

CUT ALUMNI NEWS 2022 5TH EDITION



Central University of
Technology, Free State

CONTENTS

PAGE

Editorial note

It is with great pleasure that we present the 5th Edition Alumni Newsletter. We have received inspiring feedback from our readers and would like to send a shout out to all the alumni who are waving the CUT flag high. In this edition we see how giving back after achieving a lot is still an essential part of our humanity. We also learn how a career choice can lead you to a totally different path, and still work to your advantage. We meet a diverse set of alumni with exceptional skills, from making medical miracles to dresses and perfume. Launching our first international Alumni Chapter in Lesotho, Maseru was big a major milestone and worth celebrating.

We know that you will enjoy the content of this edition and remember to tell us about the wonderful things that you and your fellow graduates are doing. You are more than welcome to contribute to your alma mater in any way you can. Thank you for your continued support, you are highly appreciated.

Regards

The Alumni Team.

A legend giving back to the community



Patrick Molokase grew up a multitalented boy. Not only was he athletically blessed, but he was an artist too, something few people may know about him. He played soccer, cricket and basketball when he was at Christian Diphoko Secondary School in Thaba 'Nchu. He was a singer and part of a dance crew called "Makoya". After matric, his father sat him down, and told him he had to choose between soccer and music. Soccer is his first love, so he took the obvious choice.

His father also told him that a tertiary qualification was compulsory. He enrolled at the Central University of Technology, Free State (CUT) in 2001, to study Business Management. He then played for the national team in 2003. This was when he became a semi-professional player. "My lecturers were the best! It was tough managing football and academics, but they were very supportive and extremely helpful."

He explains that his best CUT memory is when he was a professional player and could not play for the varsity team. They made a bet. The professionals against the varsity team. If they won, they had to let them play. They won, and were allowed to play for the varsity team. They represented CUT in the provincial tournament with seven others, and they won that year. They moved on to the championships, and brought the trophy home.

In 2005, things kept looking up for him. He received three major offers. Patrick was wanted by the Free State Stars, Bloemfontein Celtics and Golden Arrows. He decided that Golden Arrows was the team for him, as they had just been promoted to the Premium Soccer League. He says his biggest accomplishment was playing for Pirates, and winning a double treble in the first two years he joined the team.

Patrick is now a coach at Grey College. This started out as a way to spend time with his son, and he ended up falling in love with the game all over again. He has a Level C Coaching Certificate, and is still busy with the others. Six Grey College boys have been selected for the national team ever since he has been there, and the u/17 team went through the first stage of the championships for the first time in 15 years. Patrick also has an electrical consulting company, and a mentoring and sports management company.

The latter also supplies and delivers sports equipment. He says it is important for him to help young men who are coming into the industry to get their ducks in a row. "I just want to help them get to professional levels, and help them to go there well equipped and financially stable, too. I did not have anyone who guided me when I was still coming up, and I do not want the same for these boys. I want to instil good work ethic and good morals in them, and support them in all they need."

Woman in Engineering



It is challenging for women in engineering to climb up the success ladder without being looked down upon, but Bonolo Tshetle did not let that stop her from pursuing what she loves. She registered for a National Diploma in Engineering at Central University of Technology (CUT), and also completed her BTech and Masters degrees in Electrical Engineering. Whilst studying at CUT, Tshetle became a house committee member at her Residence as a Warden and Finance Officer, and worked as a mentor in the Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology.

This helped her to grow holistically and also prepared her for the work environment. She got into her first internship at the Municipal Infrastructure Support Agent (MISA) at Letsemeng Local Municipality. After that, she worked as a part-time lecturer at Motheo TVET College offering Electrical Trade and Mathematics until November 2019.

Following that, she obtained her Masters degree in Electrical Engineering at CUT, and started working as an Assistant Electrical Engineer at Protonics Holdings under the Renewable Energy Department, where she is still employed. She describes these two events as the highlights of her career so far.

