

# News

## Build a (eco)brick, one bottle at a time

by Kerry Pattinson

HOW do we unite a community in the midst of a global pandemic? This is the question I found myself pondering many times during 2020 and 2021. At a time when we are all separated, how do we come together safely for a good cause? How do we help those less fortunate than ourselves when it feels like we can barely connect with our own families?

The EcoBrick Project was our solution to the above questions. A simple way for everyone to recycle used plastics into a two litre bottle (thereby helping the environment), which would be used by the Re-Trade Project to build a community centre in friendly Gqeberha.

A big thank you to all staff and students who contributed towards a total of 200 bottles (better known as bricks). Special mention must be made of Karla Pienaar who brought in 50 bricks! We trust that the bricks will show our local community the love that is missing by us all being separated.

No matter how little you have to give, you always have the opportunity to make a positive difference in the lives of those around you. Maybe we should all ponder this a little while longer and see what solutions we can find to making that difference? The Re-Trade Project offers various exciting ways to recycle and empower the community to be environmentally responsible. Be sure to follow them on social media for regular updates! ▼



Image: Kerry Pattinson

▲ Karla Pienaar on her way to drop off 50 EcoBricks!

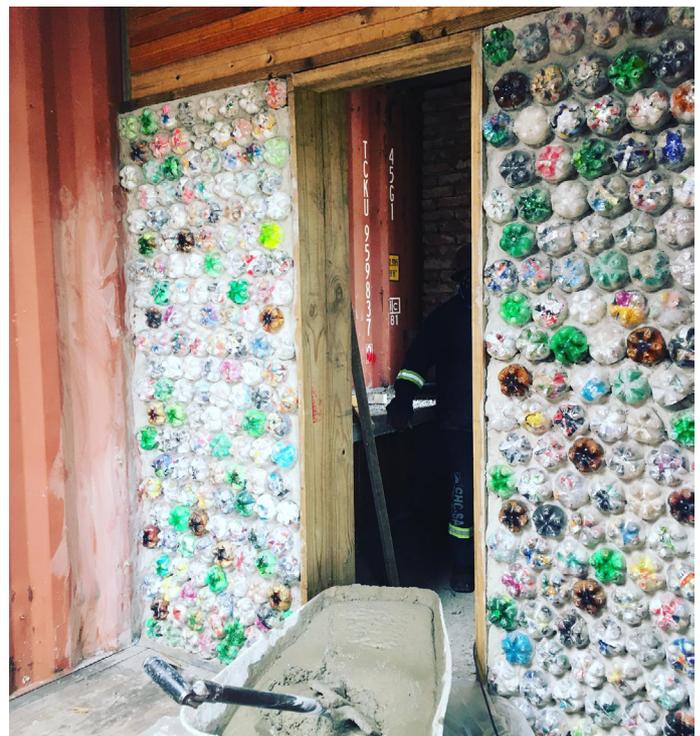


Image: Facebook

▲ A work in progress using EcoBricks

 This is an e-newsletter. Look out for this icon and click to be redirected to the relevant website.

# Celebrating success amidst challenging times

by Houdini Fourie

ANOTHER extraordinary year has flashed by – another year during which students and staff were tested beyond what would normally be expected. The 2021 academic year was not only a year of challenges for the School of Accounting, but the team has once again proven that we can stand the test of times. Several achievements of note can be shared. The challenges of the 2021 academic year created opportunities for us to celebrate the way in which we have successfully accomplished our goals – both physically and mentally. We were able to complete the learning and teaching component of the 2021 academic year very successfully and we performed well in the research and engagement domains too.

Isn't it a special and proud experience when we have success in a difficult challenge? With all that said, it is a privilege for me to express my sincere gratitude to each and every student and staff member, but also and very importantly, the stakeholders of the School of Accounting. The accounting profession in the Nelson Mandela Bay region, our professional bodies (local and global) and every individual and organisation that played a role in the 2021 academic year, made our success even more glamorous. From the School of Accounting, allow me to wish you a blessed 2022 with your family and friends. Take care and stay safe. ▼

# Innovative change leading the way to success

by Amanda Singleton

THE COVID-19 pandemic has presented unprecedented challenges and novel opportunities for innovative change, not only in the way we live and work but also in the way learning takes place. Staff and students alike had to change their behaviours and working habits to manage the challenge of completing the 2020 and 2021 academic years during 2021 which is first in the history of the Department of Accounting Sciences.

