

ALUMNICONNECT

EDITION 2 2017



Warmest greetings to all alumni of CPUT! In this newsletter, we report on our Gauteng chapter alumni networking event and profile another outstanding crop of CPUT graduates.

After an absence of almost two years, due to effects of #FeesMustFall protests, we met with alumni in Parktown, Gauteng, on 2 December. It was so good to see familiar faces and meet new ones. Lwandile Socikwa, Vice-Chairperson of the CPUT Alumni Association, welcomed all present and announced plans for similar events in the other alumni chapters. CPUT Advancement Director: Calvin Maseko updated alumni on developments within CPUT and thanked alumni for their loyalty and continued support.



Guest speaker, alumnus Murendeni Mafumo, shared with alumni how and when his interest in science started, viz. at age 13 when his mother bought a set of encyclopaedia books called The Young Scientist.

Today Murendeni is an entrepreneur having founded Kusini Water which provides safe drinking water to rural communities.

The event drew a diverse range of alumni with various qualifications, skills, attributes and interests which made for great networking – so much so that we only left the venue at 14h30 instead of 13h00! Our next chapter event will take place during the first quarter of 2018, in Cape Town. Ensure we know your email address – call us on telephone 021 4603786 or send an email to alumni@cput.ac.za

We will be on holiday from Thursday, 21 December to Friday 5 January 2018. December is festive and holiday time in sunny South Africa – this equates to increased shopping and spoiling our loved ones. We appeal to all our alumni to sign up for a My School My Village My Planet card by completing the form on their website www.myschool.co.za or downloading the app. Then all you do is add CPUT as a beneficiary so that next time you buy from one of their partner shops, the CPUT Bursary Fund benefits. It is as easy as counting 1 to 3 and it is free! Thank you for supporting your alma mater.

Wishing you and your loved ones a blessed, safe festive season and happy holidays!

Valerie

Alumni profiles

DR THUMELA DLODLO

by Buziwe Seeland

His fascination of white coats has made him a well-known doctor.

Goal-oriented Thumela Dlodlo, who naturally prefers to work in a structural environment where his objectives are clearly defined, has done himself proud by becoming a dentist in the early 2000's.

In year 1993 he graduated from CPUT with the National Higher Diploma in Dental Technology, worked a few years which included a 3-year stint at UWC's Dental Laboratory in Mitchell's Plain. His work at the laboratory, among others, entailed teaching prosthetics to UWC's 3rd year dental students. The dental technology skills he learned at CPUT earned him a certificate of recognition for teaching prosthetics from UWC. Working at UWC, Dlodlo decided he wanted more and registered for Dentistry.

As the saying goes there's no substitute for hard work, Doctor Dlodlo's hard work while he was a CPUT student has paid off. Regardless of the many obstacles he had to overcome during his undergraduate student days - he did not throw in the towel.

"During my time, it was not easy. Firstly our education system was not up to standard, public transport between home, campus and work was problematic and also being an African to qualify in this kind of profession was tough, as it was white dominated. I had to work twice as hard because of my skin colour," said Dlodlo.

In year 2005 he was contracted to the Zeerust-Lehurutsho Hospital Complex in North West Province where he

completed his one year community service. Since then has been employed as Senior Dental practitioner with the Western Cape Department of Health and is currently based at Mfuleni Community Health Centre.

Dr Dlodlo says there is absolutely nothing he wants to change or do differently in his life as he is living the dream he aimed for. He said that this kind of work is an art, a person needs to know how to use their hands. Those who would like to pursue the same career, he encouraged to work hard and have good marks especially in physics and biology.

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DR ETIENNE VERMEULEN

Targetry Physicist

By Mandisa Mfenyana

radionuclides with medium energy targetry' he earned another accolade, PhD in Physics at Stellenbosch University. The devotion towards the expansion of his knowledge proved to be fruitful. Shortly after graduating from Stellenbosch University in 2014, Etienne received the opportunity to join the team of Paul Scherrer Institute in Switzerland as the Staff Scientist.

"This field is so much more than what I imagined it to be, it's one of the most satisfying fields there can be. We take the very dangerous thing of radioactivity and turn it into something good, we actively work for the cure of cancer, this is really important and millions of people benefit from the work we do."

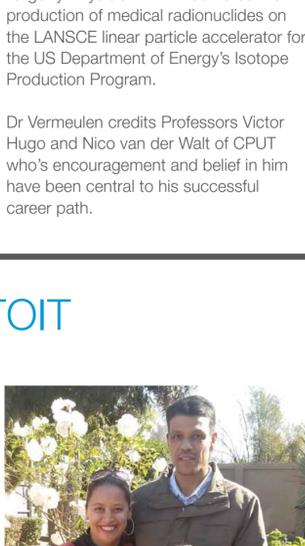
After hopping on a plane with his wife and cat to wider pastures, Etienne has not envisioned a return to his homeland anytime in the near future. In his experiences he has found that there is so much more the rest of the world has to offer. Having being raised in Gansbaai, a small fishing village in his time, and receiving an opening to see a new world, there is no wonder his return to South Africa remains undetermined.

