are planning on studying next year, you should seriously consider postgraduate programmes at DUT. We would love to see you grace our graduation stage with your masters and doctoral degrees. Remember, you can also visit www.ccpe.ac.za for information on lifelong learning opportunities at DUT. And please keep in touch with us – we would love to hear from you – about your career advancement, marriages, babies, awards and any other interesting news that you would love to share. Please connect with us on www.dutalumni.com.

Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,
Alan Khan
Senior Director
Corporate Affairs
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Disclaimer: This magazine is published in good faith and every effort has been made to ensure that the information was true and correct at the time of going to print.
"I’m not a believer in this entire Blesser mentality mindset," she says about the recent trend of young women seeking older men to care for their material needs. “It’s a lazy mentality and one that will never bring you sustainable success," explains the DUT Interior Design graduate, who is the founder and owner of Thobethulani Trading construction company.

A millionaire by the age of 26, Ndlovu was raised in a middle-class Pietermaritzburg home by strict parents, and thus didn’t need to ambitiously pursue the success she has attained. This 37-year-old’s determination to succeed is instead borne out of her goal-driven, independent, ‘go-getter’ personality.

“I knew early on that even though my parents were successful (her father is a businessman and her mother, until recently, was a teacher at Mfunwenhle Primary School in Pietermaritzburg), I wanted more and better than what they had accomplished and I knew the only way was through a good education.”

After weighing her options for further study, art-inclined Ndlovu considered architecture and interior design. “I immediately fell in love with the idea of studying the DUT course; I enjoyed..."
Ndlovu recalls her time at DUT fondly and credits the institution for instilling a strict work ethic and a desire to achieve a high standard of work. “I started studying when it was Natal Technikon and I am to this day still impressed by its strict requirements. Lecturers were experienced, had a sound knowledge in their fields, and the industry respected graduates from the Technikon.”

Ndlovu only pursued extra-curricula campus activities that she believed would positively contribute to her future life and career. “I got involved in a student Christian organisation that helped to develop my character, and I also acted as House Committee member in the student residence. Both developed my leadership skills and I even secured work during the holidays to gain work experience.”

As the only black graduate in the Interior Design Class of 2002, Ndlovu began working at Partners in Design, the company that had employed her during her study years. By the age of 23, Ndlovu moved on to her second job as a senior interior designer at Maharani Tiles.

At just 25, she decided to launch her own interior design company, Impressing Designs, in 2004. Ndlovu worked on many exciting projects, including the interior design of some of the retail spaces in the then newly launched uShaka Marine World complex. But it was her first government tender, awarded in 2005, that truly put Impressing Designs on the map.

“The KwaZulu-Natal Legislature wanted to revamp the Speaker’s Cottage of the KZN Parliament. The then Speaker Willies Mchunu was extremely happy with my work and I realised at that point that I had matured into this career. It transformed the way in which I saw myself; not as a graduate, but as an accomplished player in this game.”

Ndlovu went on to win many other government contracts and received great recommendations from clients. In just a few years, she successfully made the transition to full-scale construction in addition to interior design.

“As a woman, I believe I have the ability to focus on what the client needs and when they appreciate my work, it spurs me on to excel and achieve even more. I believe that principles for good business lie in your ability to nurture those relationships so that they can recommend your work,” explains Ndlovu, who recently won the KZN Master Builders Association’s title of ‘Best Woman in Construction’ for 2015.

Ndlovu lists one of her goals as owning several big malls. Her latest passion, however, is her development of a mentorship outreach initiative called Great Impact Lifestyle, which exposes youth to potential mentors and skills for career development.

“I believe that it’s only fair that we join hands in giving back to our society and to show our gratitude to God for what He has done for us, by developing other leaders of our kind.”

QUICK FACTS

- Ndlovu is the eldest of three siblings and is the only girl child
- She is a mother to three children: two girls and a boy
- She helped design and construct her current home in the exclusive Izinga Ridge Estate in Umhlanga
- Life motto: “Satisfaction is the enemy of growth.”
CONTINUING TO DEVELOP THE YOUTH OF KZN

Asked what one of the most trying leadership positions to hold in current day South Africa would be, there is likely to be unanimous consent: the role of Vice-Chancellor in a public tertiary institution in South Africa.

Outgoing Durban University of Technology Vice-Chancellor Dr John Volmink, who has held this esteemed position from earlier this year, would readily acknowledge the job’s challenges in the context of ongoing protest action and the country’s transformation agenda.

Probed to define his short term in a single word, Dr Volmink insists on adding on an adjective to that single word. “It is not just demanding, but extremely demanding. The fact is, the higher education arena of this country has never ever been a place of tranquillity in South Africa.