The pandemic has also made visible the inequality fault lines that can impede the success of our students who hail from under resourced schools and communities. Approximately 45% of students enrolled in the Department of Accounting Sciences are from Quintiles 1,2 and 3 (no-fee paying) schools with only about 35% of these students qualifying for financial aid via the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS). Thanks to the efforts of Ms Heather Cousins and our Thuthuka programme we have been able to raise funding for bursaries for some of these students. Funding at the postgraduate level remains a major challenge for students.

Almost 70% of our student intake emanate from the Eastern Cape which is one of the worst performing provinces in the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examination. The proportion of matriculants scoring above 50% for mathematics is 9% below the national average. Consequently, we are partnering with the Nelson Mandela University's Govan Mbeki Mathematics Development Centre (GMMDC) to consider strategies for improving mathematics within the province. This will require strategic partnerships with industry to raise funding to support these initiatives. An analysis of pass rates and throughput rates in our programmes relative to the introduction of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) system in the basic education system has highlighted some interesting trends that warrant further analysis.

In a recent publication by the Human Sciences Research Council highlighting the results of the 2019 Trends in Mathematics and Science studies (TIMMS), it is concerning to note the reduced emphasis on higher order thinking skills, such as application and reasoning within the CAPS curriculum relative to international norms.

The National Senior Certificate (NSC) 2020 Diagnostic Report for Languages finds that candidates perform well in questions that require lower order thinking skills whilst many learners performed poorly in questions that demanded analytical, evaluative and problem-solving skills. *(Continues on page 3)*

> The performance of our graduates in the SAICA ITC examinations attest to the continuing quality of our programmes in producing graduates with the requisite higher order thinking skills. But the decline in pass and throughput rates particularly in the undergraduate programme is concerning. The correlation of the decline in these pass rates with the introduction of the CAPS curriculum begs the question, are our declining pass rates attributable to the reduced preparation of our students for higher order thinking and if yes, how can we adequately address this problem in the academic programme?

Ms Joné Pienaar was able to secure funding to convert the critical thinking module that she has developed into a hybrid online learning tool that we will be piloting in the 2022 academic year. This module aims specifically at addressing the development of higher order thinking skills such as evaluation, reasoning and application. We hope to be able to roll-out the module to all students in the 2023 academic year.

We have also embarked on some curriculum renewal projects aimed at ensuring our programmes remain relevant and adequately prepare graduates for the increasingly complex and interconnected world and future role of accountants in organisations and society. The curriculum renewal projects aim to place technology and professional skills development at the centre of learning and teaching approaches and assessment. To this end the Department was able to secure Funding from the Teaching Development and Innovation Fund (TDIF) for three projects, one of which addresses the upskilling of technological skills of staff to enable them to build interactive online learning resources, another on the conceptualisation of a capstone project and a third on exploring the introduction of Robotic Process Automation (RPA), programming, data analytics and visualization into the BCom Accounting Curriculum.

Our students and academic trainees continue to contribute through various social outreach initiatives, whilst our marketing and engagement team have continued to innovate in their outreach endeavours. You can follow these developments in the newsletter.

On the staffing front, we sadly bid farewell to Ms Pienaar who resigned at the end of the 2021 academic year. Fortunately, we were able to secure her assistance to see through the finalization of the critical thinking project during 2022. Mr Vusi Ndzimakhwe has joined our tax team and we look forward to the contribution he will make. ▼

## #2022 AY

Our approach is to mix online and mask-to-mask experiential learning in various ways across programmes.



## So tiny, so small, so loved by all

by Akhona Yosa

OUR Ironman athlete, Janine Christian, Postgraduate Diploma in Accounting (PGDA-CTA) Auditing lecturer, welcomed a beautiful baby girl, Lily Kate, on the 26<sup>th</sup> of August 2021! We wish her and her husband the absolute best on their parenthood journey.