Tshetle says working at Protonics Holdings is a great opportunity because it is a step towards getting her professional registration with the Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA). "My dissertation was about renewable energy strategies with a focus on solar and wind energy, and I am hoping that I will put this into practice as I advance and learn in my career."

Tshetle grew up on a small farm in Madibogo near Mafikeng where there were few opportunities. She is the second born in her family and was raised by her mother. "Do not let your background determine how far you can go in life. I come from an impoverished home, school and community, but that did not stop me. If anything, it has pushed me to be the hard-working individual that I am today."

Getting a qualification is not without its challenges. There are obstacles along the way. Tshetle encourages future alumni to take any failure as an opportunity to try again with more wisdom. She says it is important to stay true to yourself, and to always do your best.

The people's fairy godmother



Beauty aesthetics has always been a passion of Elmarane Van Ryneveld. From a young age she enjoyed playing dress-up and getting dolled-up. She attended school at Sentraal High School and thereafter studied make-up and aesthetics while she was trying to figure out what her next step would be. During this time she realised that this was what she was passionate about.

Elmarane decided to enrol at Central University of Technology (CUT) for a National Diploma in Fashion Design. She learned much during this time. She found her identity as a designer. CUT did not only ripen her fashion skills, but her studies also assisted with her business skills. Elmarane has her own label called Orijinel by Elmarane Van Ryneveld where she is the Head Designer. With a swoosh here and there and a little bit of fairy dust, Elmarane has ladies walking out with stunning evening and wedding dresses.

She gets to wake up every day and do what she loves. "Every single dress we make is different from the previous one, and it is extremely rewarding being able to see the outcome of the product." Watching her business grow in the last ten years has had her beaming with pride. "It is a huge compliment knowing that people trust me with such important events in their lives," she stated joyfully.

Her biggest challenge is accepting criticism. She is, however, trying to accept that she cannot make everyone happy. She talks about the impact of decisions made and how they should not be made on a whim. Some decisions have worked out favourably and some have blown up in her face, but she is incredibly grateful for every good and bad outcome because both led to learning important lessons. Expanding her business and creating more jobs for people is one of the goals that drive her on a daily basis.



Shining in front of, and behind, the lens



Mark Steenbok grew up in George, a beautiful town in the Western Cape surrounded by the Outeniqua mountains and rivers. He was an energetic boy, always playful and inquisitive, which was sometimes challenging for his parents. However, they taught him much about life, and invested in his education.

Steenbok always knew that he wanted to be a journalist, so he enrolled at Central University of Technology (CUT) for a Diploma in Language Practice. He says this is one of the best decisions he has ever made, and he recommends it to anyone who wants to be in the media field. During his time at CUT, he stayed at Eendrag Hostel and was on the House Committee.

He learned discipline and gained leadership skills. After completing his diploma, Steenbok got involved in the campus radio station. CUT FM was established in 2015, and this was a pivotal moment in his life. It was the beginning of his career. "Being part of that management group that took the station to air for the first time was remarkable," he says excitedly.

Soon after, he got an internship at OFM where he worked for four years. He was the first intern to ever be employed there. He met wonderful colleagues who became mentors and taught him much about journalism.

eTV launched a new Afrikaans channel in 2018 and needed a reporter in central South Africa. This was the perfect opportunity for Steenbok, and he grabbed it. "For two years I got the opportunity to go inside people's environments and tell their stories while learning more about making great television," he says. He is currently working as a television producer in Cape Town.

Being a journalist is a huge responsibility, but it is also very satisfying. He wants his stories to have a great impact and to change people's lives for the better. He is driven by ordinary South Africans. "The dad that gets up at five o' clock every morning to go earn money to feed his family, and the mother that fulfils different roles in the household, being the pillar of strength, making ends meet to be able to send her children to university," he says.