“The earliest challenges of transformation that we faced involved issues around massification and access, which had to be addressed in the context of a world that still demanded the highest quality in education. These contending demands have taken a quantum leap in the level of complexity we face today; to the extent that what would have been thought to be outrageous, is now the accepted norm.”
Listing the example of recent calls for not merely the request for no fee increases, but the scrapping of fees altogether, Dr Volmink explains the complexity of addressing these demands in the context of still meeting other associated cost demands such as the requirements to insure all services in the tertiary landscape.

“You know, another word for ‘complexity’ is ‘mess’,” Dr Volmink wryly remarks. “And in dealing with that level of complexity, we need to accept that there may not be a single solution, but a myriad of choices that require us as leadership to deeply engage with them in order to find the best solution to each challenge,” Dr Volmink explains, referring to the executive leadership of the University, with whom he works closely on a daily basis.

Leadership, with its associated demands of accountability, is obviously a topic close to Dr Volmink’s heart. “There are lessons I’ve learnt in my own life from experience alone. In my younger days, I was schooled by the belief system held at the older traditional Afrikaans universities; the Vice-Chancellor was seen only as second in stature and significance to the Supreme Being.

“Through my own experiences in academia over the years, I believe firmly now that when we talk about leadership, we should not just be referring to the executives of an organisation. We need to respect the value of team leadership and its benefits to the organisation.”

Describing the positive change he has attempted to bring to the University during his period of tenure, Dr Volmink describes his commitment to adopting a culture of inclusivity at all levels.

“As a single individual, it is not possible for me to understand and meet the needs of a 27 000-student and 1 800-staff complement at this institution. It is my duty, along with executive leadership, to create the guiding ideas for change and to enable positive conditions that enable them to do their own work. But that change can only be sustained by those without the high ranking positional authority.

“It is these leaders who move around unnoticed who become the actual seed carriers of the culture the organisation wishes to adopt. And it is the duty of the executive to create and guide these leaders in the understanding of the larger picture, outside of their departments and office spaces.”

Dr Volmink hopes that as he exits the University at such a transformative point in its existence that this culture of inclusivity is the legacy he leaves behind. “I have tried my best to ensure that each voice is heard. I have never made decisions that have not been informed by the meeting of the executive leadership.

And if I had stayed on any longer, I would have done my best to entrench this culture. It is only in recent years that we have had the position of Deputy Vice-Chancellor and this is an indication to me that we are moving in the direction of plural, rather than a singular approach to leadership and decision-making. Given the demands of the higher education space today, leadership is everyone’s business, and it is my hope that I have set a path towards teamwork.”

Describing his own role in spearheading the University’s transformation path in recent months, Dr Volmink presents an illuminating perspective: “You spend a great deal of time listening. Listening to disgruntled students who are unhappy about the state of their residences; listening to staff members facing the challenge of resourcing issues and other such disgruntlements. It is my responsibility to help people to not feel despondent, to keep hope alive in the belief that we can address these challenges, to confront them and see them as opportunities to be lived into rather than feeling overwhelmed by the fear of wading into unchartered territory.”

This ‘new normal’ currently facing the education landscape is also a challenge that Dr Volmink believes is the role of leaders like himself to embrace first. Suddenly contemplative, Dr Volmink addresses another challenge facing the University going forward.

“My perspective of this University since arriving here has been completely changed. It is an excellent institution with quality people, both in student and academic leadership. As a voluntarily merged institution, it has outperformed many other traditional leading research institutions in this country and I’d like to pay tribute to the leadership of Professor Bawa, who is both a visionary and thought leader who has changed the academic discourse of the Institution. He has set a strategic agenda that is unparalleled and I
hope that people continue aspiring to live and realise that agenda.”

“One of those strategic agenda objectives is to embed an ethos of ‘student centeredness’ in our DNA. Unfortunately, in the past year alone, there have been four student suicides in this Institution, which really only indicates that there is a wide gap between our espoused and lived values. Our biggest challenge yet is to address this gap and make the effort to bring together those values.”

Doing so, Dr Volmink suggests, just may unlock the key to addressing the ‘demand’ mindset afflicting the current cohort of tertiary students and the country’s youth. “With the inception of a democratic ethic that was supposed to have been realised with the change in 1994, in which we strive as a people to do things because we believe them to be intrinsically right, there has been a mindset shift. From a fear-based obedience ethic, where punishment is considered a norm, we seem to have transitioned to a demand ethic that entrenches the gap between ourselves as leaders and the youth.”

Asked how we would shift this mindset, Dr Volmink deliberates for a while before responding: “You know, I’ve studied in both the UK and the US and I’ve witnessed a very interesting practice there. When you are invited to a home for a meal and you sit around the table, the contributions made by children in dinner conversation is seen as meaningful as any adult’s. They are heard and feel heard and know their opinions are respected.

“We don’t have the same practices here, yet, with most of us still believing in the adage that children should be seen and not heard. Perhaps these deeply entrenched ideas have created a false narrative where our youth assumes we don’t respect their voices, and we feed into this by perpetuating them, leading to the self-destructive behaviours we’ve evidenced recently.