"It's absolutely possible to do this, its hard work and you of course pay a price but the satisfaction of getting through all of that and ending up with a PhD is great. Anybody can do it."

Dr Vermeulen recently embarked on a new expedition to the United States of America where he joined Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) as a Targetry Physicist. LANL facilitates the production of medical radionuclides on the LANSCE linear particle accelerator for the US Department of Energy's Isotope Production Program.

Dr Vermeulen credits Professors Victor Hugo and Nico van der Walt of CPUT who's encouragement and belief in him have been central to his successful career path.

With this thesis - "Production of



DR RUSSEL DU TOIT

By Chantelle Hartebeest

The Cape Peninsula University of Technology in Cape Town, formerly known as Peninsula Technikon, has been a great source of knowledge to many young people over the years, leading them to big, bright and successful futures.

One of these young people is Doctor Russel du Toit, who says that CPUT has taught him one of the most valuable moral lessons: "Respect and admire those who have taught you". Du Toit also describes life as a student at CPUT as "a good balance of having great friends, inspiring lecturers and assimilating new skills and ideas."

Born and raised in Kimberley in the Northern Cape, du Toit began his tertiary education in 1988 at the CPUT's Bellville campus to study electrical engineering. His love and passion for the well being of people later led him to become a medical doctor specializing in vascular surgery. When questioned about his move from engineering to medicine, du Toit said that it was personal and his decision has nothing to do with regret. Although du Toit has not continued a career in electrical engineering, he says that what he had

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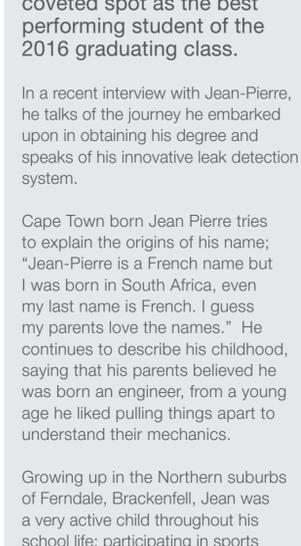
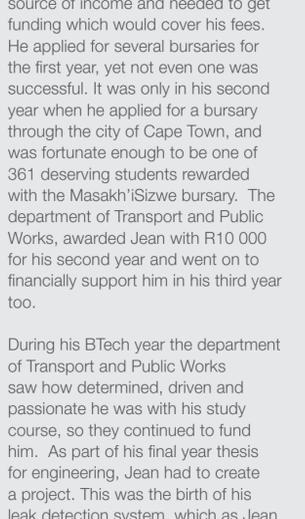
learned during his course at CPUT gave him an advantage in his current profession as a doctor. "It has made me admire and appreciate the various applications of engineering. We use various instruments everyday and it has made me appreciate the thinking and application that brought the device to life so to speak."

Today, du Toit is married and resides in Johannesburg with his wife and their two beautiful daughters. He says that in his free time he loves spending time with his family. Du Toit also has a very good sense of humour and says if there is any other job

that he would take on it would be that of Superman. As part of his charity work, du Toit donates blood on a regular basis.

Dr du Toit has put in a lot of effort and hard work to get to where he is today. With his efforts came many success and achievements. "Every patient who I, as part of a team, can get back on the road to recovery has been a success for me." Du Toit also credits CPUT as one of his achievements. "I'd like to say without a doubt that being an alumnus of CPUT is a proud achievement for me!"

The world's most beautiful and precious diamonds are found in Kimberley and Dr du Toit carry on with the good work that he is doing and may he continue to be a good example of what CPUT as an institution can embed in the future generation of our country.



Alumnus Jean-Pierre Mostert

You're never too old to realize your passion

By Lesego Mkhize

always supportive..."

During his gap year Jean worked at a technical school and enrolled for several months at an engineering company, in doing this Jean believes he was becoming more and more exposed to the field.

After six years, of working, Jean earned a stable income and finally feeling like he had settled down- in 2012 Jean decided that it was time to go and study full time. Knowing that he had to quit his job in order to maintain full focus on his studies, Jean had no source of income and needed to get funding which would cover his fees. He applied for several bursaries for the first year, yet not even one was successful. It was only in his second year when he applied for a bursary through the city of Cape Town, and was fortunate enough to be one of 361 deserving students rewarded with the Masakh'iSizwe bursary. The department of Transport and Public Works, awarded Jean with R10 000 for his second year and went on to financially support him in his third year too.

During his BTech year the department of Transport and Public Works saw how determined, driven and passionate he was with his study course, so they continued to fund him. As part of his final year thesis for engineering, Jean had to create a project. This was the birth of his leak detection system, which as Jean describes "is an early method of water leak detection within a water distribution network".