Applied Accounting lecturer, Mr Bradley van der Ross and his wife also welcomed a little girl, Saige. May she bring you all the joy and embrace you with her love! Welcome to the world Lily and Saige, it has been waiting for you! ▼



▲ Baby Lily Kate Christian



▲ Baby Saige van der Ross

Images: Supplied

# Teamwork and innovation, a vital role to success

by Lizel Bester

I AM extremely proud to be the leader of #TeamAppliedAccounting. 2021 again was "what a year" to the power of two as the previous Head of Department had said for 2020. Once again, the colleagues from the department has shown the vital role they play. They have shown:

- A – the ABILITY to continue during a pandemic and still to have achieved what they did with all their hard work in academia and with the many community outreach projects;
- P – PASSION as committed lecturers and their passion they have for their students;
- P – PERSEVERANCE when overcoming struggles with unstable connectivity and load shedding;
- L – the LOYALTY towards their colleagues and myself is something they should all be proud of;
- I – the INNOVATIVE skills they have displayed to navigate the online learning and teaching environment is commendable;
- E – they are EXTRAORDINARY individuals with superpowers;
- D - and finally, their DETERMINATION to complete the 2021 academic year showed their commitment to their students.

Thank you to all colleagues for being an active member of #TeamAppliedAccounting. Celebrating the achievements of our students is always a highlight for any staff member, however, in 2021 we hosted the Department of Applied Accounting's prize giving in the form of a Microsoft Teams live event.

Thank you to Ms Andrea Govender who put together a lovely online celebration together with our prize winners. Thank you to each and every student and colleague for the outreach projects that you have committed yourself to and have open your hearts to. The smiles we received made it worthwhile. ▼

# A celebration of dedication

by Andrea Govender

THE Department of Applied Accounting always loves to celebrate and acknowledge academic and charitable excellence which is why the Department hosted its first Live Virtual Prizegiving Ceremony for the 2020 academic year prize-winners on Thursday the 14<sup>th</sup> of October. In 2020 no event could be held, and a video was made to celebrate the 2019 prize-winners instead. Andrea Govender, a lecturer in the Department, hosted a live event for staff, students, loved ones and sponsors which included presentations from the INTACC Society as well speeches from some of the prize-winners.

It was an extremely memorable and delightful event as it was the first of its kind for the Department. Generous sponsorships from Tiam Services, PKF Inc and LexisNexis thrilled students and made the fruit of their hard work that much sweeter. Certificates were all sent prior to the event for prize-winners to hold up with their cameras on and proudly show off to all in attendance. There were priceless smiles, applause and pride as the evening was a wonderful example that hard work pays off and motivation for students to continue with their dedication and perseverance. We are looking forward to many more in future and hopefully a mask to mask event in 2022. ▼

# Mandela Uni recognises top academic students

by Elma de Koker

THE excellence of 24 top students and graduates were recognised at Nelson Mandela University's second, virtual annual student Academic Awards ceremony on 28 September 2021. Vice-Chancellor Prof Sibongile Muthwa in her address, thanked the 2021 achievers for making excellence a habit. "While you have done us



Image: Supplied

▲ Kristin Giddy

> proud with your excellent academic achievements, we also know that you will be exemplary Nelson Mandela University alumni and ambassadors, as you make your way in the world as caring, well-rounded, responsible and civic-minded citizens, she said Kristin Giddy was the award winner for the First Degree in the Faculty of Business and Economic Sciences for her BCom Accounting Sciences (Computer Science & Information Systems) degree with an average of 85%. "In a world of corruption and negativity, I wish to be honest and considerate. I want to lead in a way that is kind and encouraging, uplifting others to better themselves, she says. She enjoys problem-solving, strategising and making decisions in accounting. Her dream job is to help entrepreneurs grow their businesses. ▼

## Students persevere, achieve throughout pandemic

by Akhona Yosa

OUR students have worked tirelessly, during a pandemic, to produce noteworthy results. To acknowledge their hard work, the Department of Accounting Sciences 'hosted' the 55<sup>th</sup> annual prize giving, based on the 2020 academic results, by means of a pre-recorded video.