“Perhaps we need to address these assumptions in order to change this mindset moving forward so that honest and open dialogue can follow,” suggests Dr Volmink.

On a personal level, the Capetonian-born Dr Volmink’s immediate responsibility after departing DUT lies with the 650 000 students due to start writing matric examinations next month. As Chairman of Umalusi, the KwaZulu-Natal matric examination authority, his job is to oversee the quality assurance process that is integral to the success of the matric examinations in KwaZulu-Natal.

“My heart is in development and I will continue to commit to youth development especially,” enthuses the father of eight and leader of three youth development oriented NGOs in Durban.
REACHING OUT TO OUR ADULT LEARNERS

DUT’s Centre for Continuing and Professional Education (CCPE) embodies lifelong learning.

Whether you’re interested in taking a course for personal enrichment, professional development or want to pursue a degree, CCPE@DUT has a course to suit your needs.

The CCPE also offers customised courses to corporate clients for ongoing adult learning.

Apply via the CCPE office
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Growing up, I had broken my own two front teeth and I couldn’t afford to have those fixed. I knew what an impact this had on my self-confidence, so I studied Dental Technology with a view to helping out others like myself, especially children, at a later stage.
raised by a single mum in an extended family in Madwaleni, rural Umbumbulu, a young Sibisi never considered the possibility of studying after school. But as fate would happily have it, the theatrical youngster, who belonged to a community theatre group where he acted, sang and danced, was awarded a one-year bursary to study after high school.

“Being only a year-long course, I decided to do Dental Technology at DUT. I worked hard and in the next year, was awarded an NSFAS loan to continue studying.”

Ever the pragmatist, Sibisi ruled out a music qualification and instead pursued a course that he believed made a real difference to others’ lives.

But long before he could begin practicing, Sibisi was exposed to a very exciting part of DUT campus life.

“I heard about the Poetry Society and the open mic Fridays and I allowed myself to use those opportunities as an outlet for my artistic side while studying. With his unique brand of blues, traditional African and maskandi rhythms, Sibisi used the DUT stage to recite poetry, sing and perform. The result was a growing fan base on campus, and a stronger determination to ‘make it’ as a full-time singer-songwriter, much like his musical icons Vusi Mahlasela and Bob Marley.

After graduating and working for only one year as a dental technician, Sibisi decided to actively pursue his music career. “There were too many songs I needed to sing,” Sibisi simply explains.

The socially conscious musician finally teamed up with another artist called King in 2012, and recorded his first album Reverbanation, which was sponsored by a Belgian Development Aid organisation called ‘Ukukhanya’, meaning ‘light’ in Zulu. Following a charity tour in Belgium, where the aid organisation collected money to transport a shipment of donated books from the country to South Africa, Sibisi’s 16-track album was an unexpected hit in that country.

Linking up with other aid organisations, Sibisi was also increasingly exposed to a growing international fan base on visits to Reunion Island, Brussels and the Midem Music and Poetry Festival in Cannes, France.

It was during this time, while garnering a bigger international rather than local following, that Sibisi decided to ‘be heard’ more in South Africa. He auditioned for, and was selected to participate in, the first season of The Voice SA under the guidance of mentor Bobby van Jaarsveld earlier in 2016. “That experience really made me realise that I could be equally successful in South Africa. I anticipate that my latest EP will be well received even with local audiences.”

As we chat, Sibisi’s prediction seems to come true as he receives calls from national radio stations looking to play his new EP. The visibly excited Sibisi tries hard to contain his excitement. “I’ll continue working hard to promote myself. I believe in funding my own journey and I know it will eventually pay off,” says the gifted young artist, whose star certainly seems to be on the rise.

**NOTABLE PERFORMANCES**

- 2016: Midem Festival (Cannes in France)
- 2016: The Voice SA season 1 contestant
- 2015 June – August: On a trip to Belgium, Spain and France
- 2015 March – April: On a trip to LaReunion
- 2014: Tour to Europe (Germany, Belgium)
- 2014: Winner of the uShaka Search for Stars
- 2014: 18th Poetry Africa Festival
- 2014: City of Gulu in Uganda
- 2013: Mbijana travelled to Reunion Island (France) with a project called Fonkner ET Poetry
- 2013: Recorded his first demo music in Brussels (Belgium)
- 2012-2013: Fundraising tour in Belgium with Ukukhanya
- 2010: Founded the fast-growing poetry circle for international guests called the ‘Poetry Circle’ in conjunction with VibeTours.
- 2004: Featured in a stage play called ‘Heroes of South Africa’, which was staged at the Durban Playhouse, LoftTheatre.
Bottcher is, in her own words, a self-confessed ‘tinkerer’, with an ‘insatiable curiosity’ for life, the confluence of which, when combined with her early experiences of medicine, led to Clinical Technology. “We lived in Carletonville, a relatively small, isolated gold mining town about 80km from Johannesburg. This did not give one too many choices. Being a bookworm from a young age helped with my insatiable curiosity. My dad encouraged me to tinker with electronic gadgets and somewhere in the middle, my love for the medical field was stirred. We would watch the miners’ annual first aid competition, and my father would come home with a huge bag of medical bits and pieces. So, I played with whatever I found in that bag.”