He encourages students to learn as much as they can, and to make use of the platforms offered to them to empower themselves, in order to bring about change one day. Now more than ever, South Africa needs individuals who can use their education to better the lives of ordinary South Africans. He says they should also never forget to have fun.

"Every day when you go out there, you represent your fellow alumni, your family, and everybody that supported you on your journey. Keep on making them proud, keep on working hard, and keep on reaching those goals. Hustle hard, no matter the circumstances," he advises alumni.



Fighting for the Rainbow Community



On Tuesday, 26 July 2022, a LGBTQIA+ Dialogue Webinar was hosted by Unit for Institutional Renewal and Transformation. The goal of this dialogue was to combat and raise awareness of the LGBTQIA+ issues within the Central University of Technology, Free State (CUT). The main theme was how local and higher institutions of learning can foster an environment that benefits the LGBTQIA+ community.

Acting Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Ngowi stated that there is a huge gender inequality problem in South Africa. He believes that universities have to reclaim their role in combatting this matter. Another panellist, Mr Tshediso Koena, who is a LGBTQIA+ Sector Chairperson of the Lejweleputswa District, expressed how he was born in an era where just discussing sexuality was taboo. He remembered an event where a Banyanabanyana player was brutally murdered because of her sexuality. Nowadays people do not respect the sanctity of life.

Mx. Mkosana Tshisa, lecturer and panellist, taught the audience about the importance of gender identifications and different sexualities. The spectrum is very wide, and one needs to be careful not to offend anyone. Some members of the LGBTQIA+ community prefer certain pronouns.

They may want to be addressed as *they* instead of *him* or *her*. Some will prefer to be addressed as *Mx* instead of *Mr/Ms*. There are people who are gender-binary meaning male or female, and there are people who are non-binary which is a term used to describe genders that do not fall into those two categories. "The Rainbow Community has been marginalised for a long time. This is disappointing because hatred is taught, no one is born with it. Some of the issues that were raised were those of inclusivity

on campus. There are no gender neutral bathrooms on campus or at the residences. There is also not a specific office or department that caters for the LGBTQIA+ community like the International Office or The Disability Unit. There should be spaces where everyone feels comfortable and welcome," said Mx. Tshisa.

This community should not feel isolated or neglected. Prof. Makola assured the audience that preparations are underway, and that this dialogue is the first step to transformation. He stated that the university prioritises the well-being of its students and staff. He acknowledged and accepted all that was said and discussed, and stated that the concerns of the LGBTQIA+ community will be addressed.



Mr Tshediso Koena, LGBTQIA+ Sector Chairperson of Lejweleputswa District LGBTQIA+ Dialogue Webinar virtually.



Prof. Solomon Makola, Director of Central University of Technology, Welkom Campus attended the LGBTQIA+ Dialogue Webinar virtually.

A father and son's academic journey



He was a strict father, and that shaped the man his son is today. “My father was extremely strict and firm with me as I grew up, and I do not regret it one bit, because I have learnt valuable life lessons from growing up in a household with principles, respect, and hard work,” says his son, Quinn Lezar.

Quinn is one of the many students who faced the difficulty of changing contact classes to online lessons due to COVID-19. “Thanks to the adaptability of the institution, we were able to overcome this challenge.” He became more confident and outspoken throughout his time at CUT, which is what he always needed because he was an introvert. He completed his Postgraduate Diploma in Project Management. He is currently working at Philips SA, which has always been his dream job. Working at Philips has made him appreciate the knowledge, skills and expertise that he gathered from the qualified lecturers from the institution. His father describes him as shrewd and responsible.

Dr Lucien says the biggest lesson he has learned from his son is to stand tall and proud about every little and big achievement. Both say walking this academic journey was tough, but worth it. “My son saw my efforts in not giving up, thus following suit and making sure that he becomes one of the best students in his group,” says Dr Lucien. It was a tremendous honour for them to be graduating at the same time. This is an academic family and they have set a great example for the generations coming after them.