> The ceremony included messages from the Director of School, Professor Houdini Fourie, Head of Department, Professor Amanda Singleton, our division heads from the Management Accounting & Finances, Taxation, Accounting, and Auditing departments, and our top

> Postgraduate Diploma in Accounting (PGDA-CTA) student, Azola Kana. A Faces, Facts & Figure presentation was included to give some fun insights about the Accounting Sciences Department. Did you know, in 1966 there were only three academic staff members serving in the Accounting Sciences department? Or that in the last six years, five of our students have been placed in the top ten in the country for the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA) Initial Test of Competence (ITC)?

We would like to once again congratulate our students for their perseverance. It is not easy studying and working under a worldwide pandemic, though they have shone and will continue to soar to new heights. We also look forward to celebrating our 2021 achievements in the near future!

Thank you to the department's staff members, without you it would not be possible. We would additionally like to thank all our stakeholders. We are grateful for the unceasing support. We would like to thank the following sponsors for their continued support and generous sponsorship towards this event: Auditor-General South Africa (AGSA), BDO, Deloitte, Ernst & Young (EY), Investec, KPMG, LexisNexis, Mazars, Moore, Professional Provident Society (PPS), Pricewaterhouse Coopers (PwC), South African Institute of Professional Accountants (SAIPA), South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA), and the family of the late Professor Gerrit Radder. ▼

# Ethics and the financial manager, an imperative attribute

by Lesego Molathwe

ACCOUNTING graduates continue to play key roles in the successful operations of many enterprises in South Africa and across the globe. In the journey of their training, financial management (as a subject) is amongst the key disciplines they explore given its centrality to decision making in both short- and long-term planning. Whilst esteemed by many, this proximity to decision makers, subjects these new financial professionals to risks that may challenge their ethical beliefs and foundations.

These challenges are covert given the glamour they are disguised in when presented to young graduates whose career aspirations are at an infancy stage. It is in light of these realities that continue to trap and destroy the careers of many young graduates, that the 2021 legacy lecture considered the subject of ethics and the financial manager the most appropriate topic for discussion.

The lecture is in honour of the late Professor Les Simpson, a highly regarded Management Accounting academic who, during his term of 26 years at the formerly known as University of Port Elizabeth (UPE) and Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, made a significant contribution to the development of many accountants.

Ms Mpho Mookapele CA(SA), the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) at Energy & Water SETA (EWSETA) was the speaker for the 2021 lecture. She has over 14 years of experience in the Private and Public Sector in the Finance, Strategy Development and Regulatory Environment, and Skills Development. More importantly, she is involved in the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA), where she has interviewed several individuals who faced the ethical dilemma and recorded these interviews into podcasts. Mpho was confronted with the same ethical dilemma and made a choice to uphold her integrity, all which made her an appropriate speaker.

Even though the event was hosted online, it did not disappoint in respect of the relevancy and nuggets for both student and academics alike. The following takeaways are some of the lessons from the lecture:

- > The need for a personal moral and ethical awareness as a guide. This will assist in responding to the situations as they arise. This important because as a professional, you are not caught off-guard as you are already clear about where you stand on ethical issues.
- The importance of being competent and not merely qualified. Competence was defined as the ability to understand the implications beyond the numbers, and this requires one to read broadly so as to identify the issues or ask the right questions.
- Ethics are expensive; standing for the right principles comes at a cost.

In conclusion, students were encouraged to be clear about where they want to go beyond qualifying as accounting professionals. The importance of being qualified is the goal, although it cannot be the end-goal as this assists the individual in managing the temptations that comes with high salaries and other benefit. ▼

▲ Mpho Mookapele CA(SA), CEO Energy & Water SETA

Image: Supplied

# INTACC, serving the community

by Andrea Govender

THE Department of Applied Accounting has set a precedent for itself to identify needs in the community, and to try as best as possible to reach those needs whilst inculcating the value of charity and ubuntu in our students.

The Internal Audit and Accounting Society (INTACC) members and lecturer, Andrea Govender, engaged and planned a Christmas Drive for December 2021. Boxes and posters were placed on South and Second Avenue Campus to collect toys and monetary contributions for an orphanage in Gqeberha.