“Clinical Technology was a beautiful marriage of my love for medicine and electronics, and I naturally gravitated towards the speciality of Neurophysiology.”

But before she discovered this, Bottcher had already studied Medical Technology and gone to Bible College for a year.

“I got married and took a year off to decide what I really wanted to do. So by the time I started this degree, I considered myself a ‘mature’ student and didn’t get too involved with typical student life. I studied full-time and worked part-time at an electronics shop. I approached studying as I would...”
a 10-hour-a-day job and this really helped me to keep time aside for my family. I enjoyed the coursework so much that I quite literally got excited when exams came around. I worked very hard and it felt almost effortless.”

While busy with her in-service training towards the completion of her BTech degree, Bottcher was approached by a neurosurgeon who was interested in starting an epilepsy monitoring unit in South Africa.

“As a student, I attended every academic meeting and conference I could, and I think the perception that I would be a good choice for this position was assumed. We had a meeting and I was told that I needed to spend time at a unit overseas, which I would fund. Once exposed to that environment, I could then decide if I wanted the position. Well, when I returned from America, I walked into a room filled with nothing but boxes of brand new equipment.”

Bottcher’s work requires a highly evolved understanding of the condition: “I work with very complex types of epilepsy where the seizures are difficult to control with medication. I admit the patients into hospital for about a week at a time and monitor their brainwave activity (EEG) constantly. This includes video recording. My job is to read the EEG, in particular when they are having a seizure, so that I can determine its origin and what other options we can offer. If I am able to isolate the seizure onset area and all the necessary criteria are met, we then remove that part of the brain.

“Patients range from newborns to geriatrics, and I am always part of a multi-disciplinary team. In this way I get to work with highly specialised equipment and interact with patients and their families in the clinical context. I love coming to work…”

Holidays are a rare occurrence, but she does keep abreast of the latest developments in her field. “I also make every effort to spend a few weeks every two years at a major unit either in the (United) States or in Europe.”

Bottcher considers the unit one of her greatest career achievements: “This August, we turned 18 years old and have grown to be a three-bedded centre of excellence. Our waiting list is three months long and we run seven-days-a-week. Every day I am part of changing and touching people’s lives, sometimes only in small ways, but that, for me, is the true meaning of success.”

“I have been incredibly fortunate to have my life passion be my work. Because I work for myself and this is a unique service, I have to close the unit to take leave. Once I was admitted into the hospital and had to do a ward round holding my drip stand behind my back! I am taking my first holiday in six years this year.”

But Bottcher has no regrets, advising prospective students to find a career path they can be passionate about. Her personal philosophy, “Be present, be mindful and above all, be kind.”

“Find something you love doing. And don’t be afraid to try different fields of study during the course of your life – no matter what your age, you are never too old to study something new.”
The Information Systems graduate, who now also holds an MBA, describes his current job role: “It is to create line of sight between the experience we create for our customers and the activities we drive in the business. The aim is to engage customers who are willing to do business with us over a longer period of time. We aim to understand the different life stages of the customer.”

Kabelo Motlhaha grew up in a ‘typical township’ in Mafikeng, North West province, in a very strict family environment that was defined by prioritising both studies and sports, almost in equal measure.

According to Motlhaha, enrolling at DUT came with two perks: he could study the course he wanted to, and enjoy the competitive sporting facilities on offer on campus. “Being a Motswana boy from Mafikeng, I was impressed by the different cultures that co-existed at the campus.

“My highlight was the sport competition between the different students’ residences. I can still recall the atmosphere as if it happened yesterday,” reminisces Motlhaha.

Being one of three boys to parents who are both government employees in the North West province, Motlhaha was schooled from an early age that education was the key to escaping the poverty cycle. So, an excited Motlhaha was extremely grateful when he was accepted to study at DUT.

“My background from high school was commerce related. What has always fascinated me is the convergence of finance and technology.
as both have the power to make financial matters mainstream. Information systems as a discipline incorporated both, hence my choice of study," he explained.

Mothaha slipped into campus life with ease, working part-time through the duration of his studies at DUT. “I can easily say that my DUT years were some of the best years of my life. I was involved in student politics at house committee level, and I strongly believe that the work ethic that I possess at the moment can be traced back to that three-year period that moulded my character. I learned a lot about life and my social skills were refined. I can safely say that being a student provided one of the most defining moments of my career.”

Describing himself as a man who has a deep personal relationship with God, the ambitious Motlhaha believes in foregoing work-life balance in order to provide for, and motivate, his wife and soon-to-be three young children. “I strongly believe that work-life balance does not exist – my purpose in life is to create a legacy for my kids; not only in the form of material gain, but to build their characters from an early age. My success will be defined by what I leave for my kids and how I stay loyal to my wife.”