It is always a proud moment when parents see their child walking up the graduation stage. Imagine how it is when it is done by a father and son at the same time. It is a joyous occasion. Dr Lucien Lezar was born in Steynsburg, a small town in the Eastern Cape during the late 1970s. His parents then moved to Coronationville for better work opportunities. However, with the advent of mines in the 1980s, his father decided to move to Welkom. His father was very strict, and his mother was exceptionally caring and kind. Hard work was instilled at a young age, and he sold fat cakes over the weekends at the mining and contractor hostels.

He worked as a shop assistant at Clicks after matriculating as he did not have funds to commence with his tertiary education. Eighteen months later he was appointed at Matjhabeng Municipality as a Traffic Officer. He moved through different managerial ranks of the traffic fraternity. He enrolled at Central University of Technology (CUT) for the 2011 to 2014 academic years for a BTech degree in Business Administration. All his hard work was for his family to have a better life.

Through it all



Doctor Mpho Tshilo is a wife, mother, Procurement Specialist at the Free State Provincial Treasury, and recent PhD graduate from the Central University of Technology, Free State (CUT). She grew up in Thaba Nchu and completed matric at Albert Moroka High School before embarking on her academic career.

She and her cousins were raised by her grandparents. They instilled hard work and Christian values in them. Her grandmother had a rigorous rulebook. She would not even allow them to bunk school when they were sick. "If you are really sick, the teacher will send you back home," she would always say. All her cousins have become successful in what they do because of their grandmother's strict upbringing.

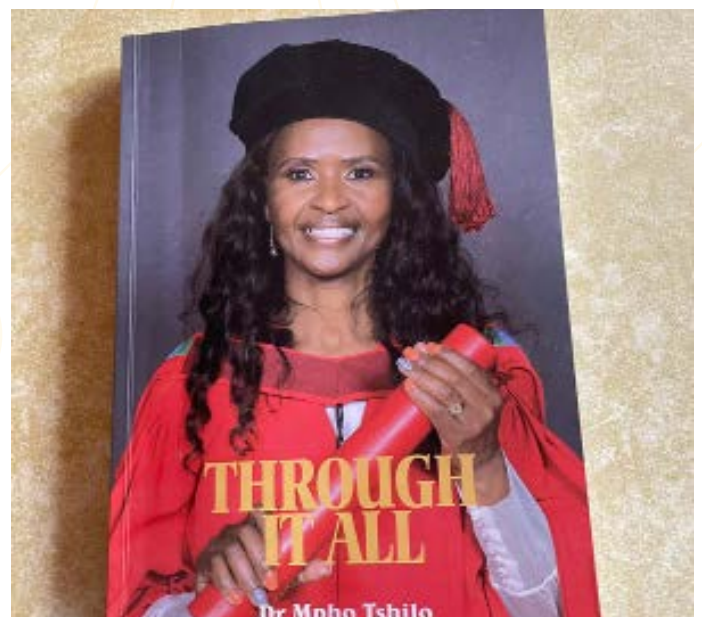
Dr Tshilo's parents encouraged her to become a teacher, and not an accountant as she had hoped to. "They felt that teaching was a safer option for me back then." Hence, she attended Thaba Nchu College of Education for three years to qualify as a teacher. Thereafter, her parents allowed her to go to university to study accounting, because she had something to "fall back on"

At the University of North-West, she completed a Bachelor of Commerce degree before qualifying with a Masters degree in Public Administration at the University of the Free State. She received her Doctorate in Public Management from the CUT in 2022.

She cites completing the daunting exercise of facilitating and coordinating the Supply Chain Management Learnership Course for ±100 officials nominated from different Departments across the province during the COVID-19 pandemic as the pinnacle of her professional life. The exercise was completed within the planned 12 months, amidst the challenges of working mostly from home.

Dr Tshilo decided to write a story about her life titled, *Through it all*. The book is about what God has done for her despite the limitations and challenges she came across in her life. "God pulled me through all that I went through and prepared me to handle my current success."