The aim was to make the festive season as memorable as possible for those less fortunate.

In addition, cupcakes, goodies and small Christmas treats were sponsored for each child by Moeksies Creative Cakes and staff. These were enjoyed whilst delighted by a motivational talk from the INTACC Society.

Lastly, the day was concluded with fun gardening activities, where kids planted tomatoes and strawberries! This will not only encourage the children to eat healthier but will help build strong bonds with the community, as it helps them stay in touch to monitor the garden's growth.

This initiative is extremely exciting and all involved are blessed by the outcome and generous donations. ▼

# Connecting digitally with firms, students

by Roelien Strydom

WITH limited ways to host events during a pandemic, the continuing need for students to connect with possible future employers, and vice versa, #MeetwithMe was our best bet – and ultimately a great success!

In August 2021, we, the Department of Accounting Sciences, hosted our first two-day online info session #MeetwithMe for local firms and professional bodies to safely connect with our students. During each session, a representative from each firm spoke about the ins and outs of their firm and the opportunities available to students. At the end of each session, students also had the opportunity to ask questions regarding training contracts, bursaries, job opportunities and more. Despite the change in format and having to engage digitally, the sessions were insightful. The following firms and professional bodies hosted information sessions: Auditor-General South Africa (AGSA); BDO; Deloitte; Ernst & Young (EY); Investec; KPMG; Mazars; PKF; PwC; SNG Grant Thornton; and, South African Institute of Professional Accountants (SAIPA).

Would you like to contact any of these firms or professional bodies? Visit the Marketing & Events Moodle page for more information. Keep an eye out for more details on the 2022 #MeetwithMe offering. ▼

## Staying connected

by Roelien Strydom

IN 2020, the School of Accounting started a new project to connect with alumni – sharing their journeys and successes as a student, and after graduation. In 2021, we continued with this venture and profiled another 10 alumni throughout the year, from April to October. This Alumni Insight project aimed to inspire students to focus on the road ahead, seek new opportunities and to never give up on their dreams. If you would like to view these infographic profiles, visit our Facebook and Instagram pages. Be sure to look out for a new alumni-inspired project coming soon! ▼

Connect with us! Visit the School of Accounting's Facebook and Instagram pages to follow us.



# Integrated thinking inspires

by Amanda Singleton

**Capstone Project** | THE purpose of this project was to conceptualise a capstone project for incorporation into the BCom Accounting curriculum. Our thinking was informed by industry developments, including the future of professional work and the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA) CA2025 revised competency framework which places an increased focus on sustainable value creation and decision making with greater emphasis on integrated thinking and the professional values, attitudes and enabling acumens (not dissimilar to our desired graduate attributes). We have defined our capstone project in the following broad terms:

- The project must be embedded throughout the entire curriculum;
- The knowledge, character, skills and meta learning that graduates need to develop will be outlined in a curriculum map with links to learning opportunities (in the formal and co-curricular system);
- Reflection, adaptation and self-directed learning are critical components of the process;
- Students will be guided through their learning journey with the identification of key milestones that must be attained at critical points within the leaning journey and a curated set of learning opportunities and resources they can draw on);
- The process will enable collaborative learning including peer-review and co-created learning opportunities; and,
- Learning will be documented in an e-portfolio and assessed using rubrics specifically designed to evaluate our desired graduate attributes.

During the 2022 academic year we plan to collaborate with the profession as we begin to source material for incorporation in the curated learning opportunities that will be embedded in this project.

**Digital Acument Project** | The Department of Accounting Sciences embarked on a curriculum renewal journey during 2021 with the objective of ensuring constructive alignment of what we teach, how we teach and how we assess against intended learning outcomes. We adopted a backward design approach using the CA2025 competency framework as a tool to complete a detailed curriculum mapping exercise with a view to identifying critical gaps in existing curriculum. Programming, Robotic Process Automation (RPA), data analytics and visualisation were identified as key areas requiring attention. The digital acumen workgroup explored the use of the UiPath Studio X software which allows students to build their own robots and automate routine processes. It is our considered view that UiPath is a tool that enables problem solving and the determination of logical steps without the frustration of learning in a programming code. It would introduce a creative and fun element into the

> learning journey and can provide a relatable experience for students when RPA is considered in the context of the core disciplines. In 2022 we will design an implementation strategy. The digital acumen workgroup also identified and evaluated various projects and learning opportunities in the formal curriculum that align with the data analytics and visualisation competencies.