Mothaha is determined to impress upon his children the need for these same levels of drive and ambition to acquire success in life. “I believe that the essence of life is: what you put in, you get out. So we must always judge the success of our lives not on what we get, but what we put in. It is important to be relentless in our efforts and not just give up at the first challenge we come across.”

**MOTLHAHA’S LIFE MOTTO:**
The beginning of wisdom is: Acquire wisdom; and with all your acquiring, get understanding.

“This is one of the most powerful quotes that I have come across: The challenges we face in life can only be resolved through wisdom and understanding.”

**KABELO MOTLHAHA**
DUT INFORMATION SYSTEMS GRADUATE
Dubbed ‘Fund the Missing Middle’, the campaign’s intent is unique in that, unlike other tertiary institutions who have launched very vocal campaigns to raise funds with the help of corporate funding, DUT has decided to use the platform as an opportunity to entrench a culture of self-sustainability and giving within the Institution’s corridors.

Explains David Sedumedi, Development and Alumni Relations Director: “As an institution, we have voluntarily configured a multi-pronged approach to a valid and very real concern raised. There is a large band of students whose parents earn more than the R120 000 salary cut-off from the National Financial Aid Scheme. This category includes those parents who may even be in public service, like teachers and police officers, and find themselves in a position of being unable to educate their children.”

In describing the campaign’s approach, which embraces the principles of crowdfunding, Sedumedi explains its multi-pronged nature: “We’ve designed messaging to target a few relevant audiences. The first, and most significant, is the student population. Our greatest intention is to propel a sense of ownership in them by giving them the responsibility to take charge of their own education.” Students have been encouraged by a cohort of fellow volunteer students to contribute to the campaign by committing to a monthly donation, the minimum of which is R10.00, payable at on-campus cashier offices. “We were actually approached by a group of second-year PR students who formed a group called PR Dynamics, to take on the initiative as a PR project. We are exceptionally proud of them for the initiative taken and for adopting this cause as a DUT community, rather than leaving the fundraising responsibility to DUT authorities.”

Student Representative Council (SRC) President Zama Mncube said that the student body was not only proud of the Public Relations Management students’ actions, but wanted to join in on urging everyone who is part of the DUT community to extend their assistance.

“You cannot be proud of being part of the DUT family and yet have students who deserve to be part of it left outside in the cold because of financial constraints. We all have R10.00 at some point of our lives during the year. Therefore, let us take it upon ourselves to assist each other,” she said.

The second target audience of the ‘Fund the Missing Middle’ campaign is the DUT staff complement, who have been asked to make payroll contributions to the campaign. Alumni, too, have been called on to make their contributions via various available platforms: “We have a contactable Alumni database of 25 000 ex-students to whom we have sent pledge forms to participate in the campaign,” explains Sedumedi.

Finally, a dedicated and focused approach has been strategised to reach out to the corporate community to partner with the Institution to raise the necessary funds for deserving students. “From mid-September, we have agreed that our first port of call should be those companies who already support our Institution through the bestowment of student bursaries. We will then continue to reach out to the larger community to join in our fundraising initiatives.”

 Asked if a larger strategy is in place by the University to supplement the short-term campaign, Sedumedi replies: “There is certainly a larger conversation being had at a strategic level on how we address various issues relating to student funding. There is a list of ongoing activities we already employ such as a Convocation Golf Day and other such PR activities whose sole aim is to raise supplemental funding to reach our strategic objectives.”

For those interested in contributing to the Missing Middle Campaign, please contact the Development and Alumni Relations office on 031 373 3020 or sedumdd@dut.ac.za.
“I’m not rich enough to pay for my studies, yet not poor enough to receive financial aid.”

TAKING ACTION FOR OUR EDUCATION
Even as an outspoken and social high school learner, Nomfanelo Dlomo recoiled at studying at a traditional tertiary institution; instead she sensed early on that a University of Technology, with its practical application, would bring out the best in her.

Unfortunately for Dlomo, her first choice for study didn’t pan out. “I applied for the Biomedical Technology course at DUT. My Maths marks, however, let me down and I ended up applying for a last-minute spot in Public Relations, Ecotourism and Journalism. I chose to go with PR.”

Estcourt born and raised, Dlomo slipped easily into the role of PR practitioner from her very first year of study in 2013. “I quickly learnt how perfectly the course suited me. I began thinking like a PR professional and even dressed the part. The practical component was up my alley and I knew I had found my niche.”

Dlomo appreciated the exposure to real-world case studies and work done with non-profit organisations during her years of study. “Those experiences were better than any traditional university course. Having such real on-the-job experiences makes you career-ready from early on.”

When Dlomo entered the world of work for her in-service requirement, she was miles ahead of other job applicants and had a professional portfolio of work. In addition to great results, she also boasted a team award won for the Best 2nd year Community Engagement Project. “My portfolio was my unique selling point and I know it played no small part in securing my first job.”