Through it all is a story about her faith, resilience, and focus through financial loss, deteriorating health, barrenness, career stagnation, unemployment, loss of loved ones, and degenerating relationships. She held on steadfast and chose to live a principled life. The book talks to people who feel unwanted and neglected – and inspires them to aim ahead and never give up. *Through it all* costs R150 per copy and can be ordered from 066 233 0634 or 071 557 3231.



Saving lives in Dubai



Vincent Malejwane was born in Welkom and attended a number of primary schools. He matriculated at Welkom High School. After matriculating he pursued his studies at the Central University of Technology, Free State (CUT). Like many teenagers, Malejwane had no idea which direction he wanted his life to go in. He was, however, sure that he wanted to be in the medical field. He applied for a Diploma in Biomedical Technology, but got rejected because there was no space. His second option was a Diploma in Emergency Medical Services. He had never dreamt of being an Emergency Medical Technician - the thought had not even crossed his mind. When he heard that there were bursaries offered for this course, he took the chance and got the bursary. As time went by, Vincent realised just how much he grew to love the course.

He did not only leave CUT with a degree, but he also left with a family. He says his fellow classmates became close companions. They supported each other academically and in life in general. Those were not the only people that played an important role in his life. Vincent laid eyes on a beautiful lady on campus whom he is now married to. He did not only bag a degree, but a life partner too! Vincent came across an incredible opportunity to work abroad, and he grabbed it with both hands. He is now based in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in a city called Sharjah. He is working as a Flight-Paramedic for National Ambulance, which is one of the biggest Emergency Medical Services' organisations in the UAE. "Being able to move overseas and work in one of the most advanced countries in the world has to be one of my best accomplishments to date."

What gives him the greatest joy at work is knowing that he made a difference in someone's life by saving their loved one during an emergency. His biggest challenge is the human element. "You need to be very empathetic when you are working with people. You see horrible situations and sometimes deliver devastating news to family members. This has an adverse effect on a paramedic's mental and physical health. This is what shortens the life span of a paramedic. This job can easily lead to conditions such as anxiety and depression, and one has to guard against it," he said.

Malejwane would like to study towards a PhD degree in Emergency Medical Care. He says he wants to save as many lives as he can, especially by educating the community on how to take care of their health, and about the measures they should take to prevent them from causing unintended harm to themselves.

CUT Alumni launch first international chapter in Maseru



The newly elected Maseru Chapter Leadership from left to right: Front: Mopeli Nthejane, Coordinator and Charmaine McPherson, Convenor. Back: Letlotlo Letuka, Lebohang Ntlhanngoe, Tankiso Motsoari, Palesa Matsoso, Maseabi Makoa, Malekhetho Noosi, Liteboho Monyake and Bokang Molato.

The Alumni Association of the Central University of Technology, Free State (CUT) launched its first international chapter in Maseru, Lesotho on Saturday, 5 March 2022. Over the years, the university has welcomed a large number of international students from Lesotho, who have chosen CUT as their preferred home away from home. CUT Alumni Deputy President, Lebohang Khutlang encouraged the alumni to embrace being brand ambassadors of the university. “As we go around the country and across borders launching these chapters, we are trying to locate our graduates, know where they are, to build networks and connect graduates with the university,” said Khutlang.

The launch included a robust discussion on challenges faced by international students and how the university can assist. Selecting their own chapter leaders is their first step towards growing the chapter, and ensuring it is beneficial to both graduates, current students as well as potential students. “We have to work very hard and make sure we represent the CUT brand well. We are excited, and provided we have a strong collaborative spirit amongst ourselves, we will be successful,” concluded the newly elected Chapter Coordinator, Mopeli Nthejane.