In 2022 we will explore how these learning opportunities can be enhanced. Catherine Fourie is a member of the SAICA digital acumen community of best practice and is collaborating on a research project that is considering the social justice challenges associated with digital learning. ▼

## Impactful TDIF innovations

by Ewayne le Roux

AS a Teaching Development and Innovation Fund (TDIF) group project, Catherine Fourie, Pete Brodrick and I have undertaken a teaching and learning initiative titled: *Pursuing impactful learning and engagement innovations in online teaching practices within the School of Accounting.*

The aim of this project is to enhance our technological skills to develop and build interactive online teaching resources, based on sound teaching and learning strategies, to the benefit of our students. The TDIF-group intends to explore learning design tools and consider appropriate pedagogical approaches and learning theories for the purposes of impactful resource design. ▼

# Signed, sealed, delivered

by Akhona Yosa

THE School of Accounting embarked on an adventure aimed at providing high school learners with prospective information. The 2021 High School USB Drive is an initiative created to bridge the information gap for learners pertaining to career field.

The School of Accounting usually visits high schools around Gqeberha to present learners with information regarding the university and the accounting study field, but with COVID-19 still prevalent, the marketing team had to find an alternative way to reach learners.

The team decided to load USBs with important information which includes the School of Accounting Welcome video, important university dates, Applicant Score guides, and much more!

The School of Accounting wants to encourage learners to make informed decisions when it comes to choosing careers paths and will continue working to ensure that learners are equipped with the necessary information. We welcome all the new students and wish them the best with their studies! ▼

## A trip around 2021 - Academic Trainees

by Kerry Pattinson & Shana Brown

**Kerry Pattinson** | MY year as an academic trainee was a year to remember. I am so grateful for the opportunity of becoming acquainted with and aiding students, even within the online environment. I enjoyed the weekly engagement with students the most, as we also spent some time discussing non-academic matters and reflecting the week that has passed.

I have learnt so much through the experience and it allowed me to live out my passion for helping and teaching others. We were afforded the opportunity of initiating an amazing community project that I hope will continue for years to come. And lastly, I was lucky enough to work with a great team that provided me with the necessary guidance and support that I needed. ▼

**Shana Brown** | IN my short academic career at the School of Accounting, it transitioned from only in-person lecturing to complete online facilitation of all classes. My role as an Academic Trainee in 2021 was not only to assist the lecturing staff in providing a quality online offering, but also to bridge the ever-growing gap between students and lecturers - and what a task that was!

I am grateful to the staff who have provided me the opportunity to aid the Tax and Auditing departments this year, and more so for valuing my insights into their virtual classrooms and using my inputs to create a better experience for all the students in 2021. ▼



▲ Kerry Pattinson



▲ Shana Brown

Images: Supplied

# Pinnacle Programme, all-round mentorship

by Jessica Raper

THE Purpose of Pinnacle aligns it to the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA) strategy objectives of developing responsible leaders who behave ethically. Research showed that Pinnacle students become a community, family they called it. With COVID-19 and lockdown, we built on this inclusive strategy to ensure no student felt left out. Top accounting students were invited from all year groups to join the Pinnacle Leadership Programme. Social media platforms were abuzz with acts of kindness initiatives and motivational quotes to inspire each other to never give up. Peer support was very important to them, as was the quick responses from staff.

**What is the Pinnacle Leadership Programme?** | This programme is a platform for expression, where we aim to make top academic accounting students feel like they belong and know that their opinions matter. It is a holistic leadership programme. The essence of this programme is to first develop and learn how to lead yourself, and then how to lead others. Year group leaders form the executive committee, with Jessica Raper as leader and mentor. It is all about experiential learning, creating excitement, getting students on Think Tanks to design new experiences that will inspire them, and match them to projects according to interest and strengths.