Even as a Cum Laude Diploma and BTech PR graduate, Nomfanelo Dlomo is making waves as she smoothly transitions from PR to radio production at Gagasi FM.
After interning at Take Note Reputation Management in 2012, Dlomo stayed on full-time and quickly rose from intern to public relations manager. “I became bold and assertive and I learnt hard from my mistakes. I had to think on my feet constantly. It’s so easy to allow your arrogance to overshadow your ability to learn. I had to be resilient, take criticism and learn every day.” Her first boss was a hard taskmaster who called her out on errors but helped her to learn valuable lessons in PR.

After two-and-a-half years at Take Note, Dlomo moved on to Black Book Events & PR, where she worked with major clients such as Tsogo Sun’s Elangeni Hotel. Her tenure was, however, short.

“I considered doing my BTech for some time and realised that if I didn’t do it then, I may never get the opportunity to do so again. Leaving a full-time, well-paying job to become a full-time student is a huge step to take, but I saw the risk as an investment in my career.”

Instead of closing doors, full-time study back at DUT in 2015 opened another door. She connected with a Gagasi FM employee, who asked her to assist with the launch of a women empowerment campaign. The campaign was so successful that Dlomo was encouraged to apply for the position of radio producer on the popular Big Bang 12-3pm slot on Gagasi with presenters Kini Shandu and Nomfundo Clarissa, regardless of her lack of qualifications.

“The bosses needed a lot more convincing and I had to put together a proper strategy of how I could use my PR skills to produce the show. After two rounds of interviews, based on the endorsement of their colleague, they hired me for a one-year contract.”

In addition to her full-time job, Dlomo also frequently attends business conferences and manages her church’s social media platforms so she can get experience in this field. She’s guest lectured at various institutions and lectured PR and events modules at Rosebank College.

She arrives at work early to develop the content and structure for the show and discussion links between the music. While she does collaborate with the show’s presenters, she is held responsible for the concept development and its implementation.

Asked what the future holds, she admits she would love to tackle the presenter’s seat on radio someday. She’s also keen to get back into DUT to do her Masters. “I’m constantly looking for opportunities to challenge myself, to grow and develop. I’m in a relentless pursuit of joy, peace and happiness and I believe I’ll always want to learn new things every day,” she concludes.

“You get what you give. If you give love, you are bound to receive love. If you work hard, you are bound to receive the recognition for the work you put in, especially if you are driven by passion for what you are doing.”
There are times where I cannot believe that I actually operated my own business and went on to prove myself. But by God’s grace, I can now step forward and speak from experience and share my lessons and successes with others.

Prinella Pillay's career as a high flyer in the public relations industry may be highly respected today, but as the DUT journalism graduate will tell you, following a 'non-traditional' career path back in the 90s met with many raised eyebrows from family and friends.
I studied Journalism back in the day; a very non-compliant choice for a generation that was working towards the traditional medicine, accounting and law fields. For as long as I can remember, I was determined to study Journalism and become a journalist; to tell stories about others for others.

I was 16 years old when I pleaded with our family doctor to talk to my mum and convince her to allow me to study Journalism and the merits behind such a career. He just said ‘let her follow her passion’.

Thankfully for the young high schooler, her parents acquiesced and Pillay enrolled in the then Natal Technikon in 1997. Based at the Technikon’s City Campus, Pillay recalls loving this period of her life – a time where future working networks were established and cultural horizons were expanded.

“We were away from the main campus so there were a lot more reasons to know your fellow students more intimately. It was a different culture but at some point, irrespective of the courses we were studying, we all came together and a little community was formed. It was an extremely exciting time in my life. It really opened up my reality to be exposed to more cultures and backgrounds.”

Graduating with her Journalism Diploma in 2000, Pillay worked at Independent Newspapers for a few years before her career took an unexpected turn. “I was fortunate that I was recognised by a much respected colleague in my life who pushed me into the world of PR and communications.”

At the age of 24, Pillay was appointed Suncoast Casino’s Public Relations Manager; a position the young graduate describes as having “challenged, broken and remoulded” her into the consummate PR professional that she is today. “I have not looked back since then,” enthused Pillay.

In 2012, Pillay took what she describes as “a leap of faith” and opened her own PR consultancy. “With many challenges but so many more returns, I went on to consult on the then Three Cities Hospitality Group, work on the 2013 Top Gear Festival, and contribute to clients such as BHP Billiton and the National Choral Music Awards.

“There are times I cannot believe that I had actually operated my own business and went on to prove myself. But by God’s grace I can now speak from experience and share my lessons and successes with others.”

In 2015, Pillay relocated to Gauteng, and worked as an account director at Jenni Newman PR where she handled accounts such as McDonald’s SA Corporate Communications and Twisp (SA’s leading e-cigarette).