By end of his BTech year he had obtained 21 distinctions out of 24 subjects and was awarded the coveted Vice-Chancellor's medal for his overall top performance. Jean now works for Lesedi Nuclear Services, and believes that without the support of his loving wife he wouldn't have made it thus far. Jean encourages everyone who would like to pursue a career within the engineering field to ensure it is out of passion rather than the monetary value it is associated with.



DEAN AWARD: Jean-Pierre receiving his first award at an Engineering ceremony in 2016 from Prof Marshall Sheldon, Acting DVC Research, Technology, Innovation & Partnerships.

Jean-Pierre Mostert graduated *cum laude* of his class in 2016, with the BTech in electrical engineering. His final year engineering project known as, the leak detection system, secured him the coveted spot as the best performing student of the 2016 graduating class.

In a recent interview with Jean-Pierre, he talks of the journey he embarked upon in obtaining his degree and speaks of his innovative leak detection system.

Cape Town born Jean Pierre tries to explain the origins of his name; "Jean-Pierre is a French name but I was born in South Africa, even my last name is French. I guess my parents love the names." He continues to describe his childhood, saying that his parents believed he was born an engineer, from a young age he liked pulling things apart to understand their mechanics.

Growing up in the Northern suburbs of Ferndale, Brackenfell, Jean was a very active child throughout his school life; participating in sports that wasn't varied from Judo to rugby. It wasn't until after matric in 2006 that Jean discovered his love for electrical engineering. "I applied to study electrical engineering at CPUT in 2007 and was accepted. But I saw how all of my fellow peers were so unsure about the study choices they had made, so I decided to take a gap year. I did not want to do electrical engineering because I felt pressured but I wanted it to be something I was ready for. Luckily my parents were

BUSISWE BUNU

By Sian Eckles

The not-so-soft whisper of men dominating industries across the globe has been spoken about in recent years and will most likely be a topic of extensive conversation until the issue is rectified. With major technology companies releasing their diversity figures, it shone a spotlight on the incredible fact that the number of women in technological jobs, globally, is sitting at under 20%; a figure that is as shocking as it is common.

In South Africa, we are no exception, with men holding the majority of positions in the technology industry however, there's an exception to that no-exception - Busisiwe Bunu.

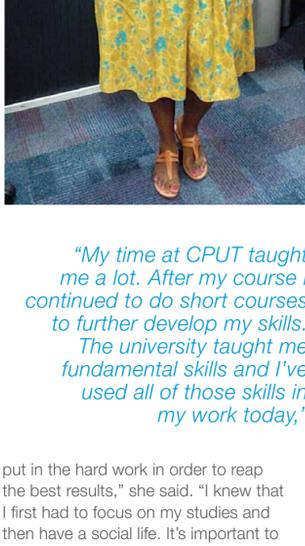
Busisiwe is a female IT specialist based in Cape Town and is currently working as programmer and data analyst for SETA. She graduated from the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) in year 2008 and has since worked for companies such as Syntell and Engen. Sitting down with Busisiwe, we spoke about her student life at CPUT and her career progression in the IT field.

Growing up as the youngest of 4 siblings in Mdantsane in East London, Busisiwe was a keen learner with a passion for learning new things and a knack for problem-solving throughout her former years. Her chosen course at CPUT relieved the itch to problem-solve and it prepared her for her many future endeavours.

"My time at CPUT taught me a lot. After my course I continued to do short courses to further develop my skills. The university taught me fundamental skills and I've used all of those skills in my work today," Busisiwe said. "My course has opened a lot of doors for me. I've been able to work in various offices for big companies like Syntell and Engen. It has also helped me to be able fix my own IT problems or problems that people in my community have. It really is a course that allows one to work in different fields because computer systems are everywhere," she said.

With the number of graduates facing unemployment increasing annually, it's fortunate that Busisiwe managed to find work immediately after graduating due to timing and her efforts during university holidays. "It was easy for me to find a job after studying because I used to work during the holidays for different companies. I also found that the market for IT developers and analysts was small, so there was a real need. Back then, it wasn't a really well known course; now there are more IT students," she said.

For aspiring IT students and students in general, Busisiwe stressed the importance of hard work and friendship to get you through one's university years. "Always



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put in the hard work in order to reap the best results," she said. "I knew that I first had to focus on my studies and then have a social life. It's important to have a balance though, to keep healthy mentally too. CPUT was the best years of my life; I made lifelong friends and was part of a very open campus community that welcomed all. You didn't feel like an outsider because there were many students from different provinces."

Busisiwe is a prime example of the type of students that CPUT produces; beating the odds and fuelled by determination and hard work. She's managed to stand her ground and excel in a male-dominated industry where women are needed to bring a fresh perspective and create fluidity in IT. She continues to inspire those around her and is one of CPUT's greatest exports.