“As CUT alumni, you are the most permanent stakeholder of this institution. People, staff, students, they come and go but graduates of an institution of learning are there to stay. Your relationship with this institution is life long. From the CUT side and from an alumni perspective, it is important for us as well as the AA Exco to support you, and to ensure that you, as the alumni, are helped whichever way we can within the policy framework of the university. We are all committed to keep you informed, engaged and connected with you alma mater,” said Jacqueline Pietersen, CUT Deputy Director of Alumni Relations. As the Alumni Association works towards reigniting the relationship between CUT graduates and the university, other chapter launches have included a chapter in the Northern Cape Province, a Dr Ruth Mompoti Alumni Chapter in Vryburg and a chapter launch in the Tswelopele District municipality.

Passionate about the youth



Doctor Rebecca Babedi has always been passionate about education. She knew her goals and dreams and has always worked hard to achieve them. She obtained many qualifications including a BCom Economics Degree, Higher Education Diploma, BEd Honours (Guidance and Counselling Endorsement), BCom Honours (Economics), MEd Inclusive Education, MEd Education. She recently obtained a doctoral degree in Education at the Central University of Technology (CUT) and that was the cherry on top of her academic dessert. Dr Babedi worked as an Economics and English teacher for many years at secondary schools in Welkom.

She was then appointed as a Provincial Economics examiner for ten years. She also worked at different managerial positions in the Free State Education Department. During this time, she discovered issues faced by teenagers. "I felt that I needed to be skilled and trained to provide effective and appropriate support. Ultimately, I gathered enough guts to embark on a career change." Her love for education is fuelled by her desire to help teenagers with emotional and behavioural challenges and the learning barriers they face.

Her research focused on factors that contribute to teenagers' anxiety, especially orphans. She believes that every learner can achieve their set academic goals if what hinders their learning is identified and proper support is provided for them. She is also busy conducting research on supporting teenage mothers to reintegrate back to the school system. She puts emphasis on the importance of career counselling in schools and how essential it is in helping learners choose vocations based on their skills, personality traits and other factors. "My wish is to see a positive change in how teenagers see themselves and to see the recommendations from my research and related studies being implemented in schools and the community at large."

Her educational journey was not always easy. All her qualifications were obtained while she was in full time employment. There were challenges with competing priorities. The support that she got from her family and her desire to succeed kept her going. "Nic Babedi, my spouse, is a devoted

education enthusiast who is incredibly encouraging and supportive. He is the genuine wind

beneath my wings and a true pillar. Refilwe and Boitumelo, our two lovely daughters, are a blessing. Finishing my education could have been more challenging if it was not for their support and understanding." Dr Babedi mentions how grateful she is for her research promoter who was always helping and motivating her when she felt like giving up. She is motivated by the small changes that bring a smile and hope in the faces of the teenagers she interacts with.

Fritz van Schalkwyk - Hero of hearts



Fritz van Schalkwyk was born and bred in Bloemfontein. After completing school at Grey College, he started his tertiary studies at the Central University of Technology, Free State (CUT) in 2015. "My fellow students, friends, and lecturers were the most dedicated, honest and professional people," he recalls his experience on campus. "I had the privilege to be head mentor for the 1st years and helped them with the start of their journey."

At the age of 21, Fritz got the opportunity to specialise in cardiology at Netcare hospital in Kuilsriver, Western Cape and is currently busy with an MSc in Clinical Technology (Cardiology and Vascular) before he will begin with a PhD. "I am currently working for Dr's Bester and Bosch, specialist Physicians in Life Rosepark Hospital. It is a big honour and privilege to work with them as they are leading doctors in the field. Dr Bester is the President of the Faculty of Consulting Physicians and an honouree of the American College of Physicians."

Fritz wants to save people's lives and make it better. "I want to be pro-active in the prevention of future diseases and further my research and studies in my field of speciality. I would like to help the underprivileged people, uplift them, and teach them primary knowledge." He looks up to God for strength and will use the abilities that the Lord entrusted to him to the best of his ability. His family and friends also motivate him, and his hero is himself in five years. "So, I work to be that hero in 5 years. My hero is always 5 years ahead of me, and in that way I will never stagnate."

Fritz encourages CUT students and alumni to gain knowledge, work hard, and improve day by day. "Strive for progress and don't let what you can't control interfere with what you can do. Do not stagnate, improve yourself and have faith because anything worth having requires sacrifice. Be the best version of yourself and the future is yours if you want it."

Technically, you have to smell good



Memories may fade, but a scent will always be the vehicle that drives you back to those memories. Has someone ever made you turn your head because you were captivated by their scent? These are the moments Thabo Kwakwa lives for. Thabo was born and bred in Limpopo, and raised by loving and supportive parents. He was fascinated by new technological advances and discoveries.

He then decided to enrol at the Central University of Technology, Free State's Welkom Campus for a National Diploma in Information Technology: Software Development. Due to his tenacity and diligence, he was nominated by his Head of Department for a six months' Study Abroad Programme in his final year (2018). He studied Computer Sciences, specialising in Data Sciences at Hochschule Aalen in Germany. "My best time at CUT was when I was selected to go study abroad. It really felt like a dream come true, and I will always be appreciative to CUT for providing me with the chance to study and travel throughout Europe." Thabo's perfume journey started in Europe.

He visited one of the biggest perfume shops in the world and right there and then he decided that he wanted to be a perfumer one day. He is the founder of TLK Oud Boutique, an online perfume store. They deliver high-quality fragrances around South Africa. All their perfume oils are imported directly from the perfume capitals of the world, United Arab Emirates and France. The ultimate product is elegantly packaged colognes and perfumes. His online boutique's recognition by Metro fm and Motsweding fm was his largest professional achievement, and hearing his voice on such prominent radio stations taught him that there are no boundaries to what he can do.

He is currently working as a technician at Alkantpan Test Range division of ARMSCOR in the Northern Cape. He goes to work excited every day because he gets to do the two things he loves, IT and perfumery. "The best thing about owning an online store is that it is fun to see how technology has made it simple for me to run a business online. Most of my customers are people who do not know me and have never seen me, and this just shows the beauty of technology." Thabo is motivated by success. Seeing other people do well pushes him to become great, too. He says coming to study IT at CUT is one of the best decisions he has ever made, because it opened so many doors for him. His goal is travelling all over the world and having his perfumes distributed globally. He counsels young people to exercise consistency and discipline in everything they do, whether it be in business or academic pursuits.



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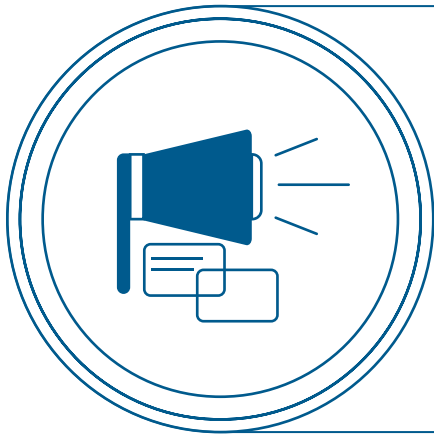
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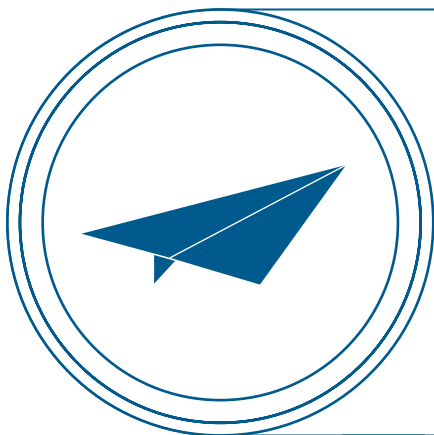
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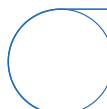
SHARING IS CARING

Share your own (or fellow alumni's) achievements/journey to success with us.

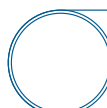
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