Nine months later, she was afforded a position at the esteemed Meropa Communications PR consultancy, and currently serves as a divisional lead with clients like Jaguar, Land Rover SA and SSA, Vodacom, IBM and Tracker. Asked to describe a typical day in such a well-recognised corporate setting, Pillay pronounces it to be about: “Early mornings and late nights!”

“Nobody has ever said that success was built in just eight hours a day. It has been an amazing one-and-a-half years and the experiences have only humbled me and allowed me to be the best that I can be to the industry, my clients and colleagues.”

Pillay, who is also a PR graduate and currently in the process of studying an LLB Law degree, is also extremely grateful to her parents for constantly encouraging her and her younger brother to pursue a good education. “My parents always uplifted our interests and passions by constantly encouraging us to educate our intellect and look for experiences and adventures to educate our hearts,” she concludes.

It is education, she believes, that will allow her to leave a legacy for the children she intends having in the not too distant future. “I want to tell them of stories and adventures that they will know in their hearts makes nothing impossible; especially if they set their minds and passions on achieving it!”
Mr Robbie Naidoo is an extremely well respected presence in the brand and marketing space in KwaZulu-Natal, having personally created and launched ‘the Kingdom of the Zulu’ provincial tourism brand and the Tsogo Sun Suncoast Casino & Entertainment World brand.

As a DUT Journalism graduate of the mid 1980s of the then Natal Technikon, Naidoo’s trailblazing career is distinguished by numerous awards, high profile marketing campaigns and brand launches in the Province.

“While I’ve always had an inclination towards writing and knew I wanted to follow a career path in Journalism, as a young black person, I was never even exposed to the possibility of the existence of ‘black marketers’, so I never investigated this option at the time of leaving school.”

It was his entry into the Technikon’s ‘radical’ Journalism department that really ‘opened his eyes’ to the political landscape at the time. “I recall my time at the Technikon vividly because of how enlightening the entire experience was.

“We were politically awakened to the ravages of apartheid and its impact on our lives by a group of exceptional lecturers who never once shied away from controversy or their duty in preparing us to use our journalistic skills to challenge the Government of the time.” Naidoo especially credits lecturers like Clive Emdon and Rob Miller, among others, who were...
responsible for conscientising him to the political and socio-economic ethos at the time.

“I remember clearly the Special Defence Force ‘mole’ who was planted in our class at the time; that’s how politically charged our journalistic education was at the time,” says an impassioned Naidoo, who has continued his involvement in community awareness programmes.

On leaving DUT with an already impressive portfolio of published work, Naidoo was snapped up by the Johannesburg-based Engineering News, where he worked for two years post-graduation. On returning to Durban, Naidoo continued a journalism career in his hometown of Stanger, north of Durban before starting a newspaper, the Stanger Weekly, which exists to this day.

“While I was there, as a result of the impact made on me by the Technikon, I got involved in politics. I coached tennis in one of the townships and assisted the community set up structures. When violence broke out, I was also integrally involved in securing peace in the area and negotiating with the warring parties.”

Despite stints at the Post newspaper, Capital Radio and sports writing and broadcasting (Naidoo is an avid and celebrated provincial sportsman), Naidoo was still intrigued by the marketing field he was exposed to for the first time while studying. “I applied for a position at the provincial ANC-led Department of Tourism as a Corporate Communications Manager initially, and after working closely with the Marketing Manager, I gained a tremendous amount of experience and a passion for the field;”

Naidoo was then appointed to the position where he worked for six years, launching the now famous ‘Kingdom of the Zulu’ brand, and winning an award for ‘Outstanding Service’ from Tourism KwaZulu-Natal for the service he rendered there.

Naidoo’s reign as Marketing Manager at Tsogo Sun’s Suncoast Casino soon followed, where he was also conferred ‘The Going Further Award’, as the group’s top marketer in 2005. The award was recognition for his aggressive tactics contributing to Suncoast achieving a record 36% growth in 2005, and was again lauded as the first recipient of an extraordinary award from Tsogo Sun’s CEO, Jabu Mabuza in 2008.

After such phenomenal career successes, Naidoo, who currently runs his own communications consultancy, has also forayed into business as General Manager: South Africa for Jet Airways, India’s premier airline, and other ventures.

An avid enthusiast of digital communication, Naidoo lists his current and future endeavours as creating a CRM programme for small business via a multi-platformed mobile application, and other unique social media platforms. Says the avid writer, who has been published four times already: “It’s been a lifelong passion of mine and I want to continue to write more in the future.”

“I live in the now. The past has happened and you should not be judged by it. The future is yet to come so it is useless fixating on it. Be the best you can be in the existing space.”
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LEARN.THINK.DO

Durban University of Technology
P.O. Box 1334, Durban, 4000, South Africa
Many journalists would come in and out of my dad’s radio repair shop to repair their mini tape recorders and other devices. I met Henry ‘Black Cat’ Cele who played Shaka Zulu in the popular series at the time, and many other famous stars. I would also read the newspapers and was very curious about the ‘State of Emergency’, meaning journalists could not report on certain things during apartheid.