Furthermore we practise:

- Student centred experiences;
- Proactive listening;
- Equal approach - mutual engagement between generations;
- Positive and new environments for communication. We embraced the digital revolution and the students got to present webinars on local and international platforms; and,
- I use my lived experiences, coaching high achievers and Psycho-educational Programme development for Student Success Interventions.

The four components of the Pinnacle programme are:

- Academic mentoring;
- Personal and professional development;

- Social responsibility initiatives; and,
- Global citizenship

**Gala Awards** | A red carpet mask-to-mask gala awards event was held to celebrate the success of the students in October 2021. This was after a long spell of total isolation since February 2020. Congratulations to Claudia Schaberg, the Postgraduate Diploma in Accounting (PGDA-CTA) group leader for 2021, who was crowned the Ultimate Pinnacle for her continued contribution to this cutting edge Leadership Programme. She is only the third Pinnacle student to ever receive this prestigious merit award. The other two were Abigail Meier and Kerry Pattinson, in 2019 and 2020 respectively.

**Global Citizenship** | Pinnacle students were invited to join webinars on Future Fit Accountants organised by Chartered Accountants Worldwide USA (CAW). Natasha Holbeck, an alumnus of our university and SAICA representative, introduced the life of a Chartered Accountant (CA) in the United States of America (USA). She made her services available should students want to explore future international opportunities.

**International Student Exchange Discussions** | A panel of two students from Fordham University in New York and two Pinnacle students from Nelson Mandela University met online and took part in a Q&A session which was facilitated by a Pinnacle student. A future collaboration between students is in the pipeline for 2022.

**Dare to dream** | Bianca Buitendag, Olympic silver medallist in the Beijing Olympics lives in George, South Africa. She shared her journey and motivated Pinnacle students to never stop dreaming and make use of every opportunity presented to them.

**Academic mentoring** | Academically it was yet another difficult year as online learning does not suit all learning styles. Some students however, found it more time and travel cost effective. *(Continues on page 11)*

> Thank you to the staff members who were so very willing to go the extra mile and assist students where possible. In conclusion, 2021 was a successful year in terms of developing top accounting students as future responsible Chartered Accountants and business leaders. Visit the Pinnacle Leadership Programme's YouTube channel for more videos. ▼

**Click on the links below to watch these Pinnacle Leadership Programme projects:**



▲ From left: Carmel Chan-Lok, Jessica Raper & Kristin Giddy. Both Carmel and Kristin received Merit Awards for their longstanding service to the Pinnacle Leadership Programme from 2017 - 2021



▲ Claudia Schaberg who received the Merit Award of Excellence for her value, passion and commitment towards the Pinnacle Leadership Programme

*by Heather Cousins*

THE Siya Phambili Bursary office focusses on widening the access to higher education for students at undergraduate and postgraduate level at the Nelson Mandela University. We actively source and manage external funding to support students studying towards a Finance and IT qualification, as well as aiding with settling outstanding fees. This office was bolstered with managing over sixteen-million-rand from the BankSETA and the Financial Accounting Services SETA (FASSET) in full comprehensive bursary awards, as well as limited academic support.

The funding of this nature is vital as the national demand for support and funding far outstrip supply. Therefore, this funding is pivotal for the support of poor and missing middle students who are academically deserving but financially needy. Additionally, another important purpose of this office is to assist students who may have completed their undergraduate with assistance from the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), but need funds to continue their studies.

An integral part of the support provided is the work readiness program, academic mentoring and tutoring, personal development workshops, as well as industry leaders visiting as guest speakers.

In 2021, two-hundred-and-twenty-four students qualified for support and attended workshops on leadership, Financial Advisory and Intermediary Services (FAIS) compliance, block-chain and crypto currency amongst many other innovative topics. Transformation and advanced skills are needed in the Finance and IT sector therefore, strategic, financial and developmental support for students in this pipeline is vital.

Accompanied by digitisation and the increase of Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) which disrupts the traditional finance and banking space, the ad-hoc workshops aim to ensure that they are not only able to start their own businesses with skills acquired in the Entrepreneurship Workshop, but that their employability is also increased by means of the workplace skills learnt. We are fortunate to continue offering this support in 2022. ▼

ITC 2022  
JANUARY  
RESULTS



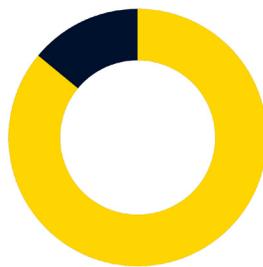
**88%** of our first-time candidates **PASSED** the national ITC qualifying examination  
**10% HIGHER** than the national average pass rate obtained for this examination

**2** out of 29 students who passed this examination with **HONOURS** (above 75%) are from  Nelson Mandela University 

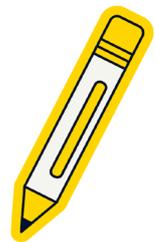
A SPECIAL CONGRATULATIONS TO  
**KRISTIN GIDDY** &  
**NICHOLAS THOMPSON**  
ON THIS REMARKABLE ACHIEVEMENT

NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY  
**FIFTH**  
PLACE IN THE COUNTRY AND  
**NUMBER ONE**  
IN THE **EASTERN CAPE**

**86%** of our first-time THUTHUKA graduates **PASSED** the national ITC qualifying examination  
**10% HIGHER** than the national average pass rate for first-time Thuthuka students



**80%** of our first-time AFRICAN graduates **PASSED** the national ITC qualifying examination  
**15% HIGHER** than the national average pass rate obtained by this demographic



The Initial Test of Competence (ITC) is the first of two professional examinations required for qualification as a Chartered Accountant (SA). These results confirm the continuing quality of CA(SA) education at Nelson Mandela University. We would like to congratulate all our successful students from the 2021 Postgraduate Diploma in Accounting (CTA-PGDA) class. A special thank you to the staff from the School of Accounting for their dedication and hard work in helping these students achieve.



# Thuthuka programme strives to support

by Felancia du Preez

**Social Responsibility Project** | THE Thuthuka students adopted the Sinethemba Children's Care Centre as their 2021 Social Responsibility Project. All year groups donated food items and pre-loved clothes to the children's home. Sinethemba, situated in Korsten, has been operational since the late 1990's. Founder and chairlady, Signoria Qolani, having grown up on the streets herself, vowed to dedicate her life to helping children in the same situation. The home takes in homeless, abandoned, and abused children (boys and girls) up to the age of 18. When the children are grown up and ready to leave, Signoria helps them to find work and housing. However, she is currently extending the house to accommodate children who are still in need of help after the age of 18 years. The home provides children with shelter, clothing, food, health care and counselling when necessary. She also ensures that they receive an education. They are desperately in need of funding, food and clothing.

**First year Thuthuka students** | Our first year group had their year-end lunch at the Cubana restaurant after their test series in November. They celebrated the end of their academic year with Mr Lucrecion Jacobus, who is their Thuthuka year group coordinator and also their Thuthuka accounting tutor. One of the class representatives mentioned that the year certainly did not turn out the way they expected. The pandemic and online learning forced them to work closely together and rely more on the support provided by Lucrecion and the Thuthuka office. They expressed their appreciation for the additional support and constant encouragement provided by their "mom and dad," Lucrecion and Felancia, as well as their Thuthuka tutors and mentors.

**Graduation and top performers** | As a result of the COVID-19 restrictions, the autumn graduation ceremony was hosted online. We decided to arrange graduation attire for the Thuthuka students to celebrate their achievements with their loved ones. Those who were

> not able to go home, arranged for fun photo sessions on campus with their friends and/or fellow graduates. A few of our Postgraduate Diploma in Accounting (PGDA-CTA) students who already started their training contracts, managed to send a few pictures of their graduation celebrations at the office. ▼



▲ Sinethemba Children's Centre in Korsten, Gqeberha



▲ Thuthuka students visited the Sinethemba Children's Centre to donate food items and pre-loved clothes



▲ The first year Thuthuka group at their year-end lunch



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