Looking back, I think it laid the foundation for my thirst for radio journalism, although I was totally oblivious to a possibility in this career at the time,” reminisces Patel, who went on to graduate from the then ML Sultan Technikon with a Diploma in Journalism in the late 1990s.

(continued on page 24)
Patel nearly abandoned her studies after the death of her father, which led to the family experiencing financial difficulties. She credits a few people in her life’s journey for guiding her in the right direction.

“I credit my Grade 4 form teacher Mr Rajoo from Juma Musjid Primary School for telling me that I should go and ‘read the news on TV.’ I enjoyed writing plays for school functions. If I could not find an interesting book in the library, I wrote my own. My mum often read me books on Greek mythology and she told the most wonderful tales, too.”

“Looking back, however, I have to credit my sister, Soraya, for encouraging me to stick with my studies instead of becoming a cashier. My sister told me that if I achieved high marks, the Technikon would refund some of my money. I had to persevere; I could not let my mother down. After all, she had spent money on my registration. So I had to take a bus and a taxi and apply for bursaries properly with covering letters. Asking for money is sometimes demeaning because people have no faith in you.”

After knuckling down to her studies, Patel was refunded about 70% of her fees in the first year and a further 50% in second year for doing well: “But I still had to raise the rest of the money myself. I worked part-time as a chip fryer for a local chicken outlet just so that I could buy some ‘girlie’ things,” she explains, describing the hardships of her early life.

The now Executive Producer of Lotus FM’s News Break was not yet ready to give up though, even when faced with the possibility of not being able to secure in-service training – a vital component of the Technikon’s diploma qualification.

“I was in Journalism class – ready to give up because I thought I needed ‘contacts’ to get a job in the media industry. All my other friends had their jobs ‘organised’ except me. The lecturer asked: “Who wants a career on TV?” and we ALL eagerly put up our hands. Then he said, “Well, don’t bother because NONE of you will make it!” I was so upset. I did not realise that he was trying to toughen us up for the world of Journalism.

“I applied to the Natal Witness and only completed about eight or nine months’ in-service training when I applied to the SABC and lo, and behold, I was called in for an interview, and hired a week or two later! Perseverance. If you have it, bottle it and USE it often,” advises the successful journalist, who now has over 19 years of experience under her belt!

Patel, who achieved various other related qualifications, has since enjoyed various career successes, including winning the SABC News Awards in 2007 for Best Radio Current Affairs Presenter; interviewing people like President Thabo Mbeki, Bollywood star Amitabh Bachchan, and Jacob Zuma, among others.

Asked for advice she would give youngsters embarking on their studies, Patel states: “I tell a lot of people that their success depends on them. How hard and far they push. Failure is just a stepping-stone to success.”

Never give up. I thought I would never make it but I did. And if I made it with little money, two pairs of shoes and lots of hand-me-downs from my sisters, anyone can make it. Money is not a problem; if you really want to study, the money will find you. Sounds strange, I know, but just believe.”
DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY POST-DOCTORAL FELLOWSHIPS (PDF): 2016

Suitably qualified candidates are encouraged to apply for Post-Doctoral Fellowship positions in the Faculty of Accounting and Informatics at the Durban University of Technology (DUT) using the DUT online application platform: www.dut.ac.za/research/application_form/

The purpose of the Fellowship is to assist the Faculty with research outputs and throughput of postgraduate students in the areas of: Financial Accounting, Management Accounting, Taxation, Auditing, Library and Information Science, Administration and Information Management, and Information and Communications Technology.

PREREQUISITES:

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• Proof of supervision will be an added advantage.

THE AWARD AND PERIOD:

• The PDF is valued at R168 000.00 and the tenure is for one year.
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• The successful candidate is free to apply for accommodation at DUT or externally.

LIMITATIONS OF THE AWARD:

Applicants may not have held any prior permanent academic or professional positions.
• Individuals who are in full-time employment are ineligible to apply.
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• The Fellow will be expected to be registered full-time at DUT.
• Should either the Host or PDF elect to terminate the contract, a 30 day notice is applicable.

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• Curriculum Vitae.
• Official certified copies of academic transcripts (please attach English translations if the documents are not in English) and certified copies of degree certificates.
• Certified copy of the identification page(s) of your passport (international PDFs) or identity document.
• Reference reports (minimum 2 to be attached).
• Proof of medical insurance (international PDFs only); this must include the following:
  - Details of membership (independent member or dependent on parents/guardian).
  - A declaration that the cover will be valid for the period spent outside home country.
  - A short summary of medical cover provided.
• While preference will be given to South African citizens, international applicants will also be considered.

Closing date for completed online applications, including submission of the supporting documents as instructed on the DUT online application platform, is 30 November 